

Sales Promotions: A Managerial Perspective

David MacGregor

Department of Marketing, Lancaster University, Lancaster U.K.

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To Melanie, without whom.....

For Isabella and Angus

Acknowledgements

The doctoral thesis presented here represents the culmination of a lengthy and at times difficult personal journey for me. Its completion would not have been possible without those around me upon whose goodwill, generosity and support I have on many occasions had to call. Firstly, acknowledgement must go to Professor Geoff Easton. Geoff 'inherited' me due to circumstances beyond either of our controls. Geoff's unstinting commitment to my completion of this thesis and unwavering support throughout the entire process means that I will always owe him a debt of gratitude. His willingness to read and comment on whatever it was I had written and his calm and considered approach to both the intellectual and mechanical aspects of researching and presenting this thesis are a mark and measure of the man as both academic supervisor and human being. I would also like to thank my parents for all of their encouragement throughout this lengthy process and to my father more so now than ever for giving me the motivation and initial impetus to return to academic study in the first place.

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Get well soon Dad.

Abstract

Sales promotions, although ill defined and under theorised, have long been a part of the marketing communications mix and used by brands in a variety of ways in many different contexts. Much of the research that examines sales promotions has done so from a rational economic or behaviourist perspective. Whilst acknowledging the contribution of such ontologies, it is argued that there has been limited examination of sales promotions from a managerial perspective. What has been produced tends to be largely prescriptive and written for practitioners. In this thesis the ontology of critical realism has been used to develop a conceptual framework that treats sales promotions as individual entities taking place within organisational and market structures. This conceptual framework has been used to analyse empirical data collected from thirteen smaller U.K. brands drawn from a diverse set of product categories and industries. Four in-depth case studies are presented with rich, fine-grained insights into the behaviours of those involved in such activities and the subsequent outcomes; in particular the contemporary practices of managerial actors involved in the conception, commissioning and implementation of sales promotions activities. The results of a further 9 case studies are also presented in summary form. In each case the conceptual framework proves largely effective in interpreting the likely causes of the form that the sales promotion took and its subsequent outcomes.

It is claimed that the research made the following contributions to the study of sales promotions: 1) a re-examination of the definitional discourse that informs sales promotion and the development of a new definition ; 2) the early and successful use of the combination of a critical realist ontology and case study 3) that the forms and outcomes of sales promotions can be better understood as being dependent on causal explanations of involving organisational and business contexts and 4) the development of a model that

integrates diverse contextual factors from both within and outside of the organisation in order to inform the managerial practice of deploying and managing sales promotions.

The products of the study argue for a deeper and more sophisticated treatment of the way that sales promotions are researched, operate and are managed. The findings also suggest that both the method and the results have wider implications for the study of sales promotions, marketing communications in general and marketing practice.

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Chapter I Introduction, Aims Objectives and Contribution

I.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the structure of this thesis and outlines its central tenet and contribution. It presents the aims and objectives of the research, a justification of, and some insight into the way that the research came to be as it is presented here. It outlines the research question and suggests that both this and the thesis itself emerged from the need to examine sales promotions from a different perspective to that covered in the current literature, which are presented in chapters 2 and 3. The research process, the structure of the thesis and key outcomes of the research are also discussed.

I.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The initial impetus and rationale for carrying out this research has not been motivated by an artificial research strategy or agenda, but merely by an initial motivation to "find out" about the phenomena and the managerial processes behind it. I had been a practitioner within a small 'below the line agency' some years before entering the university sector as a lecturer, and had been involved in the development of such promotional activities for clients myself. Initially I felt it would be useful to revisit an area of marketing activity that I had been particularly involved in as a practitioner. I had encountered marketing managers myself who perceived and commissioned sales promotions in a number of ways from the particularly sophisticated and well planned through to the haphazard and limited. It was especially useful for me to see what had changed during the period I had been out of the industry. I was also interested in the way that brand and product managers, especially those outside of the large

fast moving consumer goods and grocery sectors, thought about and behaved towards sales promotions.

The main motivation, for this work therefore, is an interest in the way that sales promotion activities are conceptualised, produced, managed and disseminated; and the behaviours and perceptions of those responsible for their inclusion in the marketing communications mix and affect the wider consumer environment. This study is not a challenge to marketing orthodoxy as there is little real substantive orthodoxy concerning the study of sales promotion, but should instead be seen as my attempt to advance academic and possibly practitioner knowledge in this field.

In this thesis I am therefore concerned with the fundamentals of what sales promotions 'are' and how and why they 'come to be'. The 'come to be' assumes a greater significance in that to date, there have been no empirical studies that examine how sales promotions have been managed. It also seeks to identify evidence of the practice of sales promotions in various contexts.

The main objective of this study therefore, is to examine the fundamental nature of sales promotions from a managerial perspective. An emergent secondary objective is to examine why marketing managers make the decision to use sales promotions within their marketing communications activities and what factors and processes inform such decisions. This is bound up in questions which run through the thesis about managerial practices around the inception, creation and implementation of sales promotions.

This research does not seek to generalise the conditions that lead to the creation of sales promotions in the focal firms, from the perspective of a narrowly defined study, or to build a general or generically transferable set of theories of sales promotions. It does however, seek to present a richer “picture” of what a sales promotion “is”, how and why it occurs and what organisational and market processes lead to it being used. The objectives are, therefore, as follows:

- To re-examine the practices of sales promotion after a long period of time out of the industry.
- To study the discourse around sales promotions, including its definition, and comment critically upon it.
- To examine and critically comment on the other main research discourses which have informed the study of sales promotions
- To use a new approach to the study of a phenomena that employs a critical realist ontology and case studies as the empirical methodology
- To contextualise sales promotions within organisational and market structures
- To study the relevant entities, particularly sales promotions themselves, and identify their causal powers and liabilities.
- To give voice to the managerial discourse on the processes of commissioning, managing and evaluating sales promotions
- To make a contribution to the study of sales promotions

1.3 The Significance of the Research to Our Understanding of the Practice of Sales Promotion

A characteristic of any form of social science is the way in which different researchers often use distinctly different approaches and perspectives. Brunsson (1982) points out that key differences often emerge between fields of research “less often in what is described than in how it is described”.

There is a view of sales promotion as a limited “supply side technology” (Chandon (1995)), for which there are limited accounts of its structural forms, processes, efficiencies and behavioural effects. What is particularly lacking is an understanding of the behaviours and perceptions of those managers involved in the production and dissemination of sales promotion as marketing activity. I would further suggest that Chandon’s use of the term ‘technology’ further confuses the definitional discourse in the contemporary context in which sales promotions currently operate. The main contribution that emerges from this thesis is a view of sales promotions as multi-form multi-contextual marketing communications events. Sales promotions are formed in vastly different organisational contexts for a wide variety of reasons. These reasons can be found within the organisations’ processes or as responses to external structures and entities.

Throughout the research process it has been important to make explicit and hold up to critical scrutiny, both the processes of sales promotion and the perceptions, insights, behaviours and actions of those that produce and disseminate them. This study therefore seeks to situate sales promotion both within the marketing communications mix but also within a managerial and behavioural frame in order to develop an understanding of the

behaviours and processes inherent in the sponsorship, management and implementation of such activities.

A purely descriptive view of these events and their outcomes is, however, insufficient as there is a need to examine the insights, thoughts and behaviours of the actors within the focal firm and the structures and entities that cause such events to occur and present the outcomes that they do.

1.4 Sales Promotions and Academic Discourse

The extant literature that informs studies of sales promotions is summarised in Chapters 2 and 3. The view of sales promotions in the extant literature is largely based on rational economic or behaviourist perspectives. Both rely, although in different ways, on a reductive framing of their research questions and robust quantification in order to obtain 'law like generalisations'. Much of this literature is surveyed in chapter two and the main discourses are critically examined. There are other emergent perspectives such as that which considers sales promotions as part of an integrated perspective and which has been subject to robust disputation in the recent literature. (Kitchen et al 2004, Swain 2004, Kliatchko 2008).

Lee (2002) highlights the lack of contemporary research that examines the management of sales promotion and the role played by brand managers and Huff and Alden's (2000) paper on managerial expectations of, and behaviour regarding, sales promotion activity also offers useful insights into the issue of sales promotion as managerial tool to organise

consumption, a theme also taken up by Low and Mohr (2000). This lack of contemporary research serves as a gap which this thesis is designed to fill and from where its main contributions to an understanding of the managerial processes that inform sales promotions are made.

1.5 The Gap in the Sales Promotions Literature

There is little empirical research or new theorisation that considers sales promotions from the marketing managerial perspective (Friedmann 1992, Low and Mohr, Peattie and Peattie 1994, Huff and Alden 2000). Nor has there been case based research into how and why sales promotions are formed, managed and benefit and affect both the marketer, brand and the organisation.

My initial research position was based on examining the way that promotional activities are produced and constructed. This was as a reaction to, and instead of, the more usual perspectives that treats promotional activity as a given and stable element of the research process. Instead literature that sought to examine sales promotions from the perspective of deeper causal mechanisms and structures and that explained how and why it came to be developed was sought. There was little such empirical work published.

Merely describing and defining and redefining marketing communications 'technologies' as in Chandon (1995), does not provide any significant addition to what is already known. The issues of definition and classification have been further destabilised by a set of epistemological problems concerning what is known and written about sales promotion. The need for multiple definitions has been acknowledged and the lag between real world action and academic reportage has already been examined in the early chapters of Yeshin

(2006), and in work by Bhaskar (2002 pp15-16) and Smith (2006) who both examine such “theory-practice inconsistencies”.

Marketing is a theoretically contestable and contested domain of management thought and as a result subject to ontological and epistemic disputation. However the identified gap in the sub-field of sales promotions afforded me, as the researcher, certain privileges and advantages within the field of research. It can also however bring responsibilities and present potential pitfalls.

We clearly know that some brands use sales promotion and others do not, the reasons being outlined succinctly but briefly by Yeshin (2006). What is under researched, thus far, is that whilst there are identifiable processes, artefacts and activities that can be isolated and presented as substantive evidence of the practice of sales promotion, why then are sales promotions strategies and campaigns commissioned conducted, presented and managed in the way that they are?

The gap that has emerged in the extant literature on sales promotions concerns causation. On one level, much of the literature treats sales promotions as closed ‘black box’ entities. They merely exist to be analysed and evaluated. This is particularly applicable to rational economic discourses. There is often much robust quantification in this literature, particularly within positivist or behavioural discourses. There is very little that places sales promotions in different organisational and market contexts; nor examines the causal factors or managerial intents behind their conception, production and implementation.

1.6 The Research Question

Research questions are definable in terms of what Yin (1989 p 18) identifies as “who, what, where, how and why” provocations. What I feel is important here is to pose the fundamental question; why are sales promotions taking place in the way that they are?

Initially the research was predicated on a single question that concerned whether studying the practice of ‘doing’ sales promotions in an organisational and managerial context tells us any more about why and how sales promotion come to be as they are?

What informs the research question therefore, is as follows:

- Are there a range of possibly diverse activities that can be identified and grouped within a definitional or taxonomic frame that might be identifiable as sales promotions?
- What entities, technologies and processes can be presented as being representative of sales promotion as a marketing communications activity?
- What patterns of managerial activity can be presented as being indicative of the practice of using sales promotion as a marketing communications tool?
- What external and internal structures and contexts inform and shape the practices of using sales promotion?
- What are the organisational processes market performance improvements and benefits sought by marketers and brand managers from their use of sales promotions as part of their marketing communications?

This may be summed up in terms of an overarching meta-question; “why was this particular sales promotion created and implemented at this time in this context with these outcomes?”

1.7 The Research Process

Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) view that research examines the "constraints of the everyday world" provided the initial impetus for this study, and it is the everyday and the ordinary that initially provided the subject matter for this doctoral research. Promotional material of the type surveyed in this work is freely available at many if not most points-of-sale in retail outlets. Deeper causalities concerning how such materials came to be in that particular context are an idea that has to date received little attention. There is little extant research that treats sales promotions as the unit of analysis for case study based research despite the view in the extant literature that sales promotions are 'action oriented events' (Blattberg and Neslin 1989).

In this research a process of "studying into" the context was employed, gaining deeper insight into the use of sales promotion with each phase of the research. This process of gradual immersion, although time consuming, yielded insight into the managerial processes and causal factors that informed sales promotion activity in the focal firms.

This research also employed a previously unused ontological perspective, critical realism which, when combined with case studies, resulted in deeper and more insightful understanding presentation. The case for such a qualitative approach to research in marketing was outlined as early as 1983 by Bonoma and Wong. The case studies presented are examples of the deployment of sales promotion using different behaviours, constructs and approaches, and the unit of analyses are the promotions themselves.

The use of case studies consistent with a critical realist philosophy (Easton 2000) has the effect of opening up a deeper causal perspective and allows the researcher to try to answer questions such as - why and how do those who sponsor, create and manage aspects of the sales promotion process do what they do? This further opens up other issues and questions about risk, contingency, knowledge, creativity, effectiveness, and the causal impact of externalities.

This approach allowed me as the researcher "write the rules" of the research process in that I was able to both define the situation and develop the questions to be asked about that situation (Morey and Luthans 1984). This was done through a variety of research instruments from semi structured interviews to sitting in on meetings, formal and informal contact with marketing staff and field visits to trade fairs, promotional events and retailers, both with brand marketing staff and unaccompanied. I was also able to examine artefacts and was privy to performance data and market intelligence.

The sheer diversity of what was available to me as a 'researcher reporter' provided me with insights into the interconnectedness of the processes, structures and actions that make up sales promotion campaigns. This research process offers an approach which accommodates the unusual position of sales promotion with its limited research methods and its unique and under developed nature. It also offers a study of sales promotion from a unique proximal standpoint in that I, as the researcher, was actually inside organisations when the research process was taking place.

Four in depth case studies were selected and they were subject to the deepest causal analysis. The remaining nine are presented as mini cases although the data collected was no

less rich and substitutions could easily have been made. From the analyses and case study materials, each case context, focal firm and unit of analysis were initially presented as being separate and diverse from the others. In each case there were a number of processes and causalities at work which shaped the use and performance of the sales promotion. This allowed exploration of the diversity, richness and the nature of the managerial and organisational reality within which such promotional activities take place but within a developed framework of the entities identified as being crucial.

The use of this methodology also contributed to a wider understanding of different forms of research into sales promotions. This informs our understanding of sales promotions not only in terms of what they are but also how they come to 'be' and is shaped and informed by internal and external structures. Finally, and perhaps most significantly it also seeks to use the case studies to provide a tangible representation of such processes in order that a retroductive analysis be possible.

1.8 The Key Contributions of the Thesis

As Brunsson (1982) suggests advancement in the social sciences is through the application of "new perspectives to an existing part of reality" and as a result examining and highlighting "new features" of that reality. This research is the result of my revisiting an area of marketing communications that I was previously involved in as a practitioner.

There has been recent attention given to the view that marketing communications activities drive firm performance (Rust et al 2004, Kumar and Petersen 2005, Luo and Donthu 2006, O Sullivan and Abela 2007). Sales promotions are only one of a range of marketing

communications activities but within academic fields, it remains something of a 'Cinderella'. It is seen as ambiguous, poorly defined and subject to disputation, although as will be seen later, has the potential to be structurally and operationally more sophisticated than has previously been suggested.

Despite the growing importance of sales promotion as an element of the marketing communications mix, it has attracted considerably less attention than other marketing communications technologies. Belch and Belch (1998) acknowledged that sales promotion had received less attention from academic researchers than other forms of marketing communications, most notably advertising.

Sales promotions have however, been a significant, and Yeshin (2006) suggests, growing element in the marketing communications activities of brands. One area that has remained particularly under explored is the way that managerial behaviours and other organisational and contextual factors affect the way that sales promotions come to be commissioned and are managed.

The research presented here makes a number of contributions to the study of sales promotions within the marketing communications canon, as follows:

- It re-examines the existing literatures that inform academic discourse about sales promotions and allows for the re-engagement with practitioners and a re-examination of how they view and manage sales promotions.
- Not only does it employ new ways of researching and thinking about sales promotion but also applies methodologies previously unused in studies of this kind.

The managerial perspective taken here is largely unique, as is the use of case studies and a critical realist ontology to explore deeper causal factors.

- It helps satisfy the epistemological and ontological concerns about the representation of sales promotion and its actors in the extant literature.

The definitional discourse to date is re-examined and a definition suggested that acknowledges the causalities that have emerged from the empirical research. An analytical framework is presented that allows for a more sophisticated analysis of sales promotions in context. This presents inter-relationships between the processes of actually 'doing' or 'producing sales promotions', managerial decision processes and organisational and wider contextual structures which also affect sales promotions. The research presented is to date, the only empirical study examining sales promotions that uses this critical realist ontology.

The intention behind this study was not to generate a "snapshot" of the same forms of promotional activities used in diverse and comparable contexts. It does not use the normative analytical models used in nomothetic, positivist and behaviourist schools of research examined. It is instead, a demonstration of what is happening in some situations and contexts with some managers operating within some organisations in some market sectors.

This research seeks to examine sales promotions as part of marketing managerial practice and that takes place in a variety of contexts which examine a range of potential causal factors and criticalities. This is conceptualised in the following framework:

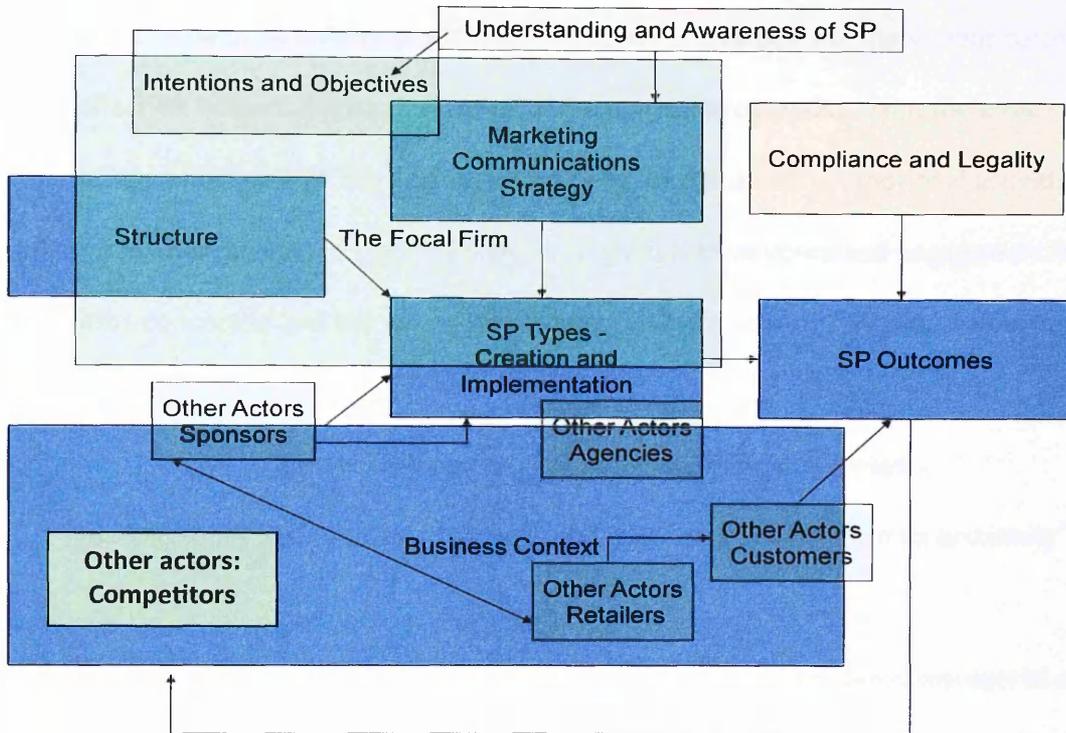


Fig 1.1 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework highlights the potentially complex interactions between entities and structures that form each sales promotion 'event'. Each case study provides insight into the deeper causalities, processes and relationships that shape and impact on the entities, structures and outcomes that inform the practice of managing sales promotions.

The way that different sales promotions are used in different contexts is central to thesis.

This is further supported by both the focus on managerial practice in the act of commissioning, producing and implementation sales promotions and the critical realist case study methodology.

Using the promotional activity as the unit of analysis and vehicle for the various forms of data collection utilised, allows theoretical and empirical progression from the basic descriptions of 'what' and 'how' towards the 'why' of the use of promotional activities. This research further developed out of a process of gradual emergence and engagement with the focal firms concerned and increasing engagement with the industry actors. As Serres (1995) suggests:

“There is only one type of knowledge and it is always -
linked to an observer, an observer submerged in a system or in its proximity”

There are however, a wide range of managerial discourses and reported managerial actions that have emerged from the study. Examples include repetitive behaviours, risk aversion, thoughtless delegation to junior staff, styles of management of employees; and awareness of the legality and ethical frame that informs the practice of sales promotions.

The causal and structural inter-relationships between the case studies are revealed in figure 5.1 in chapter 5. It should be stated that when approaching the focal firms for this study, I was not seeking to examine each case in relation to other focal firms and units of analysis.

The inter connecting relationships and commonalities between case studies came about due to shared causal factors rather than any artificial research agenda that sought such comparatives.

Finally, current changes in processes, analytical frameworks and the way that sales promotions have been used in practice have potentially destabilized existing definitions and constructions of what sales promotions represent to academic researchers. It is arguable that the scholarly field of vision needs to be reset as a result; literally a reframing exercise is

required! Moreover certain themes, ideas and conceptualizations appear to be migrating from other parts of the marketing field and beyond. For example the work of Peattie et al (1997) and Lee (2002) needs to be acknowledged in their development of a strategic perspective on the use of sales promotions; and Simpson's (2006) cross cultural, contextual examination of retail promotions. The result of this type of scholarship will hopefully be to open the managerial practice of sales promotions up to wider theoretical scrutiny and causal explanation. Sales promotion as a an area of study can only be enhanced by such developments.

My hope therefore, is that the research presented here provides this study with a defensible "niche" with the potential to make a contribution to knowledge that will add to the existing canon of research in this area.

1.9 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in the following way. Following this introductory chapter, the definitions, concepts and theoretical constructs of sales promotion are outlined and examined. The review of existing literature and referenced material is sub-divided into two distinct chapters. Chapter 2 is largely definitional and descriptive in its approach and is a necessary part of this study, as below the line activity in general and sales promotions in particular are marked by a lack of adequate definition. In this chapter there is re-examination of the definitional discourse that informs sales promotions, and it highlights the problems of defining such a diverse entity in common with the view presented by Yeshin in the early chapters of his text.

Chapter 3 on the other hand, examines the less well known and very much smaller literature which deals with the contextual, managerial and organisational aspects of sales promotion. A definition which encompasses all of the various discourses is presented at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 4 examines the methodological aspects that underpin and inform this study and lays out a clear research strategy, research methods and research design. The use of case studies as the research instrument informed by a critical realist ontology after Bhaskar (1978) and Archer (1995) is posited as the most appropriate approach. This acknowledges both the objectives of the study and the problems inherent in seeking deeper causal explanations than much of the existing empirical research provides. Case research, according to Easton (2000), is the most appropriate form for identifying contextualised processes and deeper structures such as the type found here.

This in turn leads to the potential for a more sophisticated treatment of sales promotions as presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 presents fine grained and structured case studies that seek to grasp the detail of the contemporary management of sales promotion in U.K. brands within the organisational contexts surveyed. The approach taken to researching and presenting the empirical data is consistent with Pawson and Tilley's (1997) cogent suggestions on ways to develop a critical realist approach, in that it initially identifies key outcomes that need to be explained. In this case these are sales promotions events and the processes and causalities that lead to them coming to be. Four in-depth case studies are presented with 9 additional shorter case studies as background. Case studies are presented, using a critical realist framework adapted from Sayer (1992).

Chapter 6 presents a range of causal mechanisms that have emerged from the analysis of the data drawn from the preceding case studies. Chapter 6 also presents the conclusion for the study and outlines the conceptual, methodological, contextual and practitioner implications of the thesis.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has clarified the aims and objectives of this research. It lays out the structure of the thesis, outlines its central tenets and presents a rationale for the way that the research makes a substantive contribution to academic and practitioner understanding of the managerial practice of sales promotions. It presents a research question and outlines the methodologies used to present empirical research that responds to that question.

Chapter 2: Sales Promotion: Definitions, Taxonomies and Discourses

2.1 Introduction and Rationale for this Chapter.

Yeshin (2006) suggests that there has been a lack of attention given to the subject of sales promotion in the existing marketing research literature. I suggest that the problem is more fundamental in that sales promotion is also missing an adequate meta-definition or, as will be argued later in this chapter, may not require one at all. Previously Siepel (1971) addressed the lack of conceptualization in other areas of the marketing communications mix. I believe, however, that there is now a need for a deeper and more critical examination of the phenomena of sales promotion in order to draw a wider theoretical scope similar to the way that Simpson (2006) uses multi-site multi-contextual research to draw cross cultural parallels about the use of sales promotions.

Despite attempts at integration with other theoretical domains by Belch and Belch (1998), the theoretical and conceptual bases of sales promotion remain unclear and less well defined than other forms of marketing communications, most notably media-costed advertising. This has been compounded by a further problem in that much of the existing literature has tended to focus on the short-term transactional and utilitarian view of sales promotion as represented by price manipulation, volume manipulation and “couponing”.

The purpose of this review is therefore, to examine the situation from two perspectives; firstly to see whether there is an adequate definition, as Chandon (1995) suggests, or as Yeshin suggests, that there exist multiples definitions of sales promotion(s). In this chapter I

examine the definitional discourse that has shaped sales promotion; present a thematic examination of the existing academic literature and provide a synthetic definition.

I suggest that there is a growing body of research that examines the phenomena of sales promotion from other perspectives beyond the more narrow definitions and research discourses, and that my particular research stance and perspective represents one of them. This chapter describes academic research grouped around the various typologies of sales promotion and examines the main research discourses.

