

Creating a Proactive Market Orientation: On its Organizational Antecedents, Contingency Factors and Consequences

Marketing scholars as well as leading managers agree on the importance of creating customer value for business success. But customer orientation may harm firms when they solely focus on expressed needs and miss to serve new customers or new markets. By responding to latent and emerging customer needs, firms can create new opportunities for value and maintain business success. Such a comprehensive market orientation (MO) is longer term in focus and proactive in nature.

Even though the interest in exploring various aspects of proactive MO has increased during the last years, existing research has not focused on at least three different important aspects: First, it remains unclear which norms, artifacts and behaviors determine a proactive market-oriented culture. Second, current research neglects how organizations can find a proper alignment among responsibility for proactive MO, degree of specialization, external cooperations, and prevailing organizational values. Third, it lacks a comprehensive understanding of internal and external consequences.

We used qualitative as well as quantitative research methods to investigate these research gaps. A multiple-case design has been applied to finalize a conceptual model on proactive MO, its organizational antecedents, contingency factors and consequences. Then, a dyadic survey of strategic business units in three industries (automotive, consumer electronics, financial services) and their customers tested the hypothesized model empirically. The identified proactive market-oriented culture differ clearly from responsive MO and confirm that both dimensions require different organizational cultures. Furthermore, we determine the contingency factors under which a firm should devote resources to increase its proactive MO.

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