2.2 The Definitional Discourse

The fact that there are various definitions and forms of sales promotions that are available to marketers and academics makes sales promotion an area of theoretical and definitional disputation. This contested definitional issue, combined with epistemic positions which focus on what sales promotion is rather than why it is used, have further compounded the problem. Sales promotion is often defined by what it is not rather than what it actually is, as a way of overcoming the problem of providing an adequate definition. This is often made manifest in terms of sales promotion being broadly defined as anything that is not advertising, selling or public relations, although even that is conflated in some academic works.

The view of sales promotion as a persuasive “supply side” process is also used indiscriminately and is often conflated with other forms of advertising and “promotion”. This view of sales promotion is used by academics and practitioners alike. It is however, both reductionist and insufficient. It narrows the definition of promotional activity down to price

and price/volume manipulations and makes more problematic the conceptualisation of issues such as demand and price elasticity, perceptions of brand value, consumer stockpiling and even the management of sales promotion itself.

There is, moreover, a definitional discourse that runs through academic research into sales promotions and their use. Toop's (1966) early definition refers to sales promotion as:

'...those things that can be offered as incentives to buy the brand concerned, over and above the intrinsic characteristics of the product itself'

pxi

...and presents a useful starting point in that it identifies both incentivisation and the potential for adding value through promotional activity. This even at this early stage Toop pointed out the potential diversity that I argue is inherent in the structure, form and utility of sales promotions. Other forms of marketing communications have been subject to analyses that are predicated on the specificity of the promotional form as in Bouchet's (1991) examination of advertising. Sales promotions however, do not have this singularity of form, structure or utility, and this creates both a problem within the definitional discourse and a potentially fascinating phenomenon for academic research.

The conflation and comparison of advertising and promotions have long been an unresolved issue in the empirical literature. Low and Mohr (1992) argue that sales promotion has a negative effect on brand image or loyalty and can in fact negate the investment made in advertising. Such a view is misguided and fails to adequately address the different potential forms and uses of sales promotion. It falls into the same "trap" as Kotler's (1999) view that conflates sales promotion with other communication forms and subsumes it within

“advertising” which plainly fails to adequately explain the utility or diversity of promotional activity, its structural position or the way it is used.

Much of the literature examined to date suggests that what little attention sales promotion has received in academic papers has tended to follow the line taken by Ehrenberg, (1972), Mela et al (1997) and others. This view suggests that sales promotion is operational, tactical and short term in its focus with little effectiveness given the stated objectives of those using it. Environmental and structural changes in the industry and business context in which sales promotions take place, and subsequent research however, may suggest that this may not be the case.

Van Waterschoot and Van Den Bulte (1992), also downplay the significance of sales promotion as part of the marketing communications mix. It must be noted however, that even Mela et al had, by 1998, widened their definition of sales promotion from their original narrowly defined position:

“By promotions we refer to features, displays, coupons and temporary price reductions. Here, we use promotion interchangeably with deals because these promotions are often accompanied by price reductions”.

Further distinctions such as those, between “above” and “below the line” (Schultz 1987), whilst simplistic, still have a strong hold over the literature and practitioner discourses considered here. This is problematic both theoretically and empirically, in that the versatility, variety and complexity of sales promotion in practice resists such narrow definitional classification. Such questions about the pre-eminence of advertising within the communications mix, and its wider effectiveness have opened up a debate, most notably in papers by Jones (1990) and Jones and Blair (1996).

The definitional discourse is also not helped by interchangeable terminologies e.g. “contests” and “sweepstakes” in the USA (Selby and Beranek 1981) and promotional competitions and prize draws in the U.K. (Peattie and Peattie 1994) being examples thus helping to render a concise definition tenable. The definitional discourse is also in itself a limiting frame of reference as in the definitions put forward by Shimp (2000), and Schultz et al (1992). These focus on a generic all encompassing model, largely based on price manipulations and couponing, which has been ably critiqued by Yeshin (2006) and Peattie (2002). Such a view has been rendered inadequate and untenable by innovations in sales promotions activity and communications technology.

Peattie and Peattie's (1994, p418-419), approach is more cogent than those outlined above, in that they suggest that promotional activity is typified by distinct characteristics although not limited by form and structure in the way that Shimp (2000) for example, suggests. These characteristics, they propose, identify sales promotions as being usually temporary, limited to certain groups or specific to certain distribution channels and are therefore defined as "non-standardised" forms of marketing activity. Both Chandon (1995) and Lambin (2000) define sales promotion more widely as those marketing activities that add value, or incentivise the sales force, distributors, retailers, or the consumer and are largely concerned with stimulating an immediate consumer response.

Peattie and Peattie's exploration of the temporal structures that inform sales promotions represent a more sophisticated understanding and treatment of sales promotions than had previously been apparent, a theme later reprised by Brannon and McCabe (1995). Perhaps most importantly for reasons of definition, they suggest promotions are response

orientated, a view shared by Blattberg and Neslin (1989) who define sales promotion as 'an action focused marketing event'. This makes sales promotion distinct from the processes and mechanisms of media based advertising, in that promotions seek a direct and dynamic response from customers that need not necessarily be a transaction, for example receiving direct mail, visiting a local retailer, or receiving a sample.

Perhaps the most significant change of position, and acknowledgement of the need to redefine sales promotion and its objectives and measures, is that taken by Alawadi et al(1998, 2001). Their initial paper was highly quantitative and sought to demonstrate an empirical causal link between promotional activity and the direct inducement of consumers to purchase more, at a greater rate. By 2001 however, they had assumed a different and significant position in that they suggest that brand switching, repeat purchase and higher consumption rates were all useful by-products of sales promotion activity.

One element of Neslin's research which is of note is the way that a wider definition of what "promotions" represent begins to emerge. In his 1985 paper he represents the use of promotions in terms as "purchase acceleration" but also, perhaps more significantly, recognises that promotional strategies can use other formats such as coupons. Moreover in his later work he adopts a wider definitional scope and acknowledges the way that promotional activities are more diverse in their possibilities and utility. Neslin's eventual acceptance of the widening range and diversity of sales promotions is consistent with a gradual acknowledgment, by those whose research is grounded in the rational economic and nomothetic positivist paradigm, that they may have used too narrowly defined a frame of reference.

The definitional discourse that runs through studies of sales promotions can therefore, be typified by distinct positions that limit or relax the frame of reference for what a sales promotion is and does. This has gradually expanded to acknowledge that there are multiple forms of sales promotion and that one overarching and narrow definition is likely to be adequate.

Defining sales promotions by comparison to what they are not has passed over to developing a definitional discourse which seeks to reflect the diversity of form and process now apparent in sales promotion. This means that any attempt at definition has lagged behind the way that sales promotion has developed. This thesis and the synthetic definition presented at the end of this chapter also seek to make a contribution to the definitional discourse about what sales promotion is and why it is used.

2.3 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Price and Volume Manipulations

Price and volume manipulations represent perhaps the most significant area of research activity on sales promotions. They are also more suited to robust quantification and those normative approaches to the study of sales promotions where the data is often considered to be empirically rigorous and statistically grounded (Kuehn and Rohloff 1967).

Farris and Quelch (1989) proposed that price promotions are useful for brands in that they encouraged trialling and assist in the management of supply and demand factors. This is an odd perspective in that much of the rational economic literature tends to take a negative view of the effect of sales promotions. Kalwani et al (1990) link the frequency of promotions to consumers having lower price point expectations based on continual discounting, which

in turn leads to dissatisfaction and a search for other deals with other brands once a promotion ends.

Neslin and Shoemaker (1989) directly challenged this view, suggesting that the evidence of potential damage done to a brand's standing with consumers by sales promotions was not conclusive. Schultz et al (1992) researched price manipulation sales promotions and found that they have the potential to alter brand value in the longer term, a view borne out by research by Ghosh (1997). In this they echo research findings by Ehrenberg et al, but with one crucial difference. They suggest that there is the potential for price based sales promotions to affect brand value positively as well as negatively. This view is also supported by Davis et al (1992) who reported disconfirming evidence as to the negative effect of sales promotions on brands and brand value. Flanagan (1988) takes a more definite view suggesting that sales promotion be considered as a positive alternative to the supposed brand building aspects of advertising.

Dickson and Sawyer (1990) further suggest that consumers have poor levels of recall of such promotions, whereas Diamond and Sanyal (1990) believe that consumers process different price manipulations, most notably discounts and free offers, in very different ways. Their work represents a more expansive view of promotional activity even within such a narrow research frame.

Hoek and Roelants (1991) sought to establish a positive relationship between sales volume and promotional activities, but they suggested that sales declined after a promotion ended, a view not shared by Helson and Schmittlein (1991). The latter argued that the impact of a promotional price cut had a positive effect on purchase acceleration.

Raju's (1992) study examined the way that price promotions relate to the variability factors of the sales generated in certain product categories. In this Raju is partly echoing the view put forward by Wilkinson et al (1982) that data generated under particular contextual conditions is subject to other variations and distortions and may be therefore be unreliable. In this we see typical examples of disputation within the research on price manipulations and the potential ways to examine the structure and causality of such mechanisms.

Boulding et al's (1994) paper suggests that the forms of promotional activity along with other aspects of the marketing communications mix can be directly related to price manipulations, especially within higher priced categories and the way that intensive price promotional activity leads to what they term "herd behaviour" amongst marketing managers. This represents an early acknowledgement of promotional activity's relatedness to managerial sense making of, in this case, competitive situations.

Folkes and Wheat (1995) examined the form and comparative nature of price manipulations and found that they lowered consumer's price perceptions relative to the effort required to redeem the savings. Hardie (1996) highlights the increase in price promotions as part of the marketing budgets for FMCG's. Subsequent work by Mela et al (1997) and Jedidi et al (1999) all reflect the trend in the mid to late 1990's, of a switch to price based promotional activity, the most notable being Proctor and Gambles "everyday low" pricing strategy.

Griffiths and Rust (1997) analysed the potential for damage to brands of price point matching under promotional conditions, whereas Sivakumar and Raj (1997) present evidence that supports the use of price promotional activity in conditions of market and

product stratification where higher quality “national” large corporate brands are promoted against lower quality brands. Grewal et al’s (1998) modelling of price comparisons suggests a similar result.

Mela et al (1998) put forward the view that there is a long-term negative effect on sales using sales promotional activities. Using a somewhat narrowly defined view of sales promotions they argue that they have a “carry over” cumulative effect on consumer decisions to purchase. Such effects they suggest, however, are interchangeable with that of stockpiling. The model used is based on studies of the impact of advertising on consumer price sensitivity and this is a possible weakness of the work.

Mela et al also provide a useful review of this stream of literature citing earlier work by Comanor and Wilson (1974), Nelson (1974), Mitra and Lynch (1995) and Kaul and Wittink (1995) although it needs to be noted that the studies related to the way advertising influences consumer behaviour does not necessarily carry over into the field of sales promotions.

Simpson (2006) argues that there are inherent problems in using these kinds of analytical techniques borrowed from studies of other marketing communications technologies to shape sales promotion research approaches. Jedidi et al (1999) continue this theme and use the same variables to produce comparatives between advertising and sales promotions, suggesting that advertising is ostensibly a brand building activity whilst price promotions negatively affect brand value. This view of sales promotion has to be taken in context in that the dominant promotional tool during the period was the EDLP ‘everyday low prices’ model utilised by major retailers and producers (Ailawadi et al 2001)

Jedidi et al also modified their earlier conclusions of Mela et al (ibid), claiming that the long term implications of promotional use for brand profitability remain unclear. The distinctions they make between the typologies of such promotions are not based on detailed examinations of the mechanisms but rather simply on their frequency of use.

The relatively under-theorised area of volume manipulations and bonus packs began to receive wider attention during the 1990's most notably by Ong et al (1997) who examined consumer processing of such offers. Fearne et al (1999) argued that price promotions are a major contributor to competitive advantage amongst retailers, and interestingly, examine alternative forms of such promotions whilst Raghubir and Corfman (1999), continued to examine whether price manipulations had an effect on consumer evaluations of the product.

By 2002 research, such as that by Srinivasan et al, meant that price manipulations were being subjected to a sophisticated analytical scrutiny. These researchers evaluated the financial implications of the pursuit of such price manipulations by manufacturers and retailers. This was a theme expanded upon by Dawes (2004) whose effects based model, whilst still focusing on price manipulations, examined the effects on brand, retail stockists and perhaps most significantly competitors. This theme also emerged in later research by Steenkamp et al (2005). They suggested that the impact on organisational resources caused by the use of advertising and promotions in competitive situations did not yield sufficient levels of effect on the competitor relative to the investment in such promotional activities.

Anderson and Simester (2004) present a significant examination of the impact of price based promotions and point out that such promotions raise short term demand but, perhaps

more crucially, generate greater long term profits from one group of “promoted to” consumers against the reactions of a control group of consumers who were not exposed to such promotions. By 2006 research such as that carried out by Chandran and Morwitz (2006) had begun to consider price and volume manipulations with a much more contextually grounded and realist perspective, in their examination of free offers. They argue that such “free” promotions represent a breakaway from the traditional models of price and volume manipulation and suggest that such offers impact on the behaviour of consumers in a way that is independent of other price manipulations. Simpson (2006) utilises what she describes as a “simple price based” transactional model as the fundamental basis for her study, whilst at the same time calling for greater diversity and sophistication in the study of sales promotion.

2.4 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Couponing

Coupons, like other discount forms, remain a controversial form of promotional activity. Studies as to their effectiveness and brand conversion potential have long been a theme in quantitative studies of marketing activity and a source of some disputation (Silva-Risso and Bucklin 2004).

Early research by Ward and Davis (1978) sought to provide direct empirical links between the use of coupons and purchase acceleration. The study of consumer reactions to coupon offers is a theme continued by Bearden et al (1984). They carried out a comparative examination of the use of coupons and their effectiveness when compared against other “media”. They found that coupon promotions performed well in certain contexts, less so where advertising was found to have a more significant effect. The specificity of context

having a particular effect, and this is also an issue which arises in the case studies presented later in this thesis.

By 1983, Neslin and Shoemaker were seeking to link product profitability directly to coupon usage decisions, their evaluation framework being a particularly strong example of robust quantification. Narasimhan (1984) further outlines potential problems and areas of disputation and presents a critical perspective which questions the general effectiveness of such studies.

Shimp and Kavas (1984) suggest that search time and the filtering mechanisms that consumers use to engage with coupons are of critical significance. This represents the start of an emergent stream of research which links coupons to the theorisation of purchase behaviour. Schindler (1984), for example attempts to establish a relationship between coupon redemption and “active” purchase data and consumer responsiveness, a theme later examined by Shoemaker and Tibrewala in 1985.

In the grocery sector, couponing is a significant element of the communications budget and is used both in conjunction with price manipulations and with other forms of communication. However as a promotional form on their own coupons have not received the empirical attention that price manipulations have. Bawa and Shoemaker (1987 and 1989) examined couponing from a behavioural perspective, examining the various ways that coupons are used and suggesting that consumers exhibit post promotional disaffection and revert to pre-promotional behaviours. By contrast Vilcassim and Wittink(1987) support the view that coupons can be linked to price rises rather than downward price manipulations.

Babkus et al (1988) researched the price sensitivity of price conscious consumers, suggesting that they tend to be more deal prone in the face of a coupon based promotion. Vernetta (1990) takes a different and early integrative perspective in terms of both comparing and examining the combined effects of coupons with other marketing communications. These two contributions represent a more sophisticated treatment of promotional activity than that which had gone before.

Hahn et al (1995) continue this theme by exploring the “strategic” and competitive use of coupons, describing their direct inducement effect on consumers of rival brands. By contrast, Papatia and Krishnamurthi's (1996) study of couponing and its effects on brand switching, although well researched and quantitatively grounded, remains ultimately inconclusive. Tat and Cornwell (1996) posited a stable predictive mode of coupon take up and usage. This research was situated in a live retail context in which the decisions of managers were tested against hypothetical predictive models of coupon deployment. Bucklin and Gupta (1999) tapped into an emergent managerial perspective on the deployment of coupons to provide a robust critique of the management and implementation of a coupon based campaign.

Shih-Fen et al (1998), present a cogent and sophisticated comparative study of coupons versus discount promotions, their conclusion being that consumers did not perceive any reduction in product quality from brands that made extensive use of coupons and, as a result, were more effective in changing purchase intention. By contrast Slater's (2001) examination of Proctor and Gamble's EDLP strategy presents an alternative view of the utility of coupons and effectively questioned their effectiveness as part of a promotional strategy.

Heilman et al (2002) examined the way in which innovations in coupon design, such as “in and on pack” coupons and electronic shelf “coupons”, when targeted at the point of sale have a profound effect on consumer propensity to purchase. This more sophisticated treatment of couponing was also adopted by Silva-Risso and Bucklin (2004) who used scanner panel data to examine the effects of such coupons on consumers. Raghurir (2004a) also argues that new customers are particularly attracted to coupon promotions and the number of consumers seeking to use the coupon increases the higher the face value. Raghurir also highlights the downside of coupon use and its lower power to stimulate sales when used or managed poorly. This research being a precursor to the managerial focus adopted in this thesis.

Yeshin cogently summarises these issues by suggesting that coupon promotions can be managed and segmented to create a sense of exclusivity, to and for specific groups of recipients whereas with price manipulations and discounts this was not possible. This more sophisticated treatment of coupons, hitherto considered to be a basic form of sales promotion, is representative of the type of emancipatory approach to the conceptualisation of sales promotions that defines the research presented here.

2.5 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Premium Promotions

The Advertising Standards Authority (A.S.A) identified premium promotions as being the most frequently used form of promotional activity in their 2003 Compliance Report.

Premium promotions are represented in their survey by schemes in which all “participants

qualify for the same gift, benefit or item irrespective of chance”. This, the ASA suggest, is often combined with a prize draw in a multi level promotional format.

The ASA states that these premiums might include voucher or token collection, free entry to events, attractions or facilities, proof of purchase promotions, promotions which require additional payments to either cover the cost of administration or a discounted item, “try me free offers” and free gifts although they do include couponing as part of premium promotions. Premium promotions are a recent development in promotional terms.

Simonson et al (1994) examined the attractiveness of various premiums offered as parts of promotions, and by closely linking such premiums to consumer perceptions of brand image present evidence that poor premium promotions negatively affect brand image and value.

The complexity of such promotions, they suggest, combined with poor decision making about the nature of the premium offered has a negative effect, but only for those consumers for whom the premium was the mitigating factor in their propensity to purchase.

D’Astous and Landeville (2003) suggested reasons for the careful structuring of premium promotions where the premium offer is both related to, and integrated with, the product, identifying product /premium congruity as being a key consideration in this planning process.

Raghubir (2004b) appears to suggest that such premium promotions and giveaways represent a roundabout form of discounting and reiterated the ‘damage to brand value’ view. Yeshin (2006 pp170-171) examined the way that short-term so called ‘collect’ promotions are used as part of a longer term continuity strategy to encourage brand loyalty

and repeat purchase, whilst acknowledging the rapid growth in usage of such promotional activities.

Despite their widespread use premium promotions remain largely under-researched perhaps due to their wide variety of promotional form, rendering comparative analyses problematic.

2.6 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Ludentic Promotions

I have combined a number of game based promotional forms under the heading "Ludentic" forms of promotional activity after Huizinga's (1949) philosophical examination of game play 'Homo Ludens'. Ludentic forms of sales promotions such as prize draws or competitions are positioned within a loose grouping of activities that fall into the promotional category identified by Peattie and Peattie (1993) known as "packaged up" or "added value" promotions.

The use of promotional games, prize draws and sweepstakes have long been a key element of promotional activity. Whilst much of this activity is currently undergoing a shift to web based technologies and interactive promotional forms in order to facilitate data capture, it is nonetheless useful to consider all such promotional activities. There is still significant use made of this kind of promotion by marketers, particularly with regard to 'on pack' and point of sales promotions.

Luick and Ziegler (1968), in early work, raised the issue of the potential significance of games based promotional activities. Many of the themes contained in the early literature on

sales promotion (Robinson 1967, Wolfe and Twedt 1970), Tillman and Kirkpatrick (1972), Arnold (1975)) suggest, somewhat naively, that firms that exploit the opportunities offered by such promotional activity should witness increases in market shares and profitability.

Apsley and Riso's (1969) work deserves some recognition in this review of the literature on sales promotion. Their text gives over 100 pages of the book's 1056 pages to the subject of the promotional contest. The text, which has been annually updated since the first edition in 1950, provides a fascinating insight into the way in which promotional competitions have been developed, designed, managed and disseminated. They outline the objectives of sales contests (p142) and techniques concerned with the organisation of promotional contests. These include establishing the ground rules and pre contest activities (p784), building alliances when mating promotional contests to build traffic (p492), theming (p787) and merchandising consumer contests (p649). The text also highlights problems of operating promotional contests in large retail outlets (pp644 and 852-854) and chain stores, (p877) joint retail contests (p962) and the preparation of product tie in materials (p 649) and contest portfolios to be sent out to dealers (p646).

Within the early academic research into sales promotions what is noteworthy about Tillman and Kirkpatrick's (1972) approach is that whilst providing detailed data about the range and extent of promotional activity, they reduce and simplify the use of the promotional contest into the easiest formats for sponsors. They suggest correlations, with little empirical grounding, between lower skill factor and higher entries and refer to their use to 'perk up' consumers. More cogently, in light of the way that ludentic forms of sales promotion are now used to capture data, they also discuss building mailing lists. Their view that there is potential for the combination of such promotional forms represents an early insight into the

way that promotional competitions and prize draws can be harnessed to other marketing communications processes. It also provides an early insight into the thinking that resulted in the concept of integrated marketing communications. This research is markedly at odds with Dakin's practical and non-integrative stance from around the same period (1974).

Returning to Blattberg and Neslin's (1989) definition of sales promotion as an action focussed marketing event, Schneider and Currim (1991) provide early theorisation in their account of deal proneness in consumers examining both "active" and "passive" typologies of behaviour. The traditional view of consumer competitions, draws and sweepstakes were previously largely based on a motivational model (Tellis 1998 p273). The motivational view suggests, although this remains under-researched and under theorised, that promotional competitions and draws stimulate purchases at the point of sale. McNally and Abernathy (1989) examine the "optimum" structural forms of such promotions, expressed in terms of mathematical modelling of the required prize fund against the numbers of respondents, and their perceptions of extrinsic value.

The dominant form of ludentic promotion is the 'instant win' promotion which is most often presented "on -pack" or "in pack". This ties together the randomness of chance with the lack of need for entry form production or handling and represents a useful way for manufacturers to situate promotional messages within retail contexts without having to negotiate shelf space or joint promotions with retailers.

Recent studies into the significance (Peattie et al 1994), and utility of such ludentic promotional forms (Peattie and Peattie, 1995; Peattie 1998; Peattie 1999; Peattie and Peattie 1999) allow for a wider and more generic understanding of the role and significance of such

forms. However to state, as Peattie and Peattie do, that they have 'strategic' importance in marketing activity may be stretching the point. This body of work, however, clearly establishes the consumer behavioural and contextual aspects of the promotional competition and prize draw rather than examining its managerial processes. Apart from Peattie and Peattie's published work, outlined above, the promotional contest in particular, has been subject to little academic scrutiny. Peattie (2002) recontextualises and, by default, increases the potential scope for the use of the promotional competition by considering its application in other contexts. This included other ludentic forms and this type of diversity and cross contextualisation is to be welcomed in that it has resonance with the methodological and ontological approach presented in this thesis.

2.7 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Interactivity

Steinbock (2000: 60) suggests that in the past marketing managers have focused on transactions and persuasion without seeking active or reactive feedback. This is at odds with the view discussed earlier in this review that sales promotions have the potential to be 'action oriented events'. New approaches to marketing management have, however, begun, to focus on outcomes such as relationships, consumer dialogue and interactivity. There is little in the existing literature to date, that clarifies the role that sales promotion could or will play in this process. The advent of marketing communications on the internet however, has led to an emergent research stream studying the potential for interactivity inherent in using such a technology and its use by marketers (Rodgers and Thorson 2000). Similarly little has been written about the integration of sales promotions with web based communications technologies (Leong et al 1998, Yoon and Kim 2001).

Kimelfeld (2001) summarized the uniqueness of online promotional activity, when compared to traditional mass media advertising, by suggesting that consumers are able to “direct their own exposure by selecting and editing the individual communication context” in the virtual environment in contrast to being passive receivers of traditional mass media messages.

Kimelfeld further suggests that “there is a loose link between sales promotion and the actual product purchase in the interactive environment” although it is much easier for consumers to access online promotions.

2.8 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Other Forms

Many of the typologies that inform this section are highlighted and subjected to wider analysis and contextualisation in Chapter 8 of Yeshin (2006). It is in the area of newer and different forms of sales promotion that the diversity that disrupts the rational economic models of sales promotion and narrow research aperture can most readily be found.

Rebating is a form of trust based price manipulation that is often used in the introductory phase of the product life cycle. Rebating overcomes trial risk factors for the consumer. However response rates are low, due to consumers’ perceptions of the time and effort required to take up the offer. Kalwani et al (1990) explored markets where consumers have price rebate expectations which are closely interlinked with a price awareness and expectation. Folkes and Wheat (1995) also suggest that this is closer to the regular price, rather than more overt forms of discounting and price manipulation promotions. Yeshin further reports on comparative research by Munger and Grewal (2001) which puts forward the view that “free” offers had a greater relevance for consumers than rebated promotional activity. Yeshin (p148-149) also examines the use of banded bonus packs in the form of

both volume manipulations of the same product and other new product lines and complementary products whether by the same or different manufacturers. He also cites research by Smith and Sinha (2000), Kimmelfeld (2001) and Guerreiro et al (2004), who all examine the advantages and disadvantages in such an approach.

Jain and Shrivastava (2002) correlated the longer temporal frames that price matching promotions involve and their connection with relationship marketing. They also present findings on price-matching promotional strategies which may be linked to trade-ins and other promotional forms particularly in the consumer durables sector. This use of sales promotions in the service sector is a useful addition to the sales promotions canon in the context of this study, as a number of the case study focal firms presented later in this thesis are service sector providers based rather than manufacturers or processors.

Yeshin (pp150-152) provides a useful examination of the way that product sampling is spread across a wide range of contexts, media, technologies and communications forms as in Singh et al (2000) and Smith (1993). These authors present a similar contextualisation of trial and sampling with their comparative studies of advertising, although only Singh et al view it as a communications form. Yeshin's examination of product sampling as a promotional form remains unique and represents a particularly noteworthy contribution to the existing literature in this area.

2.9 Typologies of Sales Promotion: Trade Promotions

The pre-eminence of consumer focussed promotional activity over trade activity and the stratification of the type of promotions by effectiveness and cost are further explored by Jereski (1984). He views the processes that underpin such promotions as 'co-operative', with the main objective being to build commitment from retailers, as in Aggrawal (1996), Murray and Heide (1998) and Kasulis et al (1999). Lal's (1990) paper also assumes significance in that it takes a business to business rather than the more usual consumer perspective. This view of trade promotions and their potential use had previously come under robust scrutiny by Quelch (1983).

Aggrawal (1996), interestingly, makes a comparison between "advertising" and "trade" promotions. Whilst the paper is empirically strong and uses a sophisticated game theoretic approach, the brand loyalty basis of the study remains somewhat contextually ill defined. Ailawadi et al (1999), however, posit the view that trade promotion spend is a rapidly rising element of total marketing communications budget, outstripping even media spend in some contexts. However they question its effectiveness as an influencing strategy to win over retailer shelf space. In particular E.D.L.P. comes under scrutiny as a strategy, but they do emphasize that well designed and well implemented trade promotions increase profitability for both manufacturer and retailer (Kasulis et al 1999). Friedmann (1992) and Hardy (1984, 1986) however, stress the potential for sales promotions as a communications tool that can be used solely for the benefit of the manufacturer.

Much of the research presented here is based in the consumer facing category although there is the need for inclusion of trade promotions as this study features at least one case study where this was the context.

2.10 Academic Discourse on Sales Promotions

Early in this review an examination of the definitional discourse that runs through sales promotions and the problems that it has engendered was presented. As outlined above, across the wide range of academic research there are varied interpretations of what sales promotions 'are' and 'do' without necessarily focussing on 'why' they occur. An examination of the way that this definitional discourse and research clustered around certain typologies has emerged. The way in which it is predicated on a number of 'deeper' ontological positions or 'streams' are summarised below.

Limited and limiting definitions such as those in the work of Moriarty (1985), Gupta 1988 and Gupta and Cooper 1992 through Ehrenberg (1974) to Mela et al (1997) rely on a view of sales promotions as a stable replicable element. What this approach presents is not merely a "cookie cutter" representation of sales promotion as a single entity or process but also part of a "cookie cutter" replicated research agenda in that often the same comparatives and analytical variables are replicated in subsequent papers. The way in which this research is carried out is treated to a robust critical realist examination by Tsang and Kwan (1999).

The trend towards the replication of research and conceptual frames first commented upon by Sidman (1960) is restated much later by Simpson (2006). She suggests that there is a comparative frame of reference at play here between sales promotions research and research into other forms of marketing communication. Existing empirical research on sales promotions, she suggests, frames problems and seeks causal factors that have already been

found to have some effect on other forms of marketing communications with researchers assuming that the effects will be similar. However the uniqueness of each form of sales promotions activity, and the context in which it occurs, potentially works against such an approach. This assumes a greater significance later in this study when different managerial discourses emerge from each unique case study.

There have however been previous attempts at surveying the academic literature in a way that reflects the wide range and forms of promotional activity. These have been usefully surveyed by Peattie and Peattie (1993, 1994) Chandon (1995), Chandon et al (2000) and Yeshin (2006), leading to multiple accounts of what it is and does. Chandon's 1995 review is the most ambitious and potentially the fullest to date. He uses an historical and chronological perspective rather than the thematic approach to structuring sales promotion literature first advanced by Blattberg and Neslin (1990). He does, however, highlight 200 of what he terms "innovations", that inform or are informed by empirical research into sales promotion, and seeks to explain them using a positivistic and developmental epistemology. This approach, he suggests, allows greater understanding of the reasons behind what he terms "conflicting results".

This view is problematic, firstly because he perceives sales promotion, its empirical research and conceptual development as a "ladder" in which one step replicates previous research and is followed by a more informed and ultimately better researched second step and so on. This, he believes, is typified by a developmental line of largely quantitative and positivist published research that focus on rational economic or behavioural models and that seek to provide an explanation of sales promotion as a supply side function. Anything that falls outside of this epistemology presents Chandon with a potential problem in that it may

generate “different” sets of results that do not inform the perspective he takes. It may also generate data that potentially could fall outside of the rational economic frame he largely employs.

Chandon, however, draws on the commonalities running through the literature on sales promotions in terms of temporary and often short-term time framing, its tangibility, potential for multi contextualisation and its impact on modifications and limitations of supply. Perhaps most notable in his work is that whilst sticking rigorously to his positivist epistemology he also argues that there is an emergent diversity in sales promotion. He suggests that it can be viewed as a collective taxonomy for a number of “technologies” and that a generic view could be abandoned in favour of treating each form of promotional element as an individual entity on its own within the marketing communications mix. This is, in effect, Chandon seeking to extricate himself from the problems of definition outlined above. He suggests that rather than wrestle with the problem of presenting a complete and overarching definition of sales promotion it is sufficient to propose, as Yeshin does, that there exist promotion(s) and it is important for them to be contextualised and held up to analytical and empirical scrutiny as individual entities.

As stated previously the ways that we view sales promotions as entities are subject to widely differing interpretations, based on the ontological stance of authors, research strategy, methodology and the level of empirical rigour inherent in the research. The academic literature is grouped around four main epistemic traditions through which empirical research about sales promotions is filtered. However, as Brunsson (1982) suggests “perspectives determine what data are seen, what theories are developed and what kinds of results turn up”.

These epistemic traditions can be narrowly classified as positivist nomothetic research which seeks rigour through robust quantification and generalisation; a behavioural perspective which has grown out of this rational economic model; an integrated perspective that positions sales promotion within a wider integrated marketing communications paradigm and a managerial/practitioner focussed discourse. There is also very little in the way of a critical turn in the extant literature. Sales promotion as an area of academic study has yet to be informed by post-modern, feminist or critical realist perspectives, although this study seeks to rectify the lack of a critical realist perspective.

2.11 Academic Discourses on Sales Promotion: Positivism

Much of the literature and theoretical advancement in the field of sales promotion has developed within a positivist and rational economic frame, treating its processes as a pseudo-science consistent with a view of marketing theorisation advanced by Schmittlein (1994). It is represented by a body of empirical work that links utilitarian and simplistic forms of sales promotions to potential changes in consumer behaviour. Little of the research treats consumers as variable entities or situates empirical studies in contexts where their behaviour can be influenced by other factors such as in retail environments. This narrow definition of sales promotion and the rational economic perspective applied means that any research findings are readily replicable. However, they ultimately present a narrow and limiting view using similar data sets and research instruments.

Adler (1963) provides an early theoretical position of this type by hypothesising the measurement of the effectiveness of certain forms of sales promotions. This early

comparative study set the tone for much of the later rational economic research that replicated its comparative approach. However Adler's work seeks a more expansive frame in that a number of sales promotional forms were examined.

Much of the extant literature in the positivist discourse fails to posit sales promotion as part of any wider marketing communications mix or "integrative paradigm" and treats individual promotions as isolates or comparatives, usually comparing two similar forms. Wilkinson et al (1982) draws on earlier work by Quandt (1964) which is significant in that both are wrestling with the problematic definition and quantification issues that continue to frame studies of sales promotions even now. Both tend to suggest that the nature of sales promotion if not defies, then certainly makes difficult, the processes of measurement that can be brought to bear on other forms of marketing communications. Whilst they subsume sales promotion into advertising they also suggest that "experimentation is the only unambiguous way to isolate the effects of promotion from other factors that affect sales". This highlights one of the key elements of the positivist discourse on sales promotion; that in order to make truth claims about the effectiveness of sales promotion it needs to be isolated from other variables that might possibly 'pollute' the data.

Blattberg and Neslin (1989) and Lichtenstein et al (1991) also both acknowledge that unobservable or situational variables have impact on the potential for sales promotion to influence consumer behaviours. Quandt clearly takes a critical perspective on the application of econometric models on advertising (and by default) promotions. This need to isolate sales promotions and their effects from other contextual factors in order to present a rigorous and unambiguous set of empirical data is a dominant theme in the rational economic episteme.

By continuing to use a narrow definition of sales promotion, nomothetic positivist research takes “narrow slices” of sales promotion activity where the data is treated in a “rational” way. This data is often ‘scanner’ data or sales data that is returned to the research ‘institute’ to be analysed in marked contrast to researchers going out into the field to examine sales promotions in context.

Whilst this approach may be parsimonious, examining sales promotions do not qualify as purely rational research activities. Rorty (1991) suggests that the humanities are concerned with “ the ends rather than means” (p36). Hence studies where the focus is on quantifying a “result” as in the case of Mela et al (ibid) or Jedidi et al (1999), with little or no indication as to how and why such as events occurred, should at least be given as much credence.

Rational economic research into the effectiveness or otherwise of sales promotion has also employed arbitrary measures and a plethora of different constructions of what the mediating analytical variable actually is.

This latter point strikes at the central problem of any such analysis of sales promotion.

Potentially different constructions of the same problem, using different although robust sets of data, lead to different and sometimes contradictory results. Dekimpe and Hannsens (1999) for example, prefer sales and profitability as their analytical variable, whilst Naik et al (2005) prefer market share and Jedidi et al (1999) brand equity. What seems to be occurring here is that the methodological and empirical consensus of this type is under some ontological “strain”. This may be due to the way in which sales promotion is being defined and framed both by different research groups and practitioners to the point where this potential for diversity has even permeated models of rational economic analysis.

Sriram and Kalwani (2007) seek to justify levels of optimal use of both sales promotion and advertising using two competing brands. They suggest that sales promotion has a significant and positive impact on consumer take up and brand switching. They also identify a cumulative negative effect on brand equity, but argue that sales promotion has a net positive effect both in the short term and longer term. This is a view borne out by Peattie and Peattie (1999). However they do identify, perhaps most critically for this study, that managers demonstrate myopic decision making in that they allocate higher than “optimal” levels of resource to sales promotions and that the smaller competitor brands are over resourced more than the market leader. What Sriram and Kalwani (2007) fail to identify is that the under resourcing of advertising below “optimal” levels and the over resourcing of sales promotion above such levels may be due to structural shifts in the advertising and marketing communications industry. It may therefore be due to managerial decision making and behaviours, or the fact that marketers from both brands may have invested differently in each technology outside of the time frames that their research is conducted.

The problem of quantification and a reductive treatment of sales promotion activity is perhaps most acute in Abraham and Lodish’s (1990) paper which provides data that “proves” that only 16% of sales promotions were actually “profitable” based on an analysis of 100 separate promotional entities. What Abraham and Lodish may have missed is that promotional activity might not be linked to profitability as the mediating analytical variable and as is evident below there are even differing constructions of this phenomenon.

Neslin and Shoemaker (1989) directly challenge this view suggesting that the evidence of potential damage done to a brand’s standing with consumers by sales promotions was not

conclusive. This latter challenge to Abraham and Lodish is certainly supported by Anderson and Simester (2004) who argue that in the longer term, consumers exposed to promotional offers, particularly deeply discounted price manipulations in their first exposure to promotional activity, tend to buy smaller less expensive items subsequently. The cumulative effect is that consumers exposed to such promotions yield greater long term profits for brands or retailers. Such largely quantitative studies of the utility and impact of sales promotion fail to answer the fundamental question as to why sales promotions continue to be used by marketers, an argument for research of the kind presented in this thesis.

Another difficulty with quantitative research into sales promotions is that it is predicated on limited definitions, and narrow typologies, of sales promotion activities. Both Ehrenberg (1993) and Mela et al (1998) use scanner data and tend to identify “promotions” firstly as “trade promotions” and secondly as what we have come to understand as price or price/volume manipulations. Mela et al (1999) define non price promotions as being “display” only that manipulate the quantity/price equation to increase the perceived value of a product (Lal 1990). This is insufficient, and relies on the same comparatives as earlier research by Guadagni and Little (1983) who isolated an exponentially smoothed weighted average of past purchases they term a “brand loyalty variable”. These debates and provocations are founded upon narrow and fixed definitions of sales promotions as price driven mechanisms only and shifting criteria upon which the effectiveness of such promotions are judged.

Hrushka et al (1999) used a more holistic model of consumer data to provide a different perspective on the use of sales promotion. However, they adopt a critical view suggesting that the data in previous empirical studies are subject to limitations, is sometimes far from

conclusive and is therefore not useful in generalising wider conceptualisations. Citing Mulherne and Leone's (1991) earlier work, they assert that effectiveness in certain promotions comes from cross category synergies.

Replication of the models, hypotheses and analytical variables, whilst subject to apparently robust quantification, had not adequately solved Wilkinson et al's (1982) problem of contextual and contingent factors impacting on the data used to "prove" or make truth claims about the utility and effectiveness or otherwise of sales promotions. This view is supported by Van Heerde et al's (2003) critique of Gupta's original study of household responses to promotions. They argue that within such a narrowly defined context, such a model only applies in that context. It therefore does not have the potential for generalisation and the statistical weight that the original authors might have suggested.

In 2006 Yeshin (pp246-249) provides a particularly useful exposition of other quantitative measures which might evaluate the effectiveness of sales promotion these include; redemption rates, displacement rates, acquisition rates, stock up rates, conversion rates and product line effects. Once again this represents a more expansive way of framing the problem. It is clearly at odds with the rational economic view of sales promotion that treats the phenomena under scrutiny as a singular isolate with narrow definitions.

From the rational economic and nomothetic perspective it is possible to view sales promotions as a series of observable and stable routinised managerial actions with sets of outcomes. As marketing may be regarded as being concerned with planning and routinisation, this is a satisfactory and rewarding position to occupy. However this is only true if such a model is not destabilised by other external causalities, or the researcher is not

seeking wider ranging or more holistic explanations for what is occurring. I take issue with Wilkinson et al (1982) and their view that there is a need to treat the effects of sales promotion by means of controlled experimentation in order to rule out any potential ambiguities in the data caused by external factors that impact on the promotional process. Sales promotions do not occur in laboratories or only on university campuses as in Chandon et al (2000) and to suggest that it is so to the exclusion of contexts in which sales promotions are actually utilised is both misleading and ultimately pointless.

The rational economic perspective predicates its research on such narrow models problems and frames so that, as Tsang and Kwan (1999) suggest, replication is always possible. There remains however, the potential for a pervasive emphasis on closure and of problems “solved” by the rigorous application of data whilst eschewing the impact of other factors. From a critical perspective the need to verify that which is empirical is predicated on the type of factors brought into the research and the type of explanations researchers want or need. The positivist epistemologies explored and critiqued in this section can only at best partially explain why social actions, such as those presented by managers in this research, occur. Such knowledge of causality is “hidden” from positivists due to their narrowly constructed views of what constitutes research into phenomena such as sales promotion. The trend within the positivist literature above has been towards greater empiricism but a narrowing of the causal, analytical and explanatory frame means that such research always gets “hung up” on debates about validity.

2.12 Academic Discourses on Sales Promotion: A Consumer Behaviourist Perspective

Out of the quest for rigour and the nomothetic/positivist approach examined in the previous section there also emerged a secondary epistemological position that sought to examine the way that promotions impacted on consumer behaviour. Whilst much of the behavioural discourse in the literature on sales promotions seeks to pursue the same rigorous scientific positions as that of the rational economic view examined above, it nonetheless requires a separate examination in this review. It is acknowledged that there is much crossover between the two positions even across certain papers, Frank and Massey (1967) being a particular early example.

It is interesting to speculate why and how the behavioural episteme and discourse evolved as it did. Much of the research privileges sales promotions over media based forms of marketing communications. It is possible that sales promotion's effects on consumer behaviour, such as coupon redemption rates or sample take up, may be easier to apprehend, measure and analyse than studies that potentially examine other forms of marketing communications.

There are a number of accounts, (Adler 1963, Crimmins 1963, Kahneman and Tversky 1979, Doyle and Saunders 1985), which relate sales promotion to purchase optimality and frequency although this early link to consumer behaviour may be said to be somewhat tenuous. Other emergent themes include purchase acceleration, sales displacement as in Dodson et al (1978), Shoemaker and Tibrewala (1985) Blattberg et al (1978), and deal proneness (Blattberg et al (1978). Shoemaker and Shoaf (1977) suggest that short-term promotional effects such as a boost in market share would be temporary and short term

and that consumers exhibited highly normative behaviour which would only be slightly interrupted by the impact of such short term “promotions”.

Scott's (1976) early work examined the relationship between different promotional mechanisms and consumers' repeat purchase behaviours. The nature of this work is interesting not only because of the way that he uses a comparative methodology but that the research seeks a combinative effect. Scott's behavioural study linked different promotional mechanisms together such as free trialling plus a premium offer. This has resonance with one of the themes that emerged from the case studies presented below, that of relatedness, synergy and combinative approaches to the deployment of sales promotions.

Dodson et al (1978) employed a narrower definition of promotions concentrating on price and using attribution theory to suggest that consumers attribute purchase and brand switching behaviour to “promotional deals” rather than any residual brand preference.

Kahneman and Tversky (1979) theorise consumer prospecting based on value and the way in which consumers perceive gain and loss during the exchange process. Sawyer and Dickson (1984), however, take a different perspective and seek to emphasize the way that promotions impact on consumers not solely as a behavioural factor but on a deeper analysis of the psychological factors. Narasimhan (1984), building on earlier work by Blattberg et al (1978), sought to examine causal links between consumer deal proneness which, by 1987, was also being researched by Bawa and Shoemaker (1987) and Feick and Price (1987).

Krishnamurthi and Raj (1985), whilst still employing quantitative techniques, began to explore the impact of promotional activity from the consumers' own perspective by shifting

the unit of analysis from the store to the consumers' own home. This is a theme later taken up by Ailawadi et al (2001) who report the positive impact of sales promotions on household expenditure and inventory. Yeshin (2006) suggests that this phenomenon might be explained by scarcity theory and indeed this has resonance with research by Brannon and McCabe (1995), who suggest that the time limitation of promotional offers has a similar effect on consumers' propensity to consume.

Citing research that links promotional activity with consumer behaviour, Doyle and Saunders (1985) suggested that promotional events lead to changes in the way in which consumers time purchases, or to an increase in the quantity purchased (Neslin et al 1985). Gupta (1988) straddles the two areas since, methodologically, he is concerned with frequency and volume of purchase but his research remains concerned with consumer motivations to purchase. Fraser and Hite (1990) on the other hand were the first to establish positive relationships between consumer attitudes and promotional activity. They suggest that promotions are effective in shaping consumer behaviour and that there is an expectation by consumers to engage with promotional activity as part of the buying process. The development of a perceptual basis to the research demonstrates the beginning of a drift towards a more qualitative perspective on the research.

Guiltinan and Paul's (1991) modelling of consumer responses to sales promotions provides a further useful insight and is contemporaneous with Schneider and Currim's (1991) work on active and passive consumer behaviours. So too does Diamond and Campbell's (1989) examination of consumer reactions to price versus volume manipulations. Krishna et al (1991) continued to present research that examined the perceptual relationships between consumers and sales promotions. The relationship between informational processing and

sales promotion was also explored by Walters (1991) and is reliant upon perceptual modelling of the relationship between quality and price.

Kim and Lehmann (1993) examine temporal changes in consumer sensitivities towards brands in the medium to longer term. The criticality of time and timing is a key emergent theme in Folkes et al (1993) who hold to the view that such inducement and loading leads to accelerated rates of consumption. Whether such promotions ever lead to long term brand loyalty is questioned by O'Brien and Jones (1995), and Vilcassim and Jain, (1991).

Mulhern and Padgett (1995) further examined the linkages between the way that consumers process regular prices in conjunction with promotional ones and this type of processing is used in Ong et al's (1997) paper on consumer processing of bonus packs and volume manipulation offers. Gardner and Trivedi (1998) continue this theme, reporting a positive link between consumer satisfaction and the "life" of a promotion, in that consumers remain satisfied and continue to purchase after the promotion has been withdrawn. On the other hand Alawadi (1998) re-examines the relationships between stockpiling and promotional activity.

Raghubir and Corfman (1999) reported the decreased likelihood of repeat purchasing after price promotions. Situating their research within the relationship marketing paradigm, they suggest that no such relationship is built and as a result no value enhancement takes place.

Kalwani et al (1990), Kalwani and Kim (1992) and Blattberg et al (1995) all support the view that sales promotions have a long term detrimental effect on the way that consumers reference price and can adversely affect prices charged by producers at the point of sale.

Blattberg et al's paper is interesting in that its "truth" claim is referred to in the title "How promotions work" with its emphasis on effectiveness and its potential, implicit in its title and focus, to consider promotional activity from a managerial perspective.

Assuncao and Meyer (1993) prefer a more measured view suggesting that consumer stockpiling is a positive outcome of the use of promotional activity. Bell et al (1999) however, propose that this effect is comparatively minor. In a later paper by the same authors, they counterfactually argue that there is a strong and positive relationship (Bell et al 2002). This view of the negative effect of sales promotions, although different from previous research by Mela et al (1998), continued to be perpetuated.

Anschuetz (1997) takes an opposing view asserting that brands using such promotions tend to be stronger and demonstrate greater "brand health", purchase frequency, repeat purchase and consumer loyalty. D'Astous and Jacob (2002) suggest that direct to consumer promotions were more effective than other structural forms of promotional activity and their popularity with, and use by, marketing managers especially in the grocery sectors is clearly a response to the increasing power of large multiple supermarkets. On pack premium promotions are one way of engaging with consumers in whatever context the promotion is placed. They also suggest that the structure of qualifiers for premium promotions require careful planning as consumers were resistant to large scale token collection promotions.

Beng (1999) and Chandon and Wansink (2002) remain more within the quantitative and rational economic frame by suggesting that consumer engagement with a particularly successful promotion results in stockpiling. Kannan and Yim (2001) used largely the same

epistemological position to suggest that added value sales promotions, in some sectors, were being replaced by price discounting. Simpson (2006), however suggests otherwise, arguing that other promotional factors shape consumer purchase behaviour rather than purely price promotions. These might include “impulse buying” under conditions of unexpected situational factors (Narhinen et al 2000), and “value seeking” behaviour first identified by Peattie and Peattie (1999). Chandon et al (2002) evaluate monetary benefit in savings terms; but also draw on a range of other benefits such as quality, convenience, value expression, exploration and stimulation and entertainment.

Two distinct streams emerge from the behavioural literature, each with a divergent discourse. The obvious and most common stream is that of marketing as rigorous “science” (Hunt 1983). In the sales promotion field this takes the form of quantitative examinations of the relationships between “promotions” on the one side and consumer’s behavioural responses on the other. What this view does not take into account, however is that such interactions between consumers and promotions take place in contexts which may be subject to other often disruptive factors that impact on those consumers’ propensity to purchase. This issue of measurement and the impact of external factors on empirically grounded data potentially impacts upon, and in effect compromises, positivist research within both the rational economic and behavioural perspectives. Wilkinson et al’s (1982) critique of sales promotion in terms of the difficulties of generating data unpolluted by other factors is an open acknowledgement of this problem.

2.13 Academic Discourses on Sales Promotion: An Integrative Perspective

As early as 1963, Crimmins used a synergistic frame of reference to claim that benefits could be accrued by the integration of promotional activities and communications forms. This is in marked contrast to much of the existing literature surveyed above which fails to position sales promotion as part of the communications mix or within an integrative paradigm. In reality, and in the integrated marketing communications (IMC) literature, sales promotion is one potential “tool” that bears scrutiny alongside, and in conjunction with, other communications forms

The academic literature that links integrated marketing communications with sales promotion consists of a number of different theoretical positions. Many of these are grouped around the notion that the potentially synergistic nature of integrated marketing communications is crucial for its success and that sales promotion as part of such a communications mix should be integrated with other marketing communications activities. There is a need to exploit potential synergies within the model. However the “above the line”, “below the line” bifurcation still implicitly holds sway if only as a way of stratifying and organising the various elements of an integrated communications mix.

As early as 1965, Hoofnagle presented a report on a simulated experiment by the American Sheep Producers Council that compared sales of lamb under conditions of advertising and both advertising and promotion. The communications forms being analysed were combined rather than isolated and treated singularly. This experiment suggested increases for both in-store co-operative advertising and a programme that combined media advertising and in-store merchandising at the point of sale. . Hoofnagle’s early albeit simulated, study was followed up by Toop’s (1966) axiomatic and idiosyncratic approach to integration in which

he suggests that consumer competitions are often mounted in conjunction with a coupon distribution either through direct mail or in store (p68).

Munger and Grewal (2001), on the other hand, present a model of couponing that integrates advertising in the form of coupon advertising, which they conceptualise as a “hybrid” promotional model. This is a useful addition to the integrative view of promotional activity.

Academic debates concerning the effectiveness or otherwise of integrated marketing communications has been ongoing over the last two decades. Linton and Morley (1995) and Hartley and Pickton (1999) identify the advantages of an integrated approach to communications strategies whilst Keller (2001) points to the way that an integrated approach can be utilised as part of both a synergistic communications strategy and a relationship marketing strategy.

Achrol (1997) shifts this debate closer to an integrated model by application of a network approach to the integrated marketing communications (IMC) model, whilst McArthur and Griffin (1997) take a marketing management view of this particular phenomenon. Gronstedt and Thorsen (1996) outline the way in which integration shapes a full-service agency’s strategies and processes. This integrative epistemology presents the integration process as a “given”. It merely “is” and there are benefits to be accrued from its use.

Theorisation around the integrated approach and the emergent paradigm has, however, been subjected to widespread interpretation, application and disputation as in Phelps and Johnson (1996). They highlight the definitional problems inherent in the discourses of

integrated marketing communications which in turn have resonance with the problems of the definitional discourse outlined above. Both they and Cornelissen et al (2000) seek to examine the discourses that define an integrative approach to marketing communications particularly with reference to issues of implementation and empirical evaluation. Phelps and Johnson however seek to clarify and demystify the meaning of integrated marketing communications. They have developed a conceptual base on which to build a definitive theorisation of such phenomena in order to examine its influence on marketing practice, if such an approach were possible.

There have been those who have sought to examine integrated marketing perspectives from a deeper analytical perspective, as in Hartley and Pickton (1999) and Cornelissen et al(2000) and this is to be welcomed as it relates to this study in that it also seeks deeper structures and offers causal explanations. Belch and Belch (1998) also provide a useful evaluation of marketing communications that seeks both a treatment of the various elements of the marketing communications paradigm in isolation for their communications effects and the potential for synergistic linkage. Sales promotion is one of the technologies examined in their study.

Schultz and Kitchen (2000) present the emergence of IMC as paradigmatic and seek to present a robust defence of it as a theoretical concept rather than “management fashion”. However they acknowledge both weaknesses in definition and its position as “proto theory” but offer the view that its progression as a discipline meant it could be claimed to be a “new emergent paradigm”. Naik et al (2005), on the other hand, provide both a wider definition of sales promotion, and a robust critique of the integration model espoused by Schultz (1987) and others. They suggest that both advertising and sales promotion have a positive

effect whilst arguing that there are negative implications to their interaction. Specifically promotions (once again limited to a definition of sales promotion as a price manipulation) have a negative effect on the effectiveness of advertising.

Earlier work by Vernette (1990) links three forms of marketing communications in a paper that takes a “through the line” perspective. Vernette’s work considers media-costed activity alongside promotional couponing and direct marketing and is one of the few pieces of empirical research that explicitly identifies and includes sales promotion in a consideration of a potential synergistic effect. This is a theme further explored by Bemmaor and Mouchoux (1991) who, whilst not explicitly taking an integrationist position, suggest that there is potential for enhanced effectiveness when sales promotions are linked with advertising in particular.

The way that sales promotion can be integrated within a marketing communications paradigm has been under-researched and under theorised. If theorisation concerning marketing communications, integrated or otherwise, has to keep pace with market and societal changes, as Swain (2004) suggests, then the position of sales promotion within such a paradigm will need to be re-examined.

2.14 Conclusion

In conclusion, sales promotion is an emergent area of interest to researchers within the marketing communications field. The definitional discourse and the problems of limited definition and theorisation examined above act as a reductive frame in many cases and highlight the need for a more sophisticated research agenda that examines different sales

promotions in different business contexts. This chapter has also sought to examine the literature that might inform any further research on sales promotion. It presents a model of epistemological diversity. Care has therefore, been taken to include a particularly wide and diverse examination of epistemological and academic discourses that currently inform the theory and practice of sales promotion.

The following chapter seeks to examine the literatures that take a managerial or contextual view of the way that sales promotions are created, managed and evaluated. Whilst the following chapter is unsurprisingly significantly smaller than this one, the texts and discourses examined have greater significance for the development of this thesis.

Chapter 3 Managerial, Organisational and Contextual Perspectives

3.1 Introduction

The central focus of this thesis is a new and previously under researched approach to the study of sales promotions that takes a managerial and organisational perspective. This chapter examines what literature there is in this area and organizes it in terms of the discourses involved. Much of the existing literature is largely practitioner oriented and is often prescriptive in its tone. There is, however, a nascent but emergent managerial focus which is also examined here. Other discourses that are discussed draw on the theorisation of contextual and managerial structures which are used to inform the development of a conceptual framework. This chapter presents a conceptual model that highlights contextual and structural elements and their inter-relationship with the process of creating and implementing a sales promotion. A synthetic definition is also presented which draws on all of the research streams and discourses examined in both chapters 2 and 3.

3.2 Academic Discourses on Sales Promotion: Managerial Perspectives

It is broadly possible to divide managerial discourses concerning sales promotion into two broad groupings. One set of discourses is written for managers and the other is about what managers do in connection with sales promotions. The former can be defined as a practitioner discourse. The latter is under-researched and represents the central theme for this thesis.

3.2.1 A Practitioner Focused Discourse

There are a wide range of practitioner oriented texts that might be described as “prescriptive” and /or “descriptive” in their tone and focus, as in Keon and Bayer (1986), Wilmshurst (1994) and Brown (1999) and aimed at the sales promotions practitioner (Carlton and Blaise 2003). The term prescriptive is used to mean advice for managers seeking to implement sales promotions. Descriptive means literature that describes, for example, what kinds of sales promotions there are and how they are, in general, deployed. The latter is rarely based on actual field research.

The practitioner prescriptive focus involves “how to” materials aimed at managers and examples of such work include Govoni et al (1986), Totten and Block (1987), Tellis (1998), Wilmshurst (1994), Burnett (1993), Shimp (1993),(2000), and Blattberg and Neslin (1990). Their treatment of sales promotions, however, is often not particularly objective or analytical, but the themes and perspectives are contextually more wide ranging than the empirical literature reviewed elsewhere in this thesis.

The focus of practitioner oriented texts is to reduce the complexity of sales promotions activities and their processes and outcomes to simple, stable axiomatic states. This tendency towards reductionism in such texts has further undermined the significance of sales promotion as a subject worthy of academic attention. Whilst texts such as Toop’s (1991) work, "Crackingjack!: Sales Promotion Techniques and How To Use Them Successfully", is of interest to the practitioner, it provides little in the way of further theorisation, wider empirical study or even advanced practice in the area of sales promotions.

Wilmshurst (1994), despite only giving 3 pages of a 399 page text to 'below the line' promotions does, nonetheless, cogently outline the way in which sales promotions can be a useful way to gather customer data (p106) although he does go on to say that the data may be suspect (p198). Both Wilmshurst (1994) and Brown's (1999) texts, whilst useful from a practitioner standpoint and grounded in an industrial and managerial context, remain largely descriptive and un-theorised. Wilmshurst's identification of promotional activity as a research tool for gathering consumer data, however, and his chapter on corporate promotional activity and corporate image (pp115-119) are useful additions to the ongoing debate about the significance of such promotional activities. More recent publications by Thompson (1997) and Keeler (2004) are more empirically well grounded whilst still written with practitioners rather than academics as the intended audience.

3.2.2 Managerial Discourse

There is little research material that examines sales promotion from a managerial and / or organisationally contextualised standpoint. Throughout most of the published material surveyed for this thesis there was little that focused explicitly on marketing management and its inter-relationship with sales promotion

Wolfe and Twedt's (1970) work is one of the earliest treatments of promotional activities that is grounded in both theoretical and managerial discourses and represents not only early theorisation around the promotional and communications mix but employs relatively rigorous empiricism. The tone of their text whilst largely positivistic, is grounded in an approach that is initially structural, then managerial and ultimately experimental. They provide an early theorisation of a paradigmatic 'mix' of managerial activities by taking a unique view of the use of sales promotions. Of note here is their early conceptualisation of

the structures within the communications industry, stressing the role of intermediaries, specialists and what they term 'middlemen'. Later Spillard (1975) was one of the first to apply models of management science and economic analysis in order to situate sales promotion within a wider managerial perspective.

Huff and Alden's (2000) study of managerial responses to, and activity around, sales promotions, is based in four national contexts and provides insights and an examination of deeper mechanisms of such processes. Although not explicitly realist in its ontology it nonetheless informs the work conducted in this study. Magid and Lodish (2000) take a particularly practical and managerial approach to the comparative issues of the use of advertising and promotion. They suggest that the use of single site based sources of data and test marketing are useful managerial control mechanisms in the implementation of sales promotions campaigns. What Magid and Lodish do attempt is to challenge conventional thinking on the relationship between marketing management and sales promotions and this is to be welcomed.

Simpson (2006) suggests that within the food and grocery sectors the management of sales promotions are significant in that such activities can be deployed quickly and with less planning or managerial effort than other marketing communications forms. The need for robust planning processes is emphasised by Flanagan (1988) and echoed in Yeshin.

In the studies of the managerial processes that deal with the use of sales promotions, criticism is most often levelled at poor managerial implementation of sales promotion. This often includes comments setting out the reasons why this might be the case. None of these

comments, however, appear to be based on formal research. Rather they are the result of experience and involvement.

The sheer diversity of potential approaches and forms, types and structures which can inform or impact upon the use of sales promotions mean that clearly there is no overall managerial model which explains or can generalise about such activities. At the level of individual case studies, each managerial context is different with often widely diverse behaviours, entities, mechanisms and structures.

3.3 The Impact of Context and Structure and on Sales Promotions

It is possible to contextualise sales promotions in terms of three environments where they can be subject to research, scrutiny, analysis and evaluation. These are downstream channel environments such as retail stores, which can be termed market contexts, the on-line domain, and in the organisations where they are commissioned and executed. This may not be within the focal firm but might also include other entities such as sales promotion agencies, advertising agencies and other third parties involved in the promotion. This contextualisation is clearly antithetical to the approaches outlined above in which sales or scanner data are treated in isolation, separate from the context in which they are generated.

With regard to the downstream channel contexts, sales promotion has the potential to be used in any such context where a transactional activity is taking place or in contexts where consumers and potential consumers engage with the products, services and marketing messages of brands and providers. What is perhaps more significant for this study is that

they might be conducted in similar or vastly differing ways within sectors or across markets or exchange relationships.

The on-line domain, whilst beginning to assume critical significance in the practical application of sales promotions, is not the focus of this study although does impact on the processes of some of the cases presented below.

Much of the empirical literature in this field and the models advanced by, for example, Chandon (1995) focus on the context for sales promotion activity as being the 'served' market. Market characterisations such as business to business (B2B), business to consumer (B2C), and business to retail to consumer (B2R2C) categorise a rather standardised way in which the context of the sales promotion process and / or the related consumer/brand relationship is formed and is enacted.

Organisational context, structure and processes, and the structures of markets and other channels in which an organisation operates, also impact on the way that sales promotions are commissioned, managed and evaluated and these are also explored below.

3.4 The Significance of the Contexts in which Sales Promotions are Situated

Within the context of market and retail structures what happens in one sales promotion, or even the deployment of other forms of marketing communications or competitive action, can affect sales promotions and / or the managerial decisions that inform them. The emergent nature of social processes like marketing management decision making does not

however solely rest on external stimulus. The decision to utilise sales promotion can clearly also emerge from internal factors.

Sayer (2000) highlights a number of potential research questions which both frame, and rely on contextual factors. A realist treatment of causation relies on process but also the context in which such a process takes place and furthermore what it is that is significant and unique about the context that enabled the process to take place and shaped it. This more sophisticated treatment and prioritisation of the contextual factors behind a particular process draws on notions of “universalistic” versus “situated” research perspectives as in Avgerou and Madon (2004), the situated perspective in this study focussing on the work of actors in context involved in the “construction ofartefacts and information resources”.

The impact of an external contingent environment which might include local or global competitive factors, market or prevailing economic conditions cannot be understated. All of the managers in the case studies highlighted at least one external contingent factor. In reality however, there are at least three constructions of context at play here. On one level there are the contextualisations found in the existing empirical literature (Chevalier 1975, Moriarty 1985, Peattie 1998, Van Heerde et al 2004). There is also a secondary internal contextualisation in terms of the processes of planning and execution of sales promotions with the organisation and thirdly there is the process of contextualising theory, how the process of influence works. In considering the phenomena of sales promotions, this has been subject to some study, in particular within the rational economic, nomothetic positivist epistemology (Hubbard and Armstrong 1994 and Tsang and Kwan 1999). Much of this research focuses on variables and comparatives and is largely drawn from the grocery sector. There is wide-scale, extensive and in-depth investigation of the way that the types,

forms and patterns of use of a number of sales promotion activities impact upon consumers. Often, though, the position of the consumer is downplayed and reduced merely to the status of “scanner data” in order to allow quantification and rigorous data collection, such as that presented by Helson and Schmittlein(1992).

Yeshin (2006, p192) highlights the way that business-to business promotions can be tailored to specific contexts and the more sophisticated focussed requirements of the retailer.

These channel promotions emphasise the power of certain retailers to specify promotions and even choose the format and execution of a particular promotional event. Whilst this study mainly examines largely consumer facing promotional activity, my early pilot interviews with managers presented a few examples of such promotional activities. What has been understated in the existing literature is the way that consumer facing promotions are used to influence other stakeholders.

Simpson (2006), whilst suggesting that there are other contextual and situational factors that shape consumer behaviour around sales promotions, points out other causal factors on the managerial rather than consumer side. Citing Peattie and Peattie (1995), she argues that market and competitive situations can arise where commonality of the use of sales promotions cause consumer behaviour to become largely conformist, with consumers being unable to differentiate between promotional activities. From this evidence she suggests we can infer that this is both a by product of, and impacts on, the managerial structural and processual factors that shape sales promotions.

Finally the impact of web based promotions as a, if not the, business context in which sales promotions will, in future, largely be situated needs to be acknowledged. To date there has

been little published that examines this phenomenon despite the fact that marketers already using sales promotions within the structures which are emerging from web based and other forms of electronic media. Whilst this is not specifically the focus of this particular study, early work in this area such as that by Van Doren et al (2000), Changchien et al (2004) is acknowledged. The potential impact of new technology is vast and is evidenced in the case studies presented later in this thesis although, to date, there has been no great volume of published empirical work to reflect the take-up by practitioners.

3.5 Sales Promotion as a Strategic and Competitive Process

In this section the novel view that sales promotions are, or at least could be, a more significant aspect of marketing activity than the literature surveyed previously might suggest, is advanced. It is suggested that sales promotion should be regarded as a significant, some would argue strategic, element of an organisation's marketing activities and competitive strategies.

During the 1980's and 1990's scattered empirical and conceptual work emerged that posited a more holistic, explanatory and expansive view of sales promotion. This was most notably related to competitive action and the use of sales promotions as a likely competitive response.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, early research by Frank and Massy (1967) highlighted what they termed "promotional interaction" which examined the competitive processes that might be attributed to sales promotional activity. The significance of this early work was not only that it was integrative in its perspective; more significantly it took sales

promotions out of the tactical and operational domain. It put forward the view that its deployment had competitive implications that were at the general managerial, if not the strategic or competitive, level for the organisations that deployed them.

Jereski (1984) further links sales promotions with an aggressive competitive stance by marketers in a quest for more effective methods to capture and retain consumers' attention, interest and loyalty thus positing ongoing sales promotions activity within the relationship marketing perspective. Blattberg and Neslin (1989), argued that weaker brands use promotions and increased promotional spend in order to remain competitive. This view leads to a problem of possible reverse causalities highlighted by Boulding et al (1994). The relationship between heavy promotional spend in a given period and greater elasticity of demand functions in the same period cannot be held to prove that "promotions" cause negative price elasticities.

Schultz et al (1992) highlight the significance of sales promotions not only in terms of their short term effect of generating and maximising sales revenue but also in the long term through their impact on brand value and brand image. This was a reaction to scattered empirical research that highlighted the negative impact of sales promotions on brand equity and value (Biel 1991). This view was furthered endorsed by Davies (1992) who takes both an integrative stance and suggests that sales promotions have the potential to build strategic and brand value in the longer term. Davies also makes an explicit link between sales promotions and strategic marketing and argues that the former is increasingly perceived to be a more strategic element of the marketing communications mix. Matteson (1993) suggests that sales promotions can be used to create more favourable brand identity and images whilst O'Connor (1993) does not take the more usual integrative stance, but instead

examines the mechanisms and benefits of linked or joint promotions. Such joint promotions have a more strategic base as it is argued there is both a widening of potential coverage and impact, and pressure to extend, reach and engender mutuality between brands.

Lichtenstein et al (1997) utilise surveys based on eight types of consumer facing promotional activity. Although still quantitative and largely nomothetic in tone, such studies acknowledge the diversity and scope of sales promotions and their growing significance. They argue that such promotions alter price/value perceptions in consumers and as such are significant both competitively and in terms of building relationships with customers and retailers

This emergent strategic emphasis is in marked contrast to Jones (1990), Ehrenberg et al (1994) and Raghubir and Corfman (1999) who all downplay the strategic implications of sales promotion utilisation, relying on narrow definitions, a short term focus and suggestions that sales promotions are only useful in some cases in a short term tactical way. Yeshin (2006 pp73 and 74) provides a particularly robust critique of this view.

Boulding et al (1994) draw attention to the way that integrating various elements of the communications mix provides a potential differentiation factor for the marketing strategies of brands. This theme is continued by Hahn et al (1995) who use couponing as the focus of their study and stress the way in which it can be used strategically in terms of a key element of competitive and marketing strategy.

While there is a view that sales promotions can have the potential to be a pre-eminent element of the marketing communications mix, a more basic and operational treatment of sales promotions remains the norm in the extant literature. Lichtenstein et al (1997) argue

that sales promotions should be conceptualised at the level of the particular deal as opposed to the general level. They bring to light factors relevant to promotional planning and tactical decisions. One emergent theme is the notion of promotional segmentation between customers who have and have not engaged in sales promotional activity and therefore segments of deal-prone and non deal-prone consumers.

Studies into the “strategic” significance (Peattie et al 1997) and utility of promotional activities (Peattie and Peattie, 1995; Peattie 1998; Peattie 1999; Peattie and Peattie 1999) all allow for a wider and more generic understanding of the role and significance of promotional activities. This observation accords with McArthur and Griffin’s (1997) view that “the direction of marketing communication activities was clearly an internal, upper management affair”. Kahn and McAlister (1997) emphasise the growing significance of sales promotion from a different perspective to that of Yeshin (2006) by using the language of strategic marketing to argue for the use of sales promotions as a strategic tool. Within marketing strategy Kahn and McAlister (1997) stress the significance of sales promotions as differentiating factors in highly cluttered competitive retail outlets such as supermarket multiples. They also put forward the view that sales promotions are a brand and product differentiator if utilised at times or in situations where sales promotion is not commonly found to be the norm. A more explicitly strategic perspective concerning the use of sales promotions by brand managers is emerging as in Low and Mohr (1992).

Rather than the examination through the rigorous but narrowly defined lens of the positivists, those who examined the impact, or lack of it, of sales promotions on consumers have begun to pursue a wider ranging and possibly more fruitful stream of research. Kwok and Uncles (2005) turn the problem explored by Mela et al (1997) largely ‘on its head’ by

questioning whether the differences that define consumer groups, in this case by ethnic identity, have strategic significance when sales promotions are utilised. Their multi-contextual and cross cultural study presents sales promotion as being part of an expansive view of marketing communications. Lee (2002) explicitly writes in terms of “strategies” and “strategic” emphases and highlights the way that sales promotion is perceived as a more significant element of the communications mix.

Peattie and Peattie (1994) describe the way that narrow definitions, and what they term a process of “bundling” of promotional activities together, in both empirical studies and to some extent managerial discourse, has proved ultimately to be a limiting, tactical, short term, negative and futile way of approaching research into the practice of sales promotion.

If it is defensible, however to present a model of sales promotions as a strategically significant element of marketing communications; it is insufficient to merely suggest that promotions have a strategic significance and “push them upstairs” to a strategic level in the way that Peattie et al (1997) suggest. I believe that sales promotions have the potential to assume a strategic significance for brands in both their communications mix and marketing strategies. However this remains relatively unproven and the possible causal mechanisms undiscovered so that the issue requires a more and sophisticated research treatments than they have had to date. Yeshin’s views are significant here in that they support this view (Yeshin 2006). The strategic potential of sales promotions presented above therefore constitutes an emergent and exploratory theme of the research reported here.

3.6 Sales Promotion as a Managerial Process

Marketing has long been associated with modes of exchange and transaction, where concepts of the market and the actors within it are organised in terms of supply and demand side relationships, networks and transactional interrelated exchange relationships.

Within such markets, there is an emphasis on performance improvements through increases in the numbers of transactions and economic rents gained from each transaction. Dominant discourses in marketing management have largely been focused on key tasks such as planning, marketing strategy and the analysis of contexts, environments and markets.

Marketing communications discourses tend to be at the level of their individual forms such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing or sales promotion and their potential for stimulation of demand for goods and services. Sub themes include integration, fragmentation, effectiveness, competitive dynamics, managerial action and communications media. Within the marketing communications field, the view of sales promotion as a persuasive “supply side” activity is frequently used and is often conflated with other forms of advertising and “promotion”.

Shao's (1997) studies of the impact of sales promotional interventions represent a useful insight into the way in which marketing managers seek to manage and control sales promotions within the marketing communications mix. These approaches are later referred to as ‘managerial mindsets’ about the strategic or operational usage of marketing communications by Erdogan and Kitchen (1998). The need to engage with managers as part of the research process is presented most strongly in Bucklin and Gupta (1999) who engage in examining the perceptions of marketing managers about couponing.

Stewart and Gallen (1998) focus on the food industry and provide a robust critique of the internal planning processes behind the use of sales promotions. This theme is continued by Kasulis et al (1999), who point out a divide between promotional and marketing communications objectives and the problems marketers from the brand-side encounter when promotional plans underachieve. This is a viewpoint shared by Stewart and Gallen who examine both stakeholder pressure for short term boosts in sales but also what they term the sales promotion “dilemma”. This is, that once involved in sales promotion usage, firms may be reluctant to cease to use them if there were competitors still engaged in its use.

Hartley and Pickton (1999), whilst using integrated marketing communications as a starting point, examine the way that such strategies and paradigms present marketing managers with new objectives, conceptual frames and decision processes. I would argue that a more sophisticated treatment of the managerial aspects of sales promotion has the same potential effect.

Leeflang and van Raaij (1995) take a resource specific and structural perspective pointing out the way that sales promotion is resourced has led to its greater significance in the marketing activities of brands. The wide availability of promotional offers and materials, it is suggested, is due to widespread and possibly indiscriminate use of price manipulation promotions by marketers which may have a low levels of effect on consumers (Dickson and Sawyer (1990).

Cooper et al (1999) examined the promotional planning process and put forward suggestions for a more sensible modelling process involving more managerial and qualitative factors such as promotional style and history. Low and Mohr (1992) also studied the

managerial perspective on the use of sales promotions in terms of its use by marketing managers, whose budgets are constrained and whose goal is to discover the optimal budget allocation.

Later Sririam and Kalwani (2007) began to “stretch” their definition of “sales promotions”. Using both a limited analytical frame and citing previous research by Dube et al (2005) and Naik et al (2005) they acknowledge that in the short term the negative effect on brand equity is outweighed by increased consumer utility. Marketing managers from the two brands they considered used higher than optimal promotional budgets and in their case the market leader also spent more on sales promotion than its rival. Perhaps more interestingly, given their epistemological and methodological perspective, is that Sriram and Kalwani further challenge the existing research on “promotions” in that they can find no detrimental effect on brand equity in their use. Perhaps most significantly for this study, both studies acknowledge the complexity of using sales promotions and the need for further studies of the managerial decision making that informs its use.

3.7 A Conceptual Framework

The significance of both market and organisational contexts is acknowledged in the following conceptualisation, which draws upon both the literature presented in this chapter and the data collected during the study in an iterative developmental process. The end result was a model of the sales promotion process involving entities and structures and used as way of interpreting the empirical case study data collected during the research process.

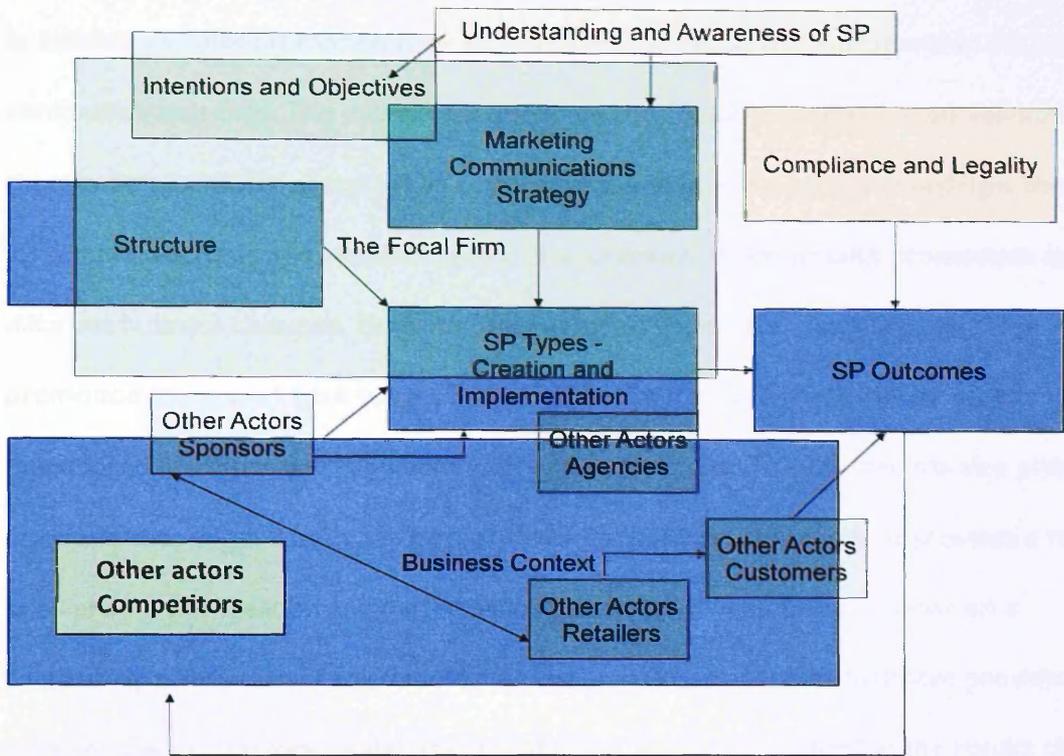


Fig 3.1 A Contextualised Sales Promotions Model with Entities and Structures

The key outcome entities of the model are the sales promotion type and the result of the sales promotion. The result is influenced not only by the characteristics of the sales promotion and how it is implemented but also by other actors in the environment, primarily customers but also competitors, retailers (where involved), sponsors, agencies and sometimes other idiosyncratic external actors and structures, such as the legal system. The sales promotion type is influenced by internal organisational entities including its intentions and objectives, the marketing communications strategy and the structure and other characteristics of the organisation.

3.8 Conclusion and Synthetic Definition

In conclusion, sales promotion is an emergent area of research interest within the marketing communications field. The definitional discourse and the problems of limited definition and theorisation examined above act as a reductive frame in many cases and highlight the need for a more sophisticated research agenda that examines different sales promotions in different business contexts. Based on this review of the extant marketing and sales promotion literature I have sought to synthesise the main themes, examine other unexplored literature and support it with extant literature. This chapter has also presented literature that might inform any further research on sales promotion. It presents a model of sales promotion creation and performance and care has been taken to draw on a particularly diverse set of epistemological and academic discourses that have provided the basis for the explanatory model used to interpret the data presented in the results chapter.

It can therefore be said that there is now a diverse and possibly divergent set of artefacts, entities and processes that fall under the heading of sales promotions and its processes and outcomes. It would be remiss of me therefore not to attempt to arrive at a definition of my own and I therefore propose that the ways that we as academic think about and define sales promotions be grouped around the following themes and views.

Drawing on Peattie (2002) and Yeshin (2006), I suggest that sales promotions can be defined as

- a robust contextualised set of 'non standardised' managerial and organisational processes
- which can be deployed in market settings in order to provide an action focused event

- designed to incentivise consumers, capture information or develop or raise awareness of a brand or product
- which can work synergistically with other elements of the marketing and communications mix
- or as an isolate and
- is subject to analytical and evaluator scrutiny by marketing managers and others.

By further drawing on Peattie and Peattie (1994), Peattie (1999, 2002) and Yeshin (2006), I am able to present my own definition that states that sales promotions can be defined as;

a robust contextualised set of 'non standardised' managerial and organisational processes which can be deployed in market settings in order to provide an action focused event designed to incentivise consumers, capture information or develop or raise awareness of a brand or product. It can work synergistically with other elements of the marketing and communications mix or as an isolate and is subject to analytical and evaluator scrutiny by marketing managers and others.

Adopting an ontology and epistemology drawn from critical realism, and using a managerially focussed case study method places emphasis not only on the processes, but also the contexts in which the phenomena, in this case managerial adoption and consumer engagement of sales promotion, takes place and the contingencies under which they operate. I have chosen the former as the focus for this study as a way of presenting a distinct contribution to marketing knowledge.

Chapter 4 Ontology, Epistemology and Research Methods

4.1 Introduction

Sayer's (1992) outline of the philosophical content of critical realism provides a defensible position from which the methods used in the thesis were developed. Sayer suggests that whilst 'the world exists independently of our knowledge of it' objects within it 'have particular causal powers', and that such 'objects' can include structures which are 'capable of generating events'. Sayer goes on to suggest that the knowledge we as researchers construct about such objects, structures and powers are not 'immune to empirical check'. He further asserts that there is an inherent criticality required in social science in relation to such objects and as social scientists we need to evaluate social phenomena critically in order to understand them.

This chapter outlines the way that my research into the management of sales promotion has been conducted. It sets out and justifies the ontological and epistemological positions taken and the methodological processes used during the research presented here. A framework from Easton (2009) is used to provide the structure for this chapter, as follows:

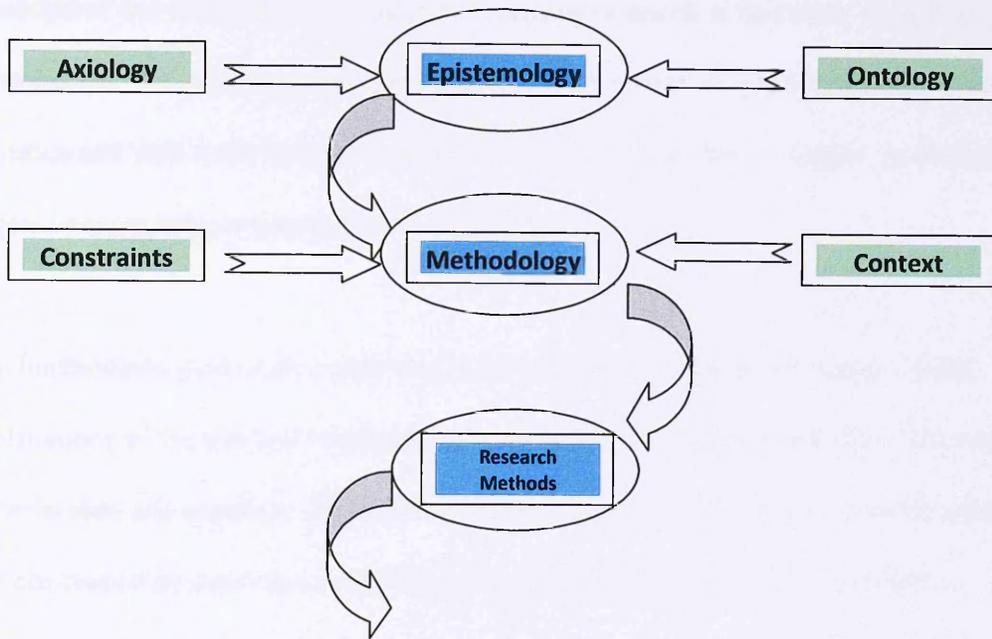


Fig 4.1 Research Helix Model Easton 2009

4.2 Research Strategy. Axiology and My Position as a Researcher

The model presented above serves as a 'route map' that articulates the way that ontology, methodology and research methods inform and frame the research process. It does not however, identify the start point from which the researcher commences such a process. In areas that are under researched this assumes a criticality. My stance and axiological position as a researcher and my 'start point' therefore require some examination before the research process begins.

The previous chapter pointed out that there are a number of potential methodological positions that have been taken in the various wide ranging studies of sales promotion. This has left the field open for me to adopt any of a number of both methodological and conceptual stances. This is further compounded by the existing gaps in the literature and the

prescriptive and undertheorised nature of existing research in this area. One key contribution of this thesis is that by situating the study within specific organisational contexts and with a marketing managerial emphasis I have taken a unique, and hitherto largely unexplored, perspective on this phenomenon.

The fundamental goal of the research presented here is to generate deeper causal explanations of the use and management of sales promotions by marketers. The empirical material that was sought is situated in different organisational contexts, and my axiological and contextual position as a researcher, therefore assumes a critical significance.

The initial stance I took is one which identifies me as informed outsider engaging in a process of gradual immersion into the phenomena and context of sales promotion activity from three critical positions. These are, as an academic and researcher studying the use of sales promotions for this thesis, as a former practitioner who has produced and organised such sales promotions for clients, and as a participant in and consumer of such promotional processes and technologies.

Any inherent axiological “bias” that I have as the researcher is, therefore, less problematic in that it is recognized, utilised and represents part of a process of re-acquaintance with the phenomena after some time. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest:

"...nomothetic/ etic approaches fail to address satisfactorily the theory – and value-laden nature of facts, the interactive nature of inquiry, and the fact that the same set of 'facts' can support more than one theory".

Morey and Luthans (1984) suggest that ideography and the use of ideographic case based

approaches such as the one used here takes an "emic" perspective (an insider's definition of the research situation) and the experience of myself as the researcher in this situation would be consistent with this description of my position.

My relationship with "the subject" and the "phenomena" of what was being studied was of critical concern to me throughout the early parts of the research process. The issue of my status as a researcher is significant in that the engagement with managers in the context of their own organisations means that I, whilst outwardly 'studying into' the phenomenon and context, was able, with the actors' consent, to adopt a position of an informed "pseudo-insider". Interestingly, there appeared to be genuine curiosity from the managerial actors within the industry concerning the motivations for the research, and my personal change in role from industry insider to academic. While this did not compromise the emic stance of the research it was useful as an access mechanism and may have contributed to more open responses.

Much of the existing empirical research into sales promotion and indeed for marketing research in general remains grounded in the positivist position of "science", prediction and control (Laurent et al 1994). This emphasis has until recently, meant that research that is not statistically "rigorous" has been eschewed in favour of that which makes "truth" claims based on sample size, statistical inference or quantitative modes of analysis. This approach is said to enable explanation and prediction based on regularities and "law like" generalisations leading to the presentation of quasi "causal" statements. Such a quest for regularity, however fails to explain "why" events occur, only that they do. They also require a particularly narrow definition of the problem or phenomena in order to generate simple, elegant and observable frames which meet particular sets of pre-supposed criteria. The use

of such a positivist approach however may cause researchers to miss rich insights into the complexity of a situation.

The research strategy developed here mirrors that outlined by Babbie and Mouton (2001), who describe the three fundamental purposes of social research as “description”, “exploration” and “explanation”. This has resonance with the process first outlined by Christenson (1983) of moving through phases of description, explanation and prediction, although his predictive element is positivistic in its approach and is therefore not relevant here.

The early stages in terms of “thinking through” and conceptualisation of these themes, combined with a study of the existing literature yielded some important theoretical pointers and signposts. This ensured the emergence of some useful early ‘concepts’ that were later discarded, and as an ex-practitioner I was able to give credence to certain personal experiences that informed the research process. This resulted in a need to acknowledge and consider the way that my knowledge and values shaped the research.

The first phase of the research strategy was largely a descriptive and definitional phase. Description, as Danermark et al (2001) suggest, is consistent with the earliest stages of an explanatory research process. Such a descriptive axiological starting position is common in exploratory research where the subject is poorly defined or under-researched. In my case this was represented by a search for adequate definitions, combined with the examination of individual sales promotions artefacts, and this was a way of using the “everyday” as the start point for my research.

This took the longest in terms of time and yielded least. It was however a necessary stage to go through. Whilst situated in the descriptive characteristics of what represented sales promotions, this process was hampered by my simultaneously searching for an “academic” and empirical lens through which to develop my own particular research. Such bases were not present themselves in a useful way at this stage.

The second exploratory phase was introduced at the insistence of my supervisor, and proved to be much more valuable and fruitful. The main issue that I had early in the research was how was I to essentially “go out” and talk to marketing managers in organisations about their use of sales promotion when I had not adequately defined what it was I was seeking to find out about.

Around this time I began to formulate what it was that I knew about the phenomena and processes of sales promotion from my own perspective of both ex-practitioner and consumer. There was a criticality in this process in terms of divergence from the definitional orthodoxy of much of the literature I was examining. My experience of managing sales promotion only partially accorded with what I was reading and to a great degree this stimulated a need to redefine my own research through a process of abduction. This was especially frustrating in terms of the way that many “imaginative theories” were adopted, constructed and then discarded.

No researcher ever enters the research process free of some theoretical or contextual awareness. Parkhe (1993) argues that a researcher’s prior exposure to theory has a critical and pivotal function in the design of any research strategy and the selection of appropriate supporting methods. Parkhe further suggests a process of continuous interplay between the

need to select appropriate research methods stimulated both by the research questions and objectives, and the status of theorisation and knowledge in the theoretical domain and research context. This requires the researcher to select an approach that is flexible rather than rigid and fixed. Parkhe refers to these as 'loose' and 'tight' frameworks that present themselves early in the research process.

The pilot case studies, although early in the research process, allowed me to engage with brand managers and were focused on single promotional entities and instances. This was a liberating experience in terms of reacquainting me with the managerial context and processes, artefacts and structures that I was familiar with. It also enabled me to learn how to discuss issues in a more general way with managers. This process generated interesting asides, some surprises and provided insight into the processes of sales promotion whilst stimulating the need to delve deeper into both the phenomenon and its context.

A lamina or stratified model attributed to Bhaskar (1978) provides a useful framework that 'organises' causal factors in order to deal with this problem. He suggests making distinctions between that which is empirical, and that which is actual or real. I outline the way in which this process informs the research I have conducted here further on in this chapter.

It was only later in the research process, once I had started to engage with organisations and develop contextually specific case studies that the key point of definition and the need for redefinition emerged. My knowledge base was initially, as with any ex-practitioner, domain specific and grounded in functionality. Theoretical, and perhaps more importantly methodological, knowledge emerged as the study developed. This, as Van Maanen (1989)

argues, allowed me to engage with a range of “interpretive techniques” which go beyond description in order to allow the decoding and translation of the meaning of real world phenomena.

What this process ultimately did was to create “positively” framed questions in terms of outcomes and what the research could become, rather than negative questions “what the research was not”. It allowed me to frame unique and different entities, processes and structures in progressive and transcendental terms and helped me to shift my assumptions on the nature and processes of sales promotion.

The third phase was one of contextualisation and embedding and was typified by engagement with industry actors, mainly marketing managers, involved in promotional activity either in-house or outsourced to others. It involved the development of case studies out of multiple visits to organisations that yielded rich but sometimes difficult to manage “data”. It took place in natural settings such as their own organisations, at events organised to promote their products and on stands at trade shows.

The final phase was one that sought explanation of what had been found out and a re-examination of the theoretical underpinnings that define and explain sales promotion both in the literature and wider context. It did not seek to provide a predictive model rather to isolate and examine areas of marketing understanding with the potential for further and more in depth research.

4.3 Ontology

Critical realism is one of a number of possible ontological positions taken up by those researching in the marketing domain (Easton 2002). Its application to the study of management subjects (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000) has already begun to define it as a viable and robust alternative to both positivism and constructivism, but its application to marketing communications or sales promotion in particular remains especially limited, and it has been largely left to Easton (2000) and Zinkhan and Hirschheim (1992) to advance this particular approach in the field of marketing.

It is transcendent (Bhaskar 2002), and avoids some of the paradigmatic problems presented by the adoption of positivist or interpretivist/constructivist perspectives. It is more relevant to the structures and processes of social, rather than natural, science and treats social phenomena such as the actions of managers as complex, adaptive, systemic and dynamic.

The central tenet of critical realism as outlined and conceptualised by Sayer (1992) is that an external reality exists independent of the researcher. However our knowledge of that external reality is steeped in theory and as a result fallible. We as researchers, Sayer suggests, are simply not in a position to relate our concepts of what is true and false to the relationships we find between an object and what we know. No factual basis is beyond disputation and while this approach acknowledges that the external world is complex it holds that it can still potentially be organised and to some degree understood. A critical realist perspective assumes that the real world and external reality mirrors the causal language that we ascribe to such an external reality.

Easton (2002) provides a particularly clear and concise description of the way that

critical realism deconstructs our understanding and studies of 'reality', into three domains or "layers" those being "the empirical", "the real" and "the actual".

The empirical is that which we perceive. The actual is that which actually occurs and there is often, perhaps always, a difference between these two. Finally there is the real which we can only guess at but which nevertheless has the power to create events in the actual world. We as researchers then try to 'understand' in the empirical world although this may be obscured by factors external to us, by our own internal ways of thinking or by how we as researchers are influenced by our own perceptions or ways of constructing the "problem".

The knowledge we present, Sayer suggests, may still be subject to the rigours of empirical testing in ways that Mays and Pope (1995) suggest that qualitative research is subject to. Rigorous processes of examination and qualitative research is not incommensurable with such processes. As a result a critical realist approach is particularly effective in both informing the processes of, and explaining "material" practices in relation to areas of study such as marketing management (Easton 2002).

Sayer organises this complexity in terms of objects and structures which have potential "powers and liabilities" both of which are capable of generating events. In terms of my research, such an approach justifies the examination of any situation in which sales promotion is occurring or has occurred and Sayer's view of critical realism is both the most detailed and closely linked to the case research I present here.

Critical Realism frees me from the positivistic processes described by Eisenhardt

(1989) in which pre-specified numbers of case studies are prescribed in order to overcome the artificial “hurdle” set to provide what is meant to be a defensible and rigorously empirically grounded position. In that aspect alone critical realism represents “an emancipatory axiology” (Easton 2002) in that it allows researchers to move to a better understanding of what marketing is and potentially could be.

The critical realist approach and philosophy when applied to marketing problems as Easton suggests allows the research presented here to place under analytical scrutiny neglected or hitherto previously under-explored research contexts and structures and explanations of deeper processes and entities. These give rise to the presentation of sales promotions as events, rather than as the subject of simplistic descriptive or comparative studies.

Constructs such as temporality, managerial and organisational intentions and the significance accorded to sales promotion within the focal firm also adds further layers of complexity. In each case to merely note that sales promotion was used and describe the processes and conditions of its use is insufficient. The significance of this issue and a critical realist response to it was manifested in the potential for deeper causal “why” questions that informed the in-company data collection process. Each case study therefore becomes a process of seeking to understand the nature of each case context and why things had occurred in the way they had. This required thoughtful and carefully planned research interactions with each organisation and the actors within it. Sometimes these interactions were time intensive, in other cases less so.

In line with Sayer (1992) I acknowledge, that the context in which the research takes place is socially constructed and informed or influenced by other socially constructed structures

such as retail environments, markets and consumers. A central tenet of critical realism is that of the identification of entities. It is these entities which are held to cause events to happen. In other words they have causal powers that may be activated when such events occur. For example firms can undertake sales promotions or they can fail to do so if the causal powers to do so are not activated. Entities may also have liabilities e.g. a firm may be liable to complete a contract, have strong or weak relationships with downstream customers or may be liable to cash flow problems.

A central task of any critical realist researcher is to identify the key entities in any research setting and hypothesise about their causal powers and also their liabilities. Entities do not usually act alone but in combination with other entities to create events. For example, the outcome of a sales promotion involves at least the firm involved and the customers who do or do not take part in the sales promotion. The combination of entities acting in particular way to create particular kinds of events is described as a mechanism. Such mechanisms can be described as theories about how the world can and does act.

Entities may also have internal structures; for example a firm may have internal entities such as departments, individuals or marketing planning systems. These entities are situated in the organisational context but may also be situated partly in other domains such as markets, supply chains or competitor organisations. These in turn can interact in particular ways, again through mechanisms, to make particular events occur in the focal firm.

In the context of each sales promotion as an event, the managerial processes that lead to the creation of the sales promotion are seen as emergent. So too, are the other contingent relationships with external agencies, be they retailers, external consultants or competitors.

The causal powers and liabilities of the brand managers involved in the development and presentation of the sales promotion are also important but act together with other powers and liabilities within each context.

In each case presented in this study, aspects of the reality of sales promotional activity the participants are involved in is independent of their own personal and managerial cognitive processes, but can still impact upon their perceptions. The realist perspective taken in this research also recognises that marketing managers construct their own reality, as do those who are researching the same phenomena.

To summarise, the objectives of critical realism can therefore be viewed as a search for mechanisms and structures which cause entities, in this case sales promotions, to occur.

The research objective as identified above is, therefore to examine and isolate the structural factors, causal elements and mechanisms in each context. The process relies upon an initial descriptive analysis that is contextual but individual case studies and units of analysis fragment any cohesion in each context. As such they are therefore, emergent and the key to understanding such emergent processes is to understand the causal powers and liabilities of such emergent relationships and the outcomes, implications and ramifications of such an event coming into being.

The multiplicity of causal factors within the research also represents within this study what Sayer (1992) refers to as an ordinary or pragmatic account of causality. The use of studies with widely differing contexts and causalities highlights the need to define causality and causal mechanisms in terms of what produces events, makes them happen and generates particular situations and outcomes. This is presented both in the conceptual

model examined in chapters 1 and 3, and in the case studies presented in Chapter 5 below.

Sayer further points to the multiplicity of interpretations of causality that require some justification using what are defined as “reliable beliefs”. This is problematic within the frame of this research in that the assumptions I, as an ex-practitioner, make about the nature of sales promotion may or may not be based on such reliable beliefs. The under theorised nature of sales promotion combined with its narrowly focused and limited definitions meant that as a researcher I found the creation of an inter-connected system of assumptions and beliefs about the contexts and phenomena I was studying to be a particularly difficult process and this is reflected in the preceding chapter.

It is, however, possible to identify the interconnected nature of entities within each context. Without making belief based assumptions concerning the way in which sales promotions are created and managed, it is possible to relate the causal processes and susceptibility of managers to be both influenced by other possibly external causal factors to sponsor, create or delegate the production of sales promotion. It is also possible for such processes and other inter and intra-organisational actors to be influenced by both managerial and other entities.

The way in which the conceptualisation of such processes inform and define critical realist accounts of the interaction of entities within a given context are crucial to the implementation of a research methodology that uses critical realism as its central philosophy.

Critical realists, in particular, accept that the real is always difficult to access. Moreover, the

actual also has to be interpreted by way of the empirical. Reversing the process, what researchers have data on is the empirical (what respondents say happened) which they have to interpret in terms of the actual (what might have actually have happened) and finally the real (what caused those events to happen). This returns us to Sayer's original position that started this chapter in that the world is socially constructed but not entirely so but that there are causal mechanisms which we are aware of, partially aware of or do not see at all. The research conducted in this thesis seeks to examine such causality in the context of sales promotions.

4.4 Epistemology

There are a number of epistemological positions that a researcher can take. Interpretivism (Hudson and Ozanne 1988) is the one chosen here. There are a number of basic axiomatic positions upon which an interpretivist epistemology is predicated. Easton (2002) suggests that these are as follows:

1. The researcher is a human being and as such constructs multiple realities
2. There is mutual interaction between researcher and researched phenomena
3. The main objective of any interpretivist research is to produce ideographic knowledge
4. There is an inseparable relatedness between cause and effect
5. No research is value free
6. Knowledge is socially constructed.

Interpretivist research eschews the predictive elements and need for controls found in positivism. Instead a research process steeped in an interpretivist epistemology seeks

advancement through developing meaning through contextualisation in multiple realities or new interpretations of what a particular research context presents to the researcher. As such, any research that adopts an interpretivist epistemological position is essentially incomplete at any point in the research process.

The epistemological position of the research presented here accords with such a view.

There is a need to understand the way in which the case study organisations treat and approach sales promotions and how they manage the processes around commissioning, managing and evaluating sales promotion activity. The role of this research is to understand the *verstehen* of such groups of managers. In other words, what they think of sales promotion, the language they use to describe it; the significance, roles and functions they accord to it, and in one case the almost ritualistic behaviour it engendered within the managerial culture of the organisation.

Interpretivism's relatedness to critical realism is strongest in the use of research methods such as case studies where the researcher is in essence situated in context and interpreting what they see and hear. This process relies on the knowledge generated by each case being situated in domains; the real, actual and empirical. The process of constructing and presenting case studies and examining the managerial understandings is concerned with the actual and empirical. Whatever I encountered in each case context was interpreted as part of the process of studying into the focal firm. Critical realism therefore, espouses an essentially interpretivist view of the process but also one that has the potential to be socially constructed but not entirely so.

4.5 Case Study Methodology

The primary research instrument used to present what has been found out in this thesis is the case study (George and Bennett 2005). The design of the research utilises case studies drawn from diverse contexts with the use of sales promotions being the factor common to all of them.

Exploratory and interpretive research of this type is useful in hitherto under-researched contexts or in order to examine new or under researched phenomena. This is appropriate in the research presented here in that it allows the researcher to examine the deeper structures of the phenomena of sales promotion use.

The growing popularity of case study research, particularly within marketing but also within other fields of management research, whilst useful as a way of contextualising the conceptual and theoretical, remains problematic and contentious. As Flyvbjerg (2006) and Clyde-Mitchell (1983), both suggest the term case study has been applied to a number of diverse epistemological “entities” and approaches.

Gerring (2004) puts forward the view that the case study is not grounded in hard and fast rules but is rather an ‘ideal type’ with the potential for flexibility in its characteristics and he uses the term ‘fuzzy’. He speculates on what passes for case study research as being grounded in a particular set of characteristics. It is possible to define the case study as a research ‘tool’ by what it is and also by what it is not. Robson (2002 p178) usefully defines the case study as a “strategy for doing research” whilst (Yin, 1994) writes of an “empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomena within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence”. This accords with both the critical realist ontology and

interpretivist epistemology discussed above.

The case study is not, therefore, merely the identification, sourcing and transcription of interview material from a case context, neither is it solely ethnography within the case context. It is instead a process whereby the researcher can combine both of the above, plus other data and materials and which crucially involves immersion in the case context and interpretation of what the researcher finds there. This allows the researcher to gain insight and understanding of a phenomenon in its operational context and can reveal causal mechanisms as they are enacted as was the case in the research presented here.

According to Tsoukas (1989), the ideographic perspective is most useful in micro level investigations of the structural patterns within any phenomenon under consideration. Such an approach seeks to understand what constitutes an individual instance and emphasises the uniqueness of each case. Rather than the etic perspective of nomotheticism which presupposes similarity (Luthans and Davis 1982), generalisability and correlation, the quest here is to treat each case context as a different instance with distinct causal mechanisms. It seeks to examine differences between the entities, contexts and the perceptions, behaviours and strategies of the actors operating in those contexts, in essence their *verstehen*.

As Stake (1995 p4) suggests there is a temptation for case study researchers to seek cases “typical” of “other cases” and there is a tension here. Whilst there is a temptation to cluster cases around certain conceptual materials, this is not a sampling exercise, nor is it a quest for similarity or commonality. One case does not represent the others and additionally within this study the theoretical basis is, for reasons explained in preceding chapters, either, too prescriptive, too limited, too narrowly defined or

inappropriate for use in the context of the research presented here.

Stake suggests that in case study research we are obliged to examine and understand each case study and each context. Stake, further makes a crucial distinction between “instrumental” case studies, those which are better suited for a particular purpose, and “intrinsic” cases, those which are pre-selected by the researcher based on any number of criteria. Interestingly he further suggests that a more significant distinction is between “typical” cases and unusual cases. Perhaps most saliently and encouragingly for the research I have conducted here, Stake acknowledges that as researchers we strike a fine balance between the limitations of time and access on the one hand and a need to maximise what can be learned given such resource limitations.

Case study research relies on the outcomes of the intentions, processes and actions of managerial actors within organisations as the main unit of analysis (Yin 1989). In this research each individual instance of the use of sales promotion has the potential to represent such a unit of analysis and the actors and organisations involved and the entities which make up each case study structure. Clyde-Mitchell's (1983) perspective and approach to the use of case studies as ‘situations’ that have the potential to be analysed justifies this approach to the research.

In case study research the requirement to generate “truths” or produce facts is normally down-played yet there remains scepticism from some sectors of the academic community regarding the use of the case study as a research instrument rather than solely as a teaching aid. One of the criticisms levelled at an interpretive and inductive approach to research is that it is not “generalisable” in the way that quantitative research

may be. Sheth and Sissodia's (1999) 'law like generalisations' in the field of marketing management represent an example of this type of conceptualisation. Without engaging in the positivist rule-making regarding sampling modes and justification of the numbers of case studies that "should" be used as in Eisenhardt (1989), it can be acknowledged that numerical constraints and the low(er) statistical representativeness of the use of sales promotion should be seen as a significant issue.

The basis of the critique is that the case study fails to provide either "truths" about the phenomenon in context or generalisable data. Rather than adopt the positivist view advanced by Eisenhardt, there was no artificial agenda to justify the number of case studies required. The use of multiple case studies is not intended in the way that Eisenhardt suggests, to improve correlations (Easton 2002). Starbuck and Bass (1967) identify a critical issue here, in that a quest for ever larger sample sizes especially when the main research instrument is a case study may yield skewed or deceptive findings, and a quest for an average standardised set of "instances" of the same phenomena actually model or describe the complexity of what is actually occurring in very few of them.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) posit the qualitative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as tests for the legitimacy of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) however, suggest a range of approaches which at best seek a compromise between approaches to the validation of data. These approaches are neatly summarised by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p230).

A realist perspective, as in Easton (2002) is utilised instead, where multiple cases are

not presented for reasons of correlation or generalisation but as a way of building theory based on greater understanding of the power of particular entities and the mechanisms through which they act. In each case the context and the empirical material it generates is an individual sample of a single instance as in March et al (1991). The use of multiple case studies, as in the research presented here, is not done to increase sample size or make the findings in any way more generalisable. One further issue that also emerged early in the research was the way that using case materials reduced complex dynamic environments down to a static analytical and simplistic model. This was not the intention here.

A critical realist approach provides an ontological answer to these problems in that one case study is “enough” (Easton, 2003) to provide an explanatory frame and basis for further theorisation and conceptualisation. In other words this is a process of generalising to theory based on an approach that seeks deeper causal explanations. Easton and Harrison (2004) provide a useful exemplar in combining a laminal approach and a quest for depth with case study research, in that they present both a cogent argument for such reconciliation, and a methodological defence for using case studies based on critical realist ontology. The justification for its use arises from the particularly novel nature of the research and its results and outcomes rather than the application of particular concepts or theoretical models.

4.6 Data Collection

The use of a critical realist ontology, interpretivist epistemology and case studies still as Sayer suggests, requires an ‘empirical check’. This section clarifies the ways that

data that has been collected in order to establish a valid and credible empirical base for the analyses presented in the next chapter.

Most data collection processes consistent with qualitative social sciences rely on reportage rather than direct observation by the researcher. In this study, the specific event in each context is the individual sales promotion and as such represents the unit of analysis.

Moreover each sales promotion represents a particular event or series of events with a given outcome. This situation relied on me as a researcher being attuned to that which initially is outwardly visible and the way that such events occurred or may have occurred.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) identify the way in which qualitative research such as that presented here emphasises the way in which managers interpret, their own, their competitors' and consumers' behaviours. In the light of this comment, and based on earlier research by Low and Mohr (1992, 2000), Yeshin (2006) and Simpson(2006); I felt that this was the most appropriate direction for my research to take if it was to make a positive contribution to the study of sales promotion.

This approach also allowed me, as the researcher, to "write the rules" of the research-process, in that knowing the background can both define the situation and develop questions to be asked about that situation (Morey & Luthans 1984). This is largely consistent with elements of what Miles and Hubermann (1994) define as a research agenda being shaped by any outcomes or conceptual frameworks that emerge from an initial set of categories or taxonomic frames of relevance. These taxonomic categories frame certain events and behaviours. This then leads to the formulation of potential research questions that I identify as "why" rather than "what" questions.

This approach also provided insight into the interconnectedness of the entities in terms of processes, structures and actions that make up sales promotion campaigns and the artefacts generated as part of such campaigns and strategies. Using these combinations of entities with the individual promotional activity as the unit of analysis allowed theoretical and empirical progression from the basic descriptive question of “what” and “how” towards the “why” of the use of sales promotions. This last point also implies asking questions which probe for the cause of managerial intentions, behaviours and decision processes behind such promotional activities (Phelps et al 1996).

The methodological utility of using the promotional event itself rather than the organisation as the unit of analysis for the most part proved a useful framing mechanism. It is only in cases where there is replication (Hubbard and Armstrong 1994), as in the case of Scottco, that it was more useful to examine the way that replication of a number of albeit similar promotions led to what was perceived as a concerted and long term campaign.

Of interest in this study are the differences between accounts and perceptions of what are outwardly the same phenomena. The interpretive perspective allowed me to examine and critically evaluate the perceptions, insights, behaviours and meanings that the actors ascribe to the process of sponsoring organising, disseminating and evaluating sales promotion activities.

I do not, however, intend merely to ascribe meaning to managerial actions purely based on uncovering the constructions of actors. Qualitative research of this kind is not neutral; the “fragile models” espoused by phenomenological approaches similarly

fail to provide an adequate methodological base upon which to build any sort of empirical study.

4.7 A Data Collection Grid

The empirical data that has been collected is presented in the following table:

Focal Firm	Wiseman's plc	Crafter	Scottco	Ekleen
Sector	Retail and Wholesale Dairy	Musical Instrument Accessory Distribution	Fashion and Homeware, Retail	Consumer and B2B Cleaning Products
Key Informants	Joanne Rae – Marketing Manager	Simon – Marketing Director Rick – Managing Director Paul-Marketing Director Rob – Marketing Assistant Jenny – External Marketing Consultant	Jim – Senior Marketing Manager (Director Designate) Stephen – Assistant Marketing Manager Rose –Marketing Assistant	Raj – Managing Director Andrew – Operations Director Sue – Sales Office Manager Paul – SP Consultant from Inside Track (external agency)
Time -frame	06/04 – 11/04	04/07 – 02/08	8/07 – 3/08	4/08 – 9/08

Interviews	<p>1 F2F Interview</p> <p>1 Phone Interview follow up</p>	<p>2 x Formal F2F with Simon</p> <p>2x Formal F2F With Paul</p> <p>1x Informal F2F with Rick</p> <p>2 x Phone follow ups with Simon and Paul</p>	<p>2 x F2F Interview with Jim</p> <p>1 F2F interview with Rose</p>	<p>1 F2F Interview with Raj</p> <p>1 F2F Interview with Andrew</p> <p>1 F2F Interview with Paul @ Inside Track Offices Leeds</p>
Field Notes	<p>Collected on 2 visits to company HQ East Kilbride</p>	<p>Collected on 3 visits to Crafter HQ Nottingham</p> <p>'Sitting in' on meetings</p> <p>1 internal marketing team meeting</p> <p>1 evaluation meeting with Jenny, Simon and Rick</p>	<p>Collected on 2 visits to company HQ Paisley</p> <p>Company Tour conducted by Jim with informal discussion</p>	<p>Collected on 2 visits to Ekleen HQ Bradford,</p> <p>1 Visit to Inside Track Offices, Leeds</p>
Additional Data Collected	<p>Informal conversation with 2 junior marketing staff.</p>	<p>1x Informal Conversation with Rob – Marketing Assistant</p>	<p>Informal conversations with both Jim and Rose</p>	<p>Informal conversation with Sue</p>

	Subsequent exchange of emails 09/04 - 11/04 for clarification		Exchange of emails with Jim and Rose	Informal conversation with Mike Exchange of emails with Raj and Andrew
Other Materials	Artefacts other sales promotion materials, Company product guide, company history document. New company website viewed	All sales promotion materials collected. Website viewed	Examples of promotional and POS artefacts collected. Viewed website	Examination of promotional materials produced by Inside Track for the campaign @ Inside Track offices

Fig 4.2 A Comparative of Data Collected for Four In-Depth Exemplar Case Studies

4.8 On Researching in an Organisational Context

The process of “doing” the research in context, what Denzin (1970) refers to as “the act”, was shaped by a number of factors and constraints. The key issue, already alluded to, was my status as pseudo insider, an ex practitioner, whose experience of working within the

sector suggested that practitioners were generally enthusiastic about engaging in discussion. This proved to be the case in some organisational contexts, most notably within smaller brands as discussed above.

Research took place and material for the case studies was collected in three distinct contexts. Firstly, there was in-company research where, by invitation, I was asked to visit the organisation's marketing department. Then there were a smaller number of discussions that took place at trade fairs and exhibitions. Thirdly there were a small number of conversations and meetings which took place in neutral "third party" contexts, one was on a University campus, one was conducted at a major sponsored event, one at an in store promotional push and one at the offices of a sales promotions agency.

Marketing managers, members of the marketing team and those connected with sales promotion from other contexts were given an opportunity to talk about the issues that surrounded a particular sales promotion. These are not however organisational "soliloquies" (Weick 1979). Rather they are, as Gummesson (1991) suggests, a commitment "to understanding social phenomena from the actors' own perspective" i.e. in this case why marketing managers choose either to utilise sales promotion or eschew its use, and the processes that are undertaken to manage its production and dissemination. The issue of formality vs. informality also presented itself in terms of when the actual research process began. Quite often essential information about the case study was raised during initial telephone conversations, discussions and chats before any interview commenced and in telephone or email follow-ups after the visit(s) to the case study firm. The research involved engagement with staff in conversations that were both formal and informal and as relationships with particular organisations and their staff developed the data

collection process become more spontaneous, informal and conversational (Kvale 1996). At no time however was the research conducted in a covert way and I was always particularly diligent in informing those involved of my status.

There was a need to obtain richer empirical detail in order to build on the conceptualisations of sales promotion. It was my intention to treat each visit to the organisation as a process of data collection through both observation and other ethnographic processes. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) describe what they term “insider accounts” and the process for the researcher of behaving within an ethnographic research context. A mix, as in Bogdan and Taylor (1998), emerged of descriptive data in the first instance produced from observation in company and at the point of sale and in other contexts, the firm’s promotional artefacts, managerial discourse both formalised within the interview, and informally, and other observable behaviours and elements.

Unstructured interviews with those marketing managers who agreed to be involved provided a central focus for each study with other “satellite” research processes clustered around them. Interviews were requested with the marketing team and the respondent usually at marketing manager or director level. What was particularly interesting was the way that in each individual firm the staff member nominated to be involved with the research was indicative of the significance placed on sales promotion in that enterprise. Organisations that tended to downplay the significance of sales promotion within their communications mix tended to nominate more junior staff whereas in those firms heavily involved with sales promotion or where it was more significant, the reverse was the case.

A discussion guide was prepared which outlined the structured points required in order to take the managers through the processes of sharing information. Whilst the guide seemed to be ordered in its approach, a more unstructured “diagram” of a connected circle of key points with lines of connectivity was a more appropriate description than a list. The main research questions outlined in Chapter 1 above provided the main focus for the research, comprising a central research question from which the others radiated outwards and were connected to. Within each case study managers were given the opportunity to share their experiences of involvement with sales promotion. There was also a “blue sky” element by which managers were able to put forward views about where their own sales promotions were headed and where they felt what might sales promotions might be in the future. This process of “giving voice” to managers on both specific issues and more general contextual factors and perceptions proved to be a useful research mechanism and it linked management discourse in terms of what managers ‘say’ and ‘do’ about sales promotion with wider strategic entities.

The issue of access and the gaining of entry into organisational contexts remains a problematic one for researchers operating in any organisational context. There is a particular expectation that permission is always required and this was the case with the research that I conducted in-company. What was noteworthy to me as a researcher was the different levels of formality in this process, which did not always map the type, sector, size and culture of the firms that I studied. In some cases smaller firms required highly formalised clearance from the University and my supervisor whereas large and outwardly hierarchical organisations were very informal in the process of allowing me access to do research.

4.9 On the Diverse Nature of Research Contexts

The randomised nature of the way that the case studies presented themselves and perhaps more significantly the way that organisations decided not to be involved in the research had implications for the diversity of research contexts utilised.

The randomness in the way that the research emerged and developed provided a number of contrasting factors, some of them marked, between the case study organisations. At one level there is division between those enterprises that have and have not used sales promotions. The issue here is the degree of accuracy the position of “not having” used sales promotions actually is. The avowed position of some of the marketing managers was that their organisation had never used sales promotion when an examination of archival data suggested otherwise. Some managers suggested that they had never employed sales promotion but their predecessors “might have done”. Attempts to identify and involve a firm where sales promotion had never been employed as part of their marketing communications mix finally yielded two potential case study firms.

This raised another issue, that of the recent use of sales promotion, and such activity being temporally framed. At a secondary level there was a need to frame whether sales promotions had recently been utilised in the organisations or indeed were ongoing. Quite clearly it was preferable to track the promotions in real time and in some cases this was possible. In others, managers were reluctant to discuss existing or ongoing promotional campaigns but were happy to discuss prior campaigns. All of the above combined with the diverse industry sectors provided a randomised, though not in the statistical sense, and stimulating set of contrasting contexts.

4.10 Managerial Mortality

There have been a number of studies of senior management team changes and the impact on corporate performance (Haveman 1993) and cross functionality at the level of marketing strategy (Shipley 1994). One key factor that did impact on the research presented here was the high levels of turnover of marketing managerial staff and it therefore requires some commentary as part of this chapter. Across the four year lifespan of the field work one of the most frustrating constraints on the research was the way that relationships with managers were built up only to be “lost” due to managers “moving on” or changing role within the firm or with another firm. Interestingly this occurred across markets of sectors.

This took four key forms; the organisation was glad to still be involved in any subsequent “follow up” researches, the firm and the outgoing manager was happy for the comments to be anonymised, the outgoing manager was happy for any comments to be anonymised but the firm were not or the research contact was lost. One aspect of this that was not foreseen, was where either the firm was bought out and restructured or ceased to exist altogether which happened in three cases, two of which are unused here. What was also interesting from a research perspective, was the rate of turnover of managers at all levels in the marketing function and this also had an impact on the continuity of the research being pursued

4.11 On Research Ethics

The extent to which the researcher is involved or distant from the research project is most cogently examined by Easterby-Smith (2002). The questions of involvement, proximity and interference caused by the researcher's presence are ones that span both ethical and methodological considerations. These however, are only part of the debate surrounding intervention. There are key advantages and disadvantages to being proximal and visible and this becomes crucial in the workability of the research process. This was an interesting issue for me as a researcher for a number of reasons.

In Galton and Delamont (1985) the vexed issue of how one represents oneself whilst conducting case research in an organisational setting is examined and a number of important issues raised. The main ethical issue that confronted me was that as an ex practitioner and lecturer my instinct was to get involved. I am minded here of Smircich's (1983) summary of three ethnographic modes. For the ex-practitioner, observation and gathering reports from informants whilst sufficient would be particularly tempting for them to participate. Beyond sitting in on meetings and in one case acting as a "sounding board" for some general promotional ideas, I did not feel that my position as both an independent researcher and a "quasi insider" had been compromised. To have become involved as a 'pseudo consultant' would have pushed the research into the realm of action research. Whilst Gill and Johnson (2002) suggest that this is context dependent and relies on the researcher being aware of his or her 'degree of immersion in the social setting', I remain comfortable with the ethical position that I took.

Whilst not wishing to misrepresent myself in terms of who and what I was, I did on occasion have to broaden the nature of my research and instead of focusing on sales

promotion I had to talk in terms of wider “marketing communications”. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, I did it in order to gain access to managers who did not see sales promotions as a significant issue or outside of their remit, even when they were responsible for its resourcing and management as part of a larger marketing communications budget. Secondly in smaller organisations it occurred where sales promotion was bound up in a wider marketing communications remit and where the style of data collection moved from general to specific.

Diener and Crandell (1978) define the codes by which ethics govern academic research and this view was first outlined by whose four principles of ethical research in the business domain have been widely reported most recently in Bryman and Bell (2003 p539). These authors focused on whether there has been harm to participants, whether participants are researched under conditions of informed consent, and whether deception or an invasion of privacy is involved.

In each case that I researched, the scale, scope and intention behind the research was explained, as were the eventual outcomes. Commercial confidentiality was also assured in each case and clarification given either orally or by letter. An appropriate supporting letter from the marketing department made clear the behaviour and objectivity of the researcher and that I was operating in line with the University’s own research guidelines and ethical frame.

Participation in any case study was voluntary and informed consent was sought from each participant regarding his or her involvement. The privacy of participants was the initial consideration and each participant was given the potential to remain anonymous and also to

make their organisational identities anonymous. Schwartz Ltd., Wisemans plc, Taylors of Harrogate, Johnsons plc and The British Potato Council were all happy for their case studies to be presented in the final thesis. The remaining organisations asked for their case studies to be made anonymous for a range of reasons. One case study, Jolifresh was also made anonymous after negotiations with the focal firm after the primary respondent had left the organisation.

Managers were also offered the opportunity to withdraw themselves and their organisations from the research process at any time. There were a number of reactions from those managers who were approached to participate in the research. Some were welcoming and happy to discuss both historical and current promotions. Others were more guarded about current sales promotional positions and the effectiveness of previous campaigns. Some managers felt time constrained and were happy to be involved within preset and fairly narrow time frames. Others were flexible and accorded me significant and wide-ranging access. Some managers required a preset list of questions to be mailed in beforehand and some managers were happy to be involved by phone and email only. One organisation agreed to see me on a set day and then on my arrival refused to be involved.

Another interesting ethical issue was where initial engagement was with a member of the senior management team, usually the marketing director but then I was subsequently directed to a more junior member of the marketing team. A wide variety of structures, roles and titles were encountered in this research. This is the case with Schwarz where the roles of the Marketing Director and Manager were clearly delineated, though to the majority of the firms who participated where the marketing manager's role encompassed everything including as an 'outlier' position Ekleen's lack of any marketing function at all.

In most cases individual respondents were particularly helpful although in two cases the employee concerned preferred anonymity as they had both recently left the organisation. In one case a junior employee used the data collection interview to be particularly critical of the firm, its practices and management style and culture. I abandoned this case study on two grounds. Firstly the junior employee appeared to be misusing the data collection interview and secondly he was dismissed from the organisation a short time later for gross misconduct. In two separate case organisations Tote and Brother plc I was directed by senior management to two newly appointed junior marketing staff both of whom were uncomfortable discussing either the work of their predecessors or their new role and the strategies they were to employ concerning sales promotion. Both of these interviews and subsequent case studies were also abandoned.

Chapter 5 Case Studies and Causal Explanations

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the case studies and contend that in each case context there are a number of processes and causalities at work which shape the use and management of sales promotion. Each case study presented here represents a unit of analysis which allows exploration of the diversity, richness and the nature of the managerial and organisational reality within which sales promotions take place. In this chapter I attempt to reconcile the themes that have emerged from the case studies with, where appropriate, wider theoretical and conceptual bases. It seeks to avoid the pitfalls outlined by Sayer(1992) in research that falls between “theory and empirical observation and the conceptualisation of the phenomena being studied” (p45)

As remarked upon previously, Eisenhardt (1989) suggests an optimum number of cases of ‘between 4 and 10’ and by implication associates the correlation between greater numbers of case studies and greater generalisation. However as Easton (2009) points out, a critical realist approach to case research is characterised by the objective of trying to understand the nature of the entities involved and the variety of causal mechanisms that shape particular events, such as the running of a particular sales promotion, to occur. Also as Tat and Cornwall (1996) suggest in the case of sales promotion, contextualisation is now preferable to generalisation and immersion in the case contexts is the intention here.

The treatment of the case studies is pragmatic and this suggests that each case has the potential on its own to develop and generate theory but theory does not necessarily

emerge solely in isolation. It is, instead, based on the diversity in each case but also from cross case comparatives where weak and strong lines of causation appear to operate.

These lines of causation emerge from the critical realist view of the nature of processes, which in turn is based on the key question why did a particular event or process take place? Four in depth case studies are presented to provide a core which supports the main knowledge claims and causal explanations. Other cross-case causalities and variables are also examined. Additional supporting factors and insights that emerge from this cross-case analysis further contribute to presenting a richer and more diverse insight into the way that sales promotions are created and managed.

A critical realist approach to the process of analysis starts with a fundamental question which is usually outlined in processual, contextual or temporal terms. In the case of sales promotions this might be expressed in terms of “why did a particular sales promotion occur when and where it did and what factors led to its creation and implementation”. From this starting point, a retroductive process takes place that seeks to reveal the structures and generative mechanisms that underpins the process that led to the entity being created and utilised in the first place. This process of stripping away surface detail in order to “drill down” through the underlying processes and structures as Bhaskar (1978) would suggest, or as Easton (2002) states “peeling away” the layers of what Tsoukas (1989) refers to as the ‘ontic onion’.

As Bhaskar and Danemark (2006) suggest each individual case study is unique and is therefore open to a potentially wide variety of different forms of empiricism. Each sales promotion required a research instrument that allowed it to be investigated within the

specific “real world” context in which this process takes place. The richer more in depth case studies emerged due to the greater access afforded to me and the greater resources I could commit to being in that particular organisational context.

The richer in depth case studies Wisemans, Scottco, Crafter and Ekleen are presented first and then included in a wider set of comparative cross-case ‘analyses’ which are grouped around the key causal factors which have emerged from the research. Finally the knowledge claims emergent from the causal factors in each case study are related to extant understanding drawn from the literature review.

5.2 Wiseman’s plc

Introduction

This case study examines the way that on-pack sales promotion was used in an organisational to support a commodity product in dynamic and competitive markets. It outlines the promotional processes and the organisational and managerial reasons behind the approach to sales promotion that was taken, with a particular emphasis on the managerial actions of the key actors. The key causality critically explored in the case study is the running of two similar promotional activities as part of a larger campaign with two different outcomes and response rates. The case study is presented according to the structure of the model presented earlier.

Sales Promotion Format

Wiseman's have run one major movie themed 'tie in' sales promotion per year since 2001. These have been conducted in conjunction with different sponsoring organisations with different sales promotions agencies acting as go-betweens. For the most part the promotional activity and the qualifiers required to enter the promotion has changed. This case study however, focuses on the 'Magic Roundabout' and 'Garfield' promotions run in 2004 and 2005 both of which had the same qualifiers and promotional mechanisms.

Each promotion was run on-pack and Wisemans' traditional and well-established 'Frisian' pack design was altered and amended to accommodate the promotional imagery and rubric panel. The promotions in this case used a collect and win mechanism with six caps as the qualifier. Both promotions were chance based and predicated on a simple prize draw format.

The Focal Firm

Robert Wiseman was founded in 1947 and the company grew rapidly during the 1960s and 70s. It developed from being an East Kilbride and Glasgow based local dairy to a national milk brand, and is currently the sixth largest in the U.K. It did this mainly by market expansion and acquisition of smaller brands and dairies such as Scottish Farm Diaries and Scottish Pride in order to acquire both a large market share in traditional product areas and distinct branded milk products.

Wiseman's core product is commodity white milk that they term "white milk 3", pasteurised milk that comes in three fat contents, "full", "semi" and "skimmed". This is

their core brand and what they call “the black and white” carton packaged milk is based on the Frisian cow patterning on the packaging, a corporate theme which is carried over to other aspects of branding and marketing communications including their transport fleet. They have two other main product ranges, Fresh and Lo and “The One” both of which are low fat milk products and have their, own mainly ‘above the line’, marketing communications strategies. They have recently launched a flavoured milk ‘lunchbox carton’ product line, aimed at children, and called Shock! Wiseman’s marketing team therefore run four branded product strategies all of which have widely diverse marketing communications strategies to support them.

Wiseman plc are particularly proud of their Scottish roots and their pre-eminent position in Scotland as a milk producer. The “black and white” milk carton brand has high-levels of consumer recall and a strong retail profile, especially in Scotland and the North of England where it is also sold into Hospitals and Schools.

Structurally Wiseman’s marketing department has a marketing director, marketing manager and two marketing assistants. Strategic decisions are largely taken at regular marketing team meetings and then taken to board level. Marketing communications activity at Wiseman’s is diverse, through the line and lively, with media based advertising, sponsorship, P.R., charity based promotions, transport and POS and sales promotions all being used although often not in a strictly integrated way. Creative work is sometimes outsourced to agencies. Other aspects of promotional activity such as fulfilment and handling is largely run and controlled in house, which is atypical for the industry or for sales promotions in general. This is significant in that it shapes the form of promotions, steering them towards consumer response, as in the case of the two promotions examined here, and away from more

sophisticated and technologically based promotions such as digital format and SMS or web based responses from consumers. However they were, at the time that this case study was researched, exploring SMS messaging as a technological response to a promotional issue.

Wiseman's eschew the traditional view of sales promotion as "advertising" or "selling on pack" and have a unique philosophy concerning what they term "being invited onto consumer's breakfast tables" which shapes and informs the way in which they approach on pack promotion. Sales promotion is the key marketing communications activity for "Black and White" and Wiseman's do little to integrate it with other activities except for sponsorship and charitable gift giving / P.R. Other products however, such as Fresh and Lo use a significant "above the line" approach with strong use of T.V. Radio and Outdoors advertising. This is due to Wiseman's pursuing a 'pull' strategy for the non-commodity products resulting, it is hoped, in consumers asking for Fresh and Lo by name. The commodity White Milk 3 line requires more of a push strategy and what they term 'a draw at point of sale'

External Entities

- Customers

Wiseman's acknowledge that the commodity nature of their core product means that at point of sale there is little discretionary choice exercised by consumers. As Joanne stated 'people either buy our milk or somebody else's'. This means that added value or competitive advantage comes largely from price manipulation where the price of milk is not influenced by suppliers or retailers.

- Competitors

There is also little in the way of major competition for “Black and White” within their local markets in Scotland due to the fragmented nature of that competitive context. Wisemans deliberately choose to supply and build relationships with smaller retail chains and ‘corner shops’ and eschew supplying the major multiples with ‘Black and White’. In essence Wisemans’ view the major multiples with their heavily discounted own brand milk as a competitive threat. They perceive their marketing activities, in particular sales promotion as being a differentiating factor and an essential part of their marketing and competitive strategies.

- Retailers

Wiseman’s use the term ‘direct customers’ to refer to the smaller retailers and retail chains with whom they seek to build relationships. By using on-pack promotions Wisemans circumvent the need to involve retailers with display materials and also allows them to maintain control of their pack and brand identity.

The sales promotion used here is also part of an ongoing strategy to engage with smaller retailers to encourage them to stock greater volumes of Wiseman’s product by means other than the more usual channel price manipulations.

- Other Actors

Wiseman’s have direct relationships with full service and specialist marketing communications agencies such as 360°, Lime and 1860. These marketing communications agencies in turn represent larger film industry concerns such as 20th Century Fox and Sony Pictures who are seeking promotional tie ups with brands like Wisemans.

In Wiseman's home market of Scotland various producers are involved in the Scottish Dairy Marketing Company. This entity acts as an 'umbrella' organisation for milk producers, retailers and the major multiples to promote milk and encourage consumer engagement and consumption through above the line advertising and point of sales promotions.

Another stakeholder with influence over the sales promotion process is Tetrapak who handle Wiseman's packaging. This gives Tetrapak some influence on a technical level as to what is possible in packaging terms although the use of sales promotions largely requires changes to the external printing and the disruption of production schedules to accommodate such changes.

Sales Promotion Creation

The promotions were run on pack with prominent film tie up imagery and the promotional messages, statements of compliance and promotional instructions were printed on the reverse of the pack.

The marketing team had to be flexible in order to take advantage of the film tie ups which are, in essence, disruptive to their planning processes. This involves a model of mutual opportunity sensing by both Wiseman's marketing staff and the film company representatives as to likely "tie ins".

The on pack presentation was decided on and the mechanism adapted from an Institute of Sales Promotion template. Tetrapak were consulted as to the on pack printing and production issues. All activities were run in house.

Sales Promotion Implementation

Wiseman's informally integrate sales promotion and other forms of marketing activity most, notably public relations, as part of a marketing strategy that seeks to build consumer awareness and 'brand dialogue'.

Joanne and her team schedule sales promotions in what they claim to be a carefully managed process but they also need to be flexible in order to take advantage of the film tie ups which are in essence disruptive to their planning processes as they present a model of opportunity sensing by both parties as to likely "tie ins"

Joanne prefers her team to run all fulfilment and handling in house in order to keep control of the fulfilment process. As she outlined 'and we are bringing that in house...where we feel we can have control over that....also to ensure that it is done properly to our standards...to try to make sure that the consumer has a feel good factor about the whole process...'

She described a joint promotion where fulfilment was handled by an agency and her frustration and not being able to 'control' this part of the sales promotion process.

Sales Promotion Outcomes

For the two sales promotions described here, 'Garfield' and 'Magic Roundabout' they had different outcomes with 'Garfield' attracting 1280 responses whereas 'Magic Roundabout' fell well short of that at only 570 responses. There is a critical factor here in that the pack print and production numbers are in the hundreds of thousands and the response rates appear especially low given the on-costs and disruption to production runs. What is useful

to note is that their experience in running these two promotions counters the received wisdom that chance based promotions tend to achieve a higher response rate than skills based promotions.

Despite the potential disruption to packaging flows and other forms of marketing communications which support the long-term strategy and objectives, Wiseman's marketing team seem content to continue with the opportunity sensing approach and the movie tie-ins.

One key outcome was that their strategic approach has emerged as a result of the use of sales promotions. Another outcome is that their use of an on-pack promotional activity, which alters the 'black and white' White Milk 3 packaging, has led Wiseman's to subsequently launch Shock! A lunchbox sized flavoured milk product. Shock also has a black pack and bold graphics.

Causal Explanations

Key to this case is the impact of opportunity sensing and the way that opportunities presented themselves to the Wiseman's marketing team. Further to this is the way that promotional activities were developed as a response to these opportunities.

One interesting aspect of this case is the way that despite the high retail profile of their black and white carton design they were, when the opportunity presented itself, willing to subvert the pack design to fit a particular sponsor's theme. As they sell a commodity product, Wiseman's perceives that any added value or scope for differentiation comes from what they do to the packaging rather than its contents. They have therefore, placed heavy emphasis on sales promotion especially on pack sales promotion.

Their use of sales promotions has led to Wiseman's marketing team selecting on-pack sales promotions as their main promotional 'vehicle' to lead their marketing communications strategy. To this end they have rejected "in-pack" promotions as previous attempts using this form of sales promotion failed to deliver enough winners due to customers missing the promotional code and discarding the packaging without claiming the prizes. In order to avoid this problem the on pack- promotions required an active response from consumers.

There is a playful experimentation in the way that Wiseman's use on pack promotions. They are willing to alter and subvert the traditional black and white pack design in order to achieve what Joanne refers to as 'stand out' within the traditional dominant white of the dairy fridge section in stores. As Joanne suggests 'we are... humorous but we are also about adding value in some way for you the consumer, very much trying to engage with you...and it's a way of giving the brand personality'.

Wiseman's reasons for using sales promotion are atypical in that they suggest that they do not tend towards the more usual sales revenue growth or maximisation. Instead they use sales promotion as an added value element in addition to pack changes through which they hope to stimulate consumer interest. The use of a 'six purchase' qualifier suggests that they are comfortable using well established promotional mechanisms but also that they are happy to link the sales promotion to repeat sales, customer loyalty and by default revenue maximisation. Wisemans have a marketing strategy strongly influenced by them being the major brand for milk production in the Northern U.K. They have grown quickly initially by acquisition and subsequently through volume sales of their core product and some innovation in the form of Fresh and Lo.

Wiseman's realise that this long term marketing strategy is tempered by the nature of their core product and that the competitive process is mitigated largely by consumer choice and product availability. They are acutely aware that the main issue is consumer take up as part of a "pull strategy" and this requires retailer acceptance of the brands they offer and the need for retailers to provide shelf space. They are also acutely aware that the commodity nature of much of their product portfolio means that consumers exercise little brand discretion when faced with a range of commodity products. Consumer awareness and retailer acceptance is therefore of greater importance to them than revenue maximisation.

They also perceive using sales promotions as integral to opening some form of dialogue with consumers, that can also be used for PR and to build relationships for what is a transactional commodity product. A secondary objective is using sales promotion in order to enhance and maintain retailer support. This is not just with the major multiples on their One and Fresh and Lo brands but as dealer support for smaller retailers on "black and white Milk 3" with whom Wiseman's have built strong links through on-van sales and a retail management and restock system. They see sales promotion and on pack offers as crucial to strengthening those relationships.

Whilst Wiseman's tend not to outsource their marketing activities they are acutely aware of such opportunities. Whilst they do not overtly seek out partners for on pack promotions they have engaged both with sponsors, and the creative agencies which represent such sponsors, in order to develop joint promotions. It is unsurprising that Wiseman's were drawn to the film tie-ins for their on-pack promotions. They are operating in highly complex environments where they supply some product to their competitors but do not

with others. They are involved in a strategic alliance with their immediate competitors, retailers who they do and don't supply and others within the dairy industry. Such on-pack film ties in, of which the promotions examined here were examples, are an integral part of Wiseman's promotional strategy in that they give them an on pack identity, different to their existing distinctive packaging. The issue of packaging design is a significant for them and as a result, little is done to affect how the pack functions as a carton for milk.

The form and type of promotions selected are informed both by the opportunities that have presented themselves through on pack 'tie-ins', and a management approach to sales promotion that eschews outsourcing in favour of in-house controlled activities. Wiseman's do not use sales promotion for any other purpose such as data capture, beyond the added value and brand engagement aspects, nor do they pre-test promotions.

Wiseman's have used very similar promotional forms driven by external input from promotional agencies and marketing services firms acting on behalf of their clients. They perceive on-pack sales promotions as critical to their marketing strategy that seeks to build brand dialogue with consumers. Response rates however, remain critically low when viewed against the numbers of packs which are marked with the promotional message. The commodity nature of their product, combined with the power of retailers has influenced their marketing and marketing communications strategies. They perceive their use of on-pack promotions as being a differentiator yet they are not in a particular competitive dynamic that suggests price manipulation or differentiation would be useful. The sales promotions employed are to build brand dialogue and seek to engender brand loyalty where possible with consumers. There is also a secondary aim to target smaller retailers in order to continue a strategy of expansion and growth.

They do acknowledge that the commodity nature of their product means that their use of any form of point of sale promotion also assists their immediate competitors hence their involvement with the Scottish Dairy Marketing Company.

Wisemans prefer to have a turnover of different activities throughout the year using the packs for sales promotions and other activities as Joanne suggests:

‘we are very conscious to have different things running, you know... throughout the year... we always say that we are community minded, we are charity minded and fun minded. This is one on pack that we have recently run with the vet’s school in Glasgow and also the Vetaid charity and this is the first time we have ever got involved in anything like this’.

Wiseman’s marketing team have an experimental and playful approach to marketing communications that has great salience with the film tie-ins presenting themselves. It may be however, that they are simply doing this in the hope that the strategy is working. The logic of what they are doing with sales promotions seems sensible to them so they keep doing it and it has quantifiable outcomes. Equally important, actually changing it might be too great a risk. Also their particular approach to sales promotion may imply that the film tie up sales promotion is a disruptive activity. It not only interrupts the marketing activities related to a commodity product, but it also gives them something additional and ‘out of the ordinary’ to be involved in. It is this on-pack experimentation that has led to the packaging and communications strategy that has led to the launch of Shock!

Whilst the marketing team at Wiseman’s acknowledge that the response rates for sales

promotions are not particularly high they remain committed to sales promotions as a significant part of their marketing communications mix. This may be due to other structural factors being of significant concern such as the relationship with retailers or a need to be seen to 'stand out' within a particular competitive dynamic.

5.3 'Crafter'

Introduction

This case study examines the outcomes of a sales promotion campaign run throughout 2007 by Crafter, an importer and manufacturer of musical instruments. The case study presented examines an on-pack /on line data capture promotion run by Crafter. It identifies the sales promotions types and format used and examines the causal factors that shaped the sales promotions and its causal outcomes. It also examines the factors that influenced Crafters management team and these are organised according to the model presented earlier.

Sales Promotion Format

The sales promotion was a typical 'reveal and win' in-pack, chance based promotion with an added on-line data capture element. The entry mechanism for the promotion was based on tokens that were printed inside the packaging on Crafter's smaller, packaged up range of accessories and consumables such as replacement and kit parts, guitar polish and guitar strings with a number of "lucky numbers" plus a message which guided entrants to Crafter's website.

The main prize was a holiday in Florida to attend a music festival. Runner-up prizes included a choice of either a Guitar or Bass Guitar and a large 'prize pot' of 10,000 smaller prizes

such as Crafter T Shirts, Caps, Key Rings, Guitar Pick Cases and packs of Guitar Picks

Consumers were 'driven' towards Crafter's website through in store promotional leafleting, advertisements and advertorial in specialist publications. The Crafter website data captured each participant's details, and used permission conventions such as click boxes to determine whether they opted in or out of mailing lists, either electronic or paper or not at all. Those that were not instant winners could send in their tokens with their details for a second chance to win one of a range of smaller prizes. Crafter had not built in a convention for consumers to enter without using the online route and this has potential implications for the validity if not the legality of the promotional activity.

If a participant won any of the main prizes they received an acknowledgement message by email through which they were asked to send in their details by post with the in-pack promotional ticket and till receipt as validation.

The Focal Firm

Crafter has operated since the mid 1970's from its headquarters in the East Midlands. The business originally started out as high quality builders of musical instruments, notably guitars and bass guitars. Crafter was formed due to merger of Charlesworth's Musical Instruments and Wilsons who had gained a reputation for building well made and quirky but original guitars during the U.K. 'beat boom' of the 1960's. A volume strategy failed after rapid expansion in the early 1990's, leaving the company insolvent and on the verge of closure. An intervention by Tom, a local entrepreneur and acting as managing director, ended in liquidation and final closure in January 1993 following a turbulent period in the company's history.

The business reopened in early 1997 under the same name with Rick, the former operations director, acting as managing director and the former marketing manager Simon being reappointed as marketing director. Paul, a marketing graduate with 2 years experience, was taken on as marketing manager in 2003, and Rob who had recently graduated from the local university was taken on in October 2006 as marketing assistant.

Following the reopening of Crafter, product strategies and marketing activity were realigned to involve import and distribution of musical instruments rather than their construction. Branding and marketing communications capitalised on the old, well established brand name with its reputation for quality and hand crafted instruments and combined it with “exciting” new brands and parts for the self build enthusiast and repairer at lower prices, sourced from outside of the U.K. most notably from the Far East.

Crafter has a strong brand identity, name and reputation, although this is possibly being eroded by their new product strategies which target a different consumer with different expectations and relies on low end imports of replacement musical instrument parts trading on the ‘Bilder by Crafter’ name and reputation for quality.

The new products account for at least 95% of Crafter’s turnover with a very small range of hand built custom ordered products still being produced at the company’s headquarters. The core operation relies on a ‘pick and pack’ process in which import bulk orders are broken down and individual items placed in ‘Bilder by Crafter’ branded packaging. The in-house team of luthiers, some of whom have returned to the firm having worked for “Old

Crafter”, refinish damaged “woodworks” such as bodies and necks which are then sold on as discounted lines.

Crafter employs a team of sales professionals who are based in 6 locations across the U.K. Their role is to visit retailers and ‘push’ Crafter product. Recent high profile successes in influencing European and domestic retailers to place large orders have meant the sales force headed by Jon have achieved a pre-eminent position in Crafter’s management structure. Simon describes this as ‘having the ear of the boss’. There have also been a number of meetings where the sales team has levelled criticism at Simon and his team over their marketing communications especially in relation to retail point of sale and getting retailers to push product for Crafter.

Crafter’s most recent promotional activity, and the subject of this case study, focused on their “Bilder” range of musical instruments and stringed instrument kit accessories and replacement parts produced in the Far East but bearing the Crafter brand name. Previous promotional activity at Crafter had been mainly “business to retailer” and based around volume incentives for dealers who hit certain sales targets along the lines of sell 10 boxes of product get an 11th box free. A critical factor for Crafter was that retail sales and retailer take up were slowing. Despite the best efforts of the sales team the number of retailers who stocked Crafter product had, at the time of the research for this case study, fallen for the first time.

External Entities

- Customers

Crafter sell two distinct products, the first is ready made up instruments which is now a small part of their total operation and turnover and harks back to 'Old' Crafter. Secondly the most significant part of the current Crafter operation are the Bilder replacement parts for those who wish to improve or repair their own instruments.

Crafter have divided their customer base into two groups the 'home hobbyist' market and the 'gigging musician'. There is also a further split in terms of the purchase process between what they term 'walk-ins', those customers who access Crafter's products through retailers on the one hand and mail order customers on the other. A large part of the turnover, the marketing team suggest, is based on impulse purchases of items to enhance and improve instruments. Both the hobbyist repairer and the gigging musician, they point out, are often looking for a part to repair their instrument at short notice and are therefore not especially price or brand sensitive. If the part fits and allows them to complete a replacement or repair job on their instrument then it is usually purchased.

- Retailers

Crafter supply 56 'main dealers' across the U.K. and Ireland with a further 20 non retail dealers who are mainly instrument repairers and builders who will fit Crafter products if a consumer requests them or is seeking to cut the price of repair. The 'main dealers' are expected to stock more than 50% of Crafter's current catalogue in return for generous and negotiable discounts and display materials.

Crafter's team suggest that a widespread dealer network, where consumers know they can

find what they need keeps sales healthy. Simon argues that their in-house mail order catalogue is merely the “icing on the cake” as it doesn’t “perform as well as the dealer network” in total sales revenue generated and is therefore unimportant both for Crafter and within this case study.

Crafter’s marketing team do, however, acknowledge that they have a major image issue that needs to be overcome in terms of retailer stocking and pushing their product. Whereas in the past retailers would be happy to act as stockists for brands such as Crafter they are much more guarded now about ordering large amounts of stock in order to achieve volume discounts. This may be due to prevailing economic conditions, or hobbyists buying parts over the internet directly from overseas or on auction sites such as EBay.

Another problem is that they supply full free standing plastic point of sale display racks to retailers who may then fail to reorder from Crafter but still use Crafter’s racks to stock discounted cheaper products from other suppliers. Thus the Crafter business with its wide range of small individual generic products is vulnerable to point of sale product substitution and the impact of the web as a market place. As Paul said ‘ We set the stuff up for them and it makes their stores look better.. you know display...and they just hang other stuff on them rather than re-order from us’. Therefore all at Crafter saw sales promotion as being crucial to “cementing” and maintaining relationships with retailers.

- Competitors

Crafter is the fifth largest U.K. based importer/distributor in the portable musical instrument sector (i.e. guitars and bass guitars) by volume and turnover. They are resigned to losing that particular position due to external structural changes in their market sector

caused by both an aggressive expansion strategy by a European competitor entering the U.K. market, and recent merger and acquisition activity.

The market for musical instrument parts and consumables, although healthy in the U.K., is dominated by well-established U.S. and European brands that are also sourcing and “badging” replacement and kit parts from the Far East. There is an attraction for U.K. consumers in buying parts from large U.S. brands as there is a perception, perhaps erroneously, that U.S. musical instruments are still built to higher quality standards than instruments and by default parts from the Far East or Europe.

The main area of competitive activity is at the field sales level, where brands try to convince retailers to stock their gondola end and behind the counter racks, continuing to restock from the same supplier.

Their main competitor in the industry is Mean Streets who pride themselves on importing and distributing high quality U.S. products in limited numbers for high margins, then controlling consumer’s access to replacement parts for which they charge higher prices. Crafter has had a number of what Rob termed “run-in’s” with Mean Streets as Crafter import and sell cheaper generic copies of Mean Streets’ high quality American manufactured parts.

Crafter face increased competition from internet purchasing, but tended to play down its impact. Simon instead suggested that targeted mail outs, mail order catalogues and a dealer network was the business model which had worked best in their case. More recently, however, they had begun to take the potential for e-commerce more

seriously.

Few other competitors actively engage in any other form of 'below the line' promotional activity due to specialist print media being the dominant form of marketing communications in this industry. Occasional sponsorship of shows and guitar technique clinics however, with "meet and greets" by famous players who then give away product and promotional clothing, badges and stickers is the most used and normal form of below the line activity used in the sector. Both Crafter and Mean Streets have run events of this type.

- Others
 - Consultants

Crafter had employed Jenny in 2006 as a 'marketing consultant' to develop a new corporate identity for them. Jenny is non agency based and appointed on Crafter's behalf by the local Business Link. Jenny extended her brief to include 'above' and 'below the line' marketing communications. She recommended a strategy whereby Crafter change their media based advertising in the specialist print sector and revitalised their consumer facing point of sale activities.

Sales Promotion Creation

The sales promotion was developed through a series of meetings described as 'lengthy and often pointless' by Paul. In these meetings the sales promotion strategy came into being with Jon, the sales director, occasionally being involved. I was present at one of these meetings and the main objective appeared to be using the sales promotion to satisfy what Jon referred to as 'grumbles from the guys in the

shops who actually sell our stuff’.

All marketing team members were involved in the preparation of the promotional materials with Jenny taking them through the process stage by stage. A planning meeting was held in the November with key milestones put in place. The point of sale materials and displays were printed up in January. The mechanism was copied from a similar sales promotion Jenny had run with a local gift company and the materials were printed by a local printer. Rob was made responsible for altering the company’s existing website to include the promotions and data capture pages and to install the database software that would drive what Simon described as ‘Crafter’s first foray into database marketing’.

25,000 pack inserts and amended pack outers were printed and prepared by the local printer who did all of Crafter’s packaging, and Crafter’s retail stockists were informed three months in advance both by letter and through advertisements in “Mi-Pro” magazine, the trade publication.

The Crafter team admitted that they were content to ‘let Jenny run things’ and that they were ‘in the dark’ about certain aspects of the process of creating a sales promotion.

Sales Promotion Implementation

The one off promotional activity was run at point of sale through retailers who were part of Crafter’s dealer network and also on Crafter’s stand at a major U.K. based trade and consumer exhibition. The sales promotion was supported by specialist magazine advertising

and highlighted the fact that the promotional materials would be available at point of sale in 'selected retail outlets' which form Crafters U.K. dealership network and at the trade fair.

The cost and lead times for reprinting packs with the promotional tokens and numbers inside the packaging and pack flash and rubric outside were under-estimated by Simon and the Crafter marketing team. This resulted in a delay in placing materials at stockist's point of sale until early March, the initial promotion having been 'flagged' with retailers as starting in mid February.

The data capture and web materials also weren't live for the first 10 days of the promotion from the March start date. Crafter's marketing team faced a decision as to whether this would have had any effect on the final outcome. It was initially decided to let the promotion run until it self-liquidated on the main prizes and for smaller prizes a closing date was abandoned altogether. After much discussion, the decision was taken to keep to the original closing date originally six weeks from the start date, and run a truncated promotion rather than change the printed material but to keep the promotion running for consumers to claim their prizes the last date for claiming being December 31st.

Sales Promotion Outcomes

The promotion failed for Crafter because of a number of factors. Firstly there had not been an overall winner due to either the pack going unclaimed and still being in stock or it having been discarded. The Crafter team had chosen to extend the promotion until all of the major prizes had self liquidated under the guise of consumers still claiming their prizes. This took until July, when in fact the closing date had been initially set for March 31st. This

was a potential irregularity in the way that this sales promotion was run which could have voided the promotional activity and could have been construed as illegal. There was also the unresolved issue of the on-going claiming of the smaller prizes which Crafter had set as December 31st.

Sign up and response rates were particularly slow, with Simon saying that on one particular day they had checked and 'only 5 people had signed up' and that '10 responses... was a good day'. The Crafter marketing team were unwilling to give me a final total for the promotion, stating only that it had been 'disappointing'.

Crafter also lost three of their dealer network although it could not be determined whether the promotional campaign was a contributory factor. Another outcome of the promotion was that Crafter and Jenny the marketing communications consultant parted company after 10 months of working together.

Causal Mechanisms

There was general discussion both informally and in meetings within the marketing team concerning why the promotion had "not delivered" and where to go from there. Clearly, things had not gone well with the promotion and Simon was concerned with what had gone wrong, what could be done to "salvage" the situation and how could they "build on" this early mistake.

The underlying marketing rationale was to use the Crafter name to tap into customer's nostalgia for the 1960's and 1970's to boost sales. That said Crafter's marketing team appeared unclear as to how to use that brand heritage as a valuable and long standing

resource in order to encourage retailer and consumer loyalty. In addition Crafter's marketing team were inexperienced in the use of sales promotion and point of sale activity as evidenced by their earlier attempts to incentivize retailers. This was borne out by their decision to delegate the sales promotion activity to Jenny.

Marketing activity at Crafter had mainly been focused on specialist magazine advertising and presence at trade fairs. Jenny the external consultant's advice on below the line was that Crafter should use sales promotion to stimulate both consumer interest and help to "cement dealer relations", and link it with a newly designed website in order to gradually switch to database driven marketing. In running the promotion Crafter, as Simon put it, 'fell between two stools' with the promotion realizing neither objective.

The issue of time and the timing of the promotion was clearly a significant causal factor in this case. The planning phase before the sales promotion was implemented and managed was clearly a significant factor in the 'false start' for the promotion and its subsequent lack of take up.

The promotion itself demonstrated how inexperienced Crafter's marketing team were in managing the sales promotion process. The mismanagement of lead times, website content and the delay in placing materials in retail contexts all highlight the way in which the inexperience of the team led to them relying heavily on Jenny.

Crafter had sought to employ a strategy of promoting at the point of sale and what Simon called 'keeping retailers sweet' due in part to the influence of the Head of Sales and his sales team whose recent European sales success had elevated the position of the team in the eyes

of Rick the Managing Director. The sales promotion may be viewed as part of a strategy by Simon to raise the profile of the marketing team. In real terms this was not a useful position to take as Crafter's stockists were using their point of sale materials in order to sell competitor's products.

The sales promotion was seen as a crucial 'relaunch' exercise to reintroduce Crafter to disenchanted retailers by Jon the sales manager, whereas the marketing team were as Rob saw it 'pulling in the direction of e-commerce' as a way of circumventing what Simon described as 'the retail problem'. Whilst the use of the promotion was laudable in its intentions, Crafter's marketing team seemed unclear as to why the use of the data from it to launch an ecommerce strategy might have potential implications for their relationships with retailers. There was therefore a tension within Crafter which emerged between those who saw their core business as supplying the enthusiast who picks something up as and when he or she needs to repair their guitar or amplifier; and the casual hobbyist.

There was a perceived need by some retailers for full stocks at the point of sale as these are impulse purchases with a high level of substitutability should Crafter's product not be available. Others in the organisation, most notably the marketing team saw e-commerce and database marketing with ensuing promotions, mail outs and interactivity as being the way forward with retail point of sale taking less of a significant role.

Their analysis of the purchase habits of their customers however, did not include the issue of immediacy of access to a product to complete a repair job and that in this the e-commerce plan had understated the significance of wait times for customers who need the parts to complete their repair job. Simon was ambivalent on this issue suggesting that some

are 'prepared to wait whilst their stuff is sent out, others need it that day...like if you have a gig that night and you need a part for your guitar'.

The marketing team sought to create a web based "relationship" marketing strategy and having a relationship with consumers and builders with forums and "infotainment" all themed on, and aimed at, guitar builders and players. Given that their previous marketing communications activity had been formulaic and similar to their competitors, both the sales promotion and database marketing activities look over ambitious given the team were lacking in experience using such communications technologies.

It was intended that, in the longer term, this communications format might be integrated with other marketing communications activities. The sales promotion was central to this process and represented Crafter's first time in using the internet to both data capture and run a promotional activity. Their relative inexperience as marketers is manifest in the way that the sales promotion activity was out sourced to Jenny and by their expectations for what the sales promotion could do. As Simon suggested they saw the promotion and its data capture process as a 'magic bullet to bring Crafter into the 21st Century'

5.4 Scottco

Introduction

This case study concerns the way that traditional forms of sales promotion can be used in an organisation repetitively and on a regular basis. It outlines the promotional processes

and the organisational and managerial reasons behind the approach to sales promotion that was taken, with a particular emphasis on the managerial processes of the actors. It is structured around the model outlined earlier in this thesis. Scottco are a traditional and long established retailer of clothing and home-wares. They are a traditional and paternalistic organisation that has grown and expanded in to England and Wales from their home-base near Glasgow.

Sales Promotions Format

Scottco's 'Big Giveaway' prize draw format had become a mainstay of their point of sale strategy and had been used in the same way for a period of eight years between 1998 and 2006. Prior to that, little formalized or planned marketing communications activity had been in place. There were occasional ad-hoc promotional activities, free-sheet drops and heavy emphasis on 'offer based' newspaper advertisements in publications geographically close to their Scottish stores. Between 1998 and 2006, however, the Big Giveaway had become an annual event run by Scottco using a traditional A5 promotional entry form situated at point of sale.

The promotional mechanism was linked to a purchase from any one of Scottco's stores, supported by large and prominent in-store and window signage. Upon completion of a sale, each member of staff was trained to offer the customer an entry form, which was then stamped as validation that a purchase had taken place. The customer filled in their personal details and the entry form was placed in an in-store box. The completed entries were then returned to Scottco's marketing department on a weekly basis. The promotion was always "chance" oriented and never related to

skill. Prizes had usually been a car, a major holiday or a cash prize the largest of which was £200,000 and linked to the Millennium celebrations in 1999/2000

In the last 3 years, Scottco had begun to use smaller prize draws targeted around specific seasonal events and often to coincide with the launch of new product ranges. Most recently there have been other minor changes in the promotional format, such as scratch cards used in 2006 rather than the A5 entry forms. All promotions, whether the large scale annual events or the more recent smaller scale events, were run for 6-8 weeks with a definite clearly identified closing date at the end of that period.

In 2007, Scottco began, albeit tentatively, to use the web as a marketing communications tool. Information about the in-store promotions was placed on the company web site, but there was no attempt to run the same promotion on-line or tangentially with the in-store promotion.

The Focal Firm

Scottco are a major Scottish based retail discount clothing and home-wares business. It has 170 outlets in Scotland and 116 in Northern England, the South West, Wales London and the Midlands. At the time that this case study was researched Scottco were seeking to expand into other parts of the U.K and had recently opened 3 new stores in East Anglia and the Home Counties.

Scottco celebrated their 125th anniversary in 2005 and had been owned by the same family, the Adamsons until 1998. Two members of the Adamson family still sit on the board of directors. The managerial culture both in the marketing department and in

the wider organisation could be described as traditional and paternalistic. The company still partly operates out of the office building on the outskirts of Glasgow where much of the internal décor is redolent of the firm's Victorian past. The company's history and Scottish heritage is a significant part of what defines them as an organisation with reception areas and meeting rooms hung with photographs of the first Scottco stores and paintings of members of the Adamson family who have run the business in the past.

On one of the visits I made to Scottco, Jim said that he had worked for Scottco for 22 years as he put it 'man and boy' and had only recently taken over the marketing director's function due to the eventual retirement of his previous line manager. The marketing department followed a traditional structure with Jim as Senior Marketing Manager (Director Designate), Stephen who was Assistant Marketing Manager and Rose who had joined Scottco from University as a Graduate Trainee and was now Marketing Assistant. Paul a recent recruit from the local Further Education College was responsible for web site management and 'data base marketing'. Secretarial and administrative support was provided by 3 other female staff, and the marketing team also had one other member, Mark who was 'shared' with the regional sales and merchandising teams. More recently two non- executive directors had been recruited at board level with one responsible for as Jim put it 'looking at what we do with our store operations and the customer experience'.

The culture at Scottco might also be described as risk averse. Jim eschewed the e-commerce route to market as being 'for the big catalogue companies... Grattan's and the like, but not for us'. Jim mentioned that he had adopted what he described as an

'if it isn't broke don't fix it' approach to marketing communications in common with the previous marketing director's approach.

Jim described Scottco's marketing communications strategy as being 'geographically focused' and 'seasonally based'. Their mainstay activities include targeted 'fashion shoot' poster sites near to store locations and local hand delivered free-sheets highlighting discounts special offers. Store window displays, point of sale materials and prize draw based sales promotions represented the activity which Jim explained as being significant 'as part of our...customer experience'.

In 2005 Scottco changed its sales management data systems as part of a general overhaul of the IT function. For the first time they were able to pinpoint with relative accuracy sales data on a more focused store by store and even sales staff basis. Greater emphasis was placed on the impact of footfall, consumer spend and consumer feedback. Surveys and monitoring of customers entering each store were conducted in Spring of 2006 with a follow up telephone qualitative questionnaire in exchange for a £15 discount voucher should customers wish to be involved .

Jim outlined Scottco's overall marketing strategy as generally 'slow and steady' with little reason to change, which is manifest in the continued use of the same promotional format over a long period of time. At the time of the interview however, following the appointment of the two non-executive directors, Scottco's marketing and marketing communications strategies were currently under review.

External Entities

Scottco's position as a non catalogue discount retailer means that the externalities which the marketing team mainly focus on are customer responses to in-store and localized activity and the actions of competitors.

- Customers

One of Scottco's key 'strategic issues' pointed out by Jim was that of 'managing customers perception'. This was especially critical in England where Scottco had expanded rapidly into high street and some out of town retail parks. Scottco had therefore sought to place heavy emphasis on 'the in-store customer experience' and Jim identified a potential tension between customers perceiving us as 'a Scottish brand' and as 'a discount retailer'. Jim outlined Scottco's key strategic customer facing objective as wanting to be perceived as both 'different' and 'down to earth' in the minds of consumers.

Jim spoke at length about his view of the typical Scottco customer. He identified them as 'largely female, working class and value seekers' but not 'willing to accept second rate products or 'shoddy store environments'. Jim seemed to take great pride in the fact that as a young boy growing up in Paisley his mother had shopped and equipped the family home from Scottco and that his sister's first Saturday job had been in a Scottco store.

Jim suggested that the recent changes in sales data management systems and the 2006 market research exercise meant that Scottco had become more acutely attuned to the way that the customer experience might be managed and the prize draw activities were perceived to be an important part of this. The customer experience he argued had 'assumed a new importance' due to Scottco's decision not to be a 'big box discounter' but also not a

'high price shopping experience' which Jim suggested 'switched off' Scottco's main customer base. Jim clearly saw the sales promotion activities as a key part of this process and they were, according to Jim, generally positive about the sales promotions so they were retained as a key part of Scottco's marketing communications activity.

- Competitors

Scottco's position within the 'retail discount' strategic group is an interesting one. They perceive themselves to be 'different' from their immediate competitors, not just as Jim put it 'because of our Scottish heritage' but also in their image relative to their competitors. Jim used the phrase 'added value discounter' several times during our meetings and I noted that other members of the marketing team did also. Whilst this was central and critical to their perception of Scottco as different from their main competitors it was not made clear how this related to their immediate competitors or the market structure in which they operate.

Heavy discounters such as Matalan, Home Bargains and B+M Bargains, the latter having recently aggressively expanded into Scottco's central and south west Scottish base, were perceived not to be a competitive threat as they were 'more down market' than Scottco and did not stock Scottco's clothing and homewares ranges. Neither were the major multiples nor what Jim described as "end of line discounters such as T.K. Maxx". When pressed on who Jim perceived as being a major competitive threat he cited Liverpool based T.J.Hughes in the U.K. whose profile and product lines seemed to replicate much of what Scottco also offered.

- Other Actors

Their relationship with the Institute of Sales Promotion was purely at membership level in

order to take advantage of the ISP's membership underwriting scheme.

Sales Promotion Creation

Scottco's Board of Directors and marketing team originally formulated 'the Big Giveaway' promotional campaign as part of a multi level marketing strategy. On one level it was perceived almost as 'gift giving' to reward loyal customers, mainly in their Scottish stores, which were well established and profitable; and at the other, as a sales revenue maximiser. It was also seen as a way of reinforcing their presence in England which had faltered competitively, following a push south in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Little innovation or change was made, or any real forethought given to the use of the sales promotions formats. Discussions with the two more junior marketing team members revealed that they felt that the sales promotion format was just reused with any 'minor' planned changes checked against the Institute of Sales Promotion guidelines to ensure the promotion was still able to be underwritten by the ISP. Rose described the process as being very much 'cut and paste from last year' giving an example of 'one year the forms didn't even change at all ...we just changed the wording on the front and the photographs and sent them off to be printed'. There was what was described by Rose as 'this kind of repetitive approach to the promotions' where innovation or even change was 'frowned upon', and that when she had raised the possibilities of using web or SMS text based promotions in a meeting it had been dismissed as 'too technical' and 'not what we do'.

The prize draw run in summer 2006 which informed my research into Scottco was a chance based Win a Car promotion, the prize being a Mini convertible car to tie in with the summer fashions and 'Day at the Beach' home ware promotion. This used a scratch card

format instead of the more usual A5 leaflet.

Sales Promotion Implementation

What emerged from the 2005, 2006 and 2007 promotional campaigns run by Scottco was the way that, despite their seeming unwillingness to alter what they perceived to be a 'winning formula', other internal and systemic changes meant that Scottco began to make small incremental innovations in their use of sales promotion. This manifested itself in the use of scratch cards in 2006 as a major break from the use of A5 printed leaflets. This led to a shift in the point of sale implementation of the promotional campaign, in that customers were encouraged to fill in the back of the scratch-cards and return them even if they had not won the car or the cash prize in return for a smaller cash prize or discount vouchers.

Rose reported that there were problems with the scratch-card promotions because of the very low rate of take up, with some stores being left with large piles of cards. The result was that the promotion did not self liquidate. There were also the added problems of 'used' cards littering sales floor areas. The scratch-card idea was abandoned in favour of the traditional prize draws in summer 2007, although the car as main prize format was retained.

The implementation of each promotional activity falls to Mark, and the regional merchandising team, who are responsible for getting promotional materials out into the stores with supporting point of sale and window display materials. The return to the more standardized A5 entry form leaflets meant that entry forms were once again returned on a weekly basis to be input into a customer data base by Paul and the admin staff. When pressed on how the data base was to be used Jim revealed that 'little had been done with the data to date' but that the firm had 'big plans' for some sort of 'targeted' promotional

activity aimed at 'loyal customers'.

Sales Promotion Outcomes

Scottco's marketing team perceived the 2007 promotion to be successful. While the response rates were relatively low, sales showed an 8% increase during the duration of the promotion against previous month's sales. The response rates for the 'Win a Car' sales promotion were 'sub 1,000' according to Jim, against 50,000 leaflets printed and delivered to the 286 stores across the U.K. Jim suggested that 'between 500 and 1,000 responses' were 'within expectations' and that 'other factors' were behind their use of sales promotion 'not just response rates to the promotion itself'. These were "increased footfall and consumer spend" and "getting people into the shop even if they don't spend or enter the promotion". This he related to the use of the promotion as part of the company's long term plans to improve store appearance and 'add value to the consumer experience'

Jim also alluded to what he called a 'P.R. bounce' that comes from announcing the prize draw winner, although he acknowledged that this had diminished now that there were smaller seasonal prizes rather than one major prize.

Scottco data captured consumer details from the entry forms although little was done with this information until recently. Jim outlined plans to use the material to target other messages and offers to consumers.

Causal Explanations

Scottco remain committed to the use of a standardized skill based point of sale prize draw because of a combination of factors. There has been little change or innovation over time due to internal and external factors that influence the focal firm's operating environment. The continued replication of largely the same format of sales promotion for such a long time period is grounded in the organisation's managerial culture. Perceptions of the risks inherent in innovations to the promotional format have been influenced by an entrenched managerial culture passed down from the previous marketing director.

The retirement of their previous marketing director and subsequent promotion of Jim, the current marketing director designate from marketing manager, in 2006 did little to change Scottco's use of the large prize format sales promotion. Jim's promotion from within, rather than the appointment of an external candidate may have been a contributory factor in the repeated use of the same promotional format.

The promotional activity has become embedded within risk averse organisational and marketing departmental processes. Beyond using the Institute of Sales Promotion guidelines as a template for the promotional format there did not appear to be any other external actors having any input into or influence on the promotion. Lack of any external input from outside agents directly contributed to the stability and replication of the promotional model over time. The absence of such external agents has probably limited Scottco's adaptation and development of promotional formats or ideas. Any change was concentrated in the prize fund and resulted in one year of using scratch cards, with less success than the A5 entry form format. This "innovation" may have been largely down to a local printer, who handles Scottco's printing, offering them the scratch cards as part of a deal to retain their

business.

This sales promotion format meets Scottco's objectives and reinforces Scottco's management team's perception of their market positioning. Their objectives were never at the level of sales revenue maximization but instead were attached to other corporate objectives such as expansion into England.

One critical factor, which is clearly grounded in the way that the promotion was presented to customers, was the 'feminine' nature of the imagery on the entry forms and of the prizes offered. Whilst the promotion was not overtly targeted at females the marketing management team at Scottco seemed to have an idealized view of a typical Scottco customer and this has had a significant impact on the way that promotions were presented.

The reason for the promotions extended "life" is that its 'cookie cutter' format is simple to operate, is easily delegated to junior staff and can be replicated with relatively low levels of financial or temporal cost. The promotion was also something that could be repeated without losing its impact and could be deployed with little forward planning.

Scottco's marketing team believed that the promotion in the way it was run and organised by them, was "a unique differentiating factor". This was due to a perceived need by Scottco's management to maintain their market position and perceived status as 'the outsiders' in their industry sector. They clearly did not see themselves as 'big box discounters' and saw the sales promotion as a crucial part of managing the consumer experience at the point of sale.

The differentiation in Scottco's use of such a traditional promotional format may be that within their market sector they may be the only competitors still using such a format. Their immediate competitors mainly prefer discount pricing strategies or operate through more sophisticated customer facing added value schemes such as loyalty cards. The non-use of a loyalty card by Scottco is also significant in that it was different from the retail strategies of many of their competitors at the time, who were abandoning single winner sales promotions in favour of wide reaching purchase loyalty schemes.

Scottco's marketing team and board identified that they had a lack of perceived presence in the rest of the UK. As Jim stated: "We were seeking a way of standing out in the English retail context –a problem we really didn't have in Scotland". From a marketing standpoint Jim suggested that their traditional 'Scottishness' had not 'worked well for them' in the English market and that their expansion into England had been difficult. Significantly, the issue of Scottco's Scottish heritage and the use of the sales promotion in Scotland was felt to be different to the way that it was used and the company was perceived in England. Jim outlined the problem thus,

'In Scotland, we were well established and liked by consumers north of the Border. The promotion was just a way of making us appear different and rewarding customers for buying from us which we thought was a novel idea...a prize giveaway rather than a loyalty card'.

In England, however, Scottco had found consumers less interested in Scottco, its product ranges or indeed its promotions. The response rates Jim had admitted were significantly lower from English stores. Despite this information and sales data from the IT system Scottco appeared to be doing little to rectify this situation.

Scottco's use of traditional promotional formats such as the kind described in this case study may have met some of the management team's expectations in terms of a lift in sales and positive consumer feedback. They have however, also eschewed on-line or technologically driven forms of promotional activity as Jim suggested, "We would lose the opportunity to link the promotion to in-store sales and the in store- customer experience".

It would be difficult to point to the sales promotion as a singular causality that led to an increase in sales as other internal processes such as a store improvement plan coming on stream in 2007 may also have been contributory factors.

Scottco have also moved to a more sophisticated and technologically driven sales data management system. This has led to a rethink in the way that Scottco's board and Jim in particular viewed their management of the point of sale and marketing activity surrounding it. Despite this adoption of a more sophisticated sales management system, the Scottco marketing team did not look to other external factors beyond the use of the sales promotion as an explanation for any increase in sales. This might have been due to consumers starting to seek added value and discounts over premium products and retailers or an acceptance that value seeking through price discounts had become increasingly less stigmatised.

Rose, the departmental marketing assistant put forward the view that 'other factors could have meant that people were spending' which she identified as 'increased footfall and interest in value for money consumers'. She also highlighted the fact that the promotions were used in the run up to key holiday and annual events such as Christmas, Easter and Back to School which also might potentially explain any additional increase in sales. As Jim

suggested 'we would like to think that our sales promotions are popular with our customers...but the truth is we really don't know'.

5.5 Ekleen

Introduction

The case study relates to a particular promotional campaign run by Ekleen between January and July of 2008 that combined three forms of promotional activity within the same time frame and on the same promotional neck collar. It outlines the promotional format and the organisational and managerial reasons behind the approach to sales promotion that were taken. Particular emphasis is given to the managerial actions of the actors involved. The sales promotion was a relative success despite the fact that this was Ekleen's first attempt at a sales promotion. Ekleen's lack of a formal marketing managerial role and the business context that they were operating in is also explored using the causal framework presented earlier in this thesis.

Sales Promotion Format

In February 2008 the senior management team at Ekleen implemented their first sales promotion activity. They had spent most of 2006/7 changing the business model and distribution networks from a strictly business to business one to a part consumer facing model,

The promotion was printed on neck collars and used a combination of a premium promotion and a price manipulation coupon, alongside an instant win based prize draw to

win a fitted bathroom. The premium aspect of the promotion was based on an online token collection process managed by sales promotion consultants Inside Track, which allowed consumers to purchase special offer items such as cleaning and household equipment and scented candles. The premium promotional mechanisms were linked to an individual number printed on the inside of the neck collar. The price manipulation coupon was for 25p off the next purchase.

The Focal Firm

Ekleen are based in West Yorkshire and produce domestic and industrial cleaning products. A classic small business start-up, they were formed when Raj and Andrew left University in 2001. Raj has an M.B.A. and an accounting qualification and Andrew the operations director has a Chemistry degree and a Masters degree in Operations Management. Andrew had previously worked for ICI before returning to full time study. The firm employees 12 people including Sue who manages the office. The rest of the staff are employed in administration, operations and as van drivers. The company also employs Mike, a sales manager with experience in the chemical industry.

Ekleen's core business model, and main market, is business-to-business, selling into the professional cleaning sector. They have only recently branched out into a range of discounted consumer cleaning products. This has required them to source smaller container sizes for their products and to examine a more consumer facing approach.

Ekleen do not have a marketing management function in place. They have a sales office headed up by Sue the sales office manager. Any marketing decisions are taken by Raj the managing director, in conjunction with Andrew, the operations director. Mike is also

occasionally consulted.

One of Ekleen's management team goals was to widen their retailer base and "move up market" to get their products into the major multiple supermarket sector.

Ekleen's management team see this as being possible through one of three processes; develop a relationship with one major multiple and produce "own brand" product for them; target only the discount multiple sector; or to develop a strong brand identity (Mr Muscle and Toilet Duck were referred to on several occasions). To date the management team remain divided on the best way forward.

External Entities

- Customers

Up until the recent shift in strategy - to market a range of consumer cleaning products- Ekleen have pursued a largely business-to-business strategy. This has meant that their customers and network relationships were in the industrial cleaning sector with buyers representing large-scale commercial cleaning operations and buying in bulk often by the pallet.

The change in pack size to a smaller more consumer-oriented product has meant establishing a different set of downstream activities and relationships. Initially Ekleen have targeted two discount chains with their new product range these being BargainCo based in the Midlands and YourSavings based in the North of England and Southern and Central Scotland. As Raj outlined 'it suits us fine for the time being to be involved with discount chains...we feel we are building a strong brand relative to this sector"

To date they have largely avoided selling into the major multiples, although that remains a long-term goal. They have built strong relationships with single stores, cash and carry outlets and regional discount multiples through an aggressive sales strategy largely run by Mike. Mike said that ‘establishing these relationships has been difficult and we needed something to say who we were to these firms...the sales promotion was it’.

Ekleen had previously incentivised customers in the professional cleaning sector to take extra product through target driven business-to-business promotional mechanisms. These take the form of volume manipulations linked to the number of cartons of product sold and are organized by Mike the salesman on a customer by customer basis.

Ekleen have done no formal market research into consumer markets and what they need or want. Raj and Mike have toured BargainCo’s stores and met the BargainCo management team to ‘get a feel’ for the new markets they are seeking to enter.

Raj perceives that the recent economic downturn has been beneficial for discount brands like Ekleen. He suggested reasons why customers seek low prices on commodity items like cleaning products stating...’it’s like there are eco brands like Ecover and then that’s it...after that it’s all pretty much the same bleach or kitchen surface cleaner just different strengths and concentrations...customers have twigged that’. In other words there is little brand differentiation.

- Competitors

The management team continually compare their product offering and their use of sales promotions to “more mainstream” brands such as Domestos and SC Johnson. At present

they are in a position where their strategy of selling into discount stores is largely unchallenged by their major competitors. Their customer relationships with BargainCo and YourSavings mean that in the wider context they are competing with major cleaning products suppliers as outlined above. But this occurs only if those brands choose to sell discounted lines into the BargainCo and YourSavings stores. Raj had noted that their competitors either did not run sales promotions in the discount retail sector or that remaindered stock from the major brands was sold into the discount stores with the packs usually marked in pen to cover over where a sales promotion had expired. As Raj explained ‘we have built up a strong relationship with BargainCo and they...sometimes prefer to stock our lines...the sales promotion we ran was about that...about keeping that relationship healthy’.

- Other Actors

The promotional campaign was put together by Inside Track, a Leeds based sales promotion agency, which is the North of England local office of a pan-European marketing services consultancy. Inside Track’s North of England operation had been set up in Leeds primarily to serve the sales promotion and marketing services needs of major multiples like Morrisons and Asda whose head offices were based in the area. Ekleen also used a local printer for pack label and special neck collars such as the ones employed in this particular promotion.

Sales Promotion Creation

The implications of resourcing what Raj and Andrew thought of as “real advertising” were considered and other forms of marketing communications were examined and discarded until on pack sales promotion was decided as most likely to give the Ekleen Consumer lines

a “promotional push”. This was largely due to them being ‘unchallenged’ in the context of the discount stores.

Ekleen used a multi-mechanism promotional structure at the recommendation of the agency to which they outsourced promotional activity. Outwardly this complex approach looks naïve and dangerous. They accepted it as a result, perhaps, of the lack of a formal marketing function in their organisation and their status as discount commodity suppliers. The sales promotion came about after a number of meetings at Ekleen’s head offices and at Inside Track’s offices in Leeds. Initial mock-ups of the neck collars were produced by Inside Track and these were discussed and amended during informal meetings within Ekleen team. A final format was decided upon as outlined above. 20,000 neck collars were printed and placed on the next deliveries to go out to the various discount stores Ekleen supply.

Sales Promotion Implementation

Ekleen deliberately targeted discount stores within their existing supply chain. The sales promotion was launched on February 1st and designed to run until May 1st in order to take advantage of a ‘spring clean’ theme. Mike telephone contacted many of the store managers during January’s ‘lean period’ to inform them of the promotion and the launch date and this created a good response amongst Ekleen’s product stockists. It was decided that Inside Track should also handle the fulfilment and handling on behalf of Ekleen and provide a regular weekly report into the take up of the promotional offer.

Sales Promotion Outcomes

Whilst Ekleen’s management team saw the sales promotion as brand building and raising

awareness of their consumer facing products, the sales promotion performed well. The sales promotion presented at 26% take up and redemption on the premium offer and 18% for the inbuilt prize draw. Coupon redemption was running at around 12% at last contact with Ekleen in August 2008 and was increasing rather than declining. Raj explained that they had no expectations of the performance doing well or not doing well, just that 'it was something that we thought we should try' and it might help keep things sweet with our stockists'. Ekleen only monitored the returns provided for them by Inside Track.

Causal Explanations

The multi level, multi promotion approach used was due to influence from Inside Track and the delegation of sales promotion activity to an external agency could be said to have had a significant impact on shaping the promotion. They use Inside Track as not only a local sales promotions agency but also as a way to legitimise their status in the retail sector that they had recently begun to operate in.

It may also be as a result of the management team at Ekleen's inexperience with promotional activities and subsequent delegation. Whilst the multi-level promotion ostensibly has problems of complexity in terms of the three levels that should have worked against each other, distracting the consumer; its performance suggests otherwise.

The promotion can be seen as being significant in "the creation phase" in that the intention behind it was twofold. Firstly Ekleen's management saw the use of sales promotion as a trialling process, "...to see what would happen". Secondly the use of sales promotion could be seen as part of Ekleen seeking to both raise their profile and imitate the strategies of what they perceived might be their rivals if they ever attained critical mass and "broke out"

of the sectors they traditionally served. They saw the promotion as being a way of “legitimising” their brand relative to the major multiples.

Ekleen’s lack of an appointed marketing director also had a contributory effect on this promotional campaign in that they felt the need to outsource the promotional campaign to Inside Track. Price manipulation and discounting for example were not usually part of any pricing or promotional decisions made by the team at Ekleen. By not selling into the multiple supermarket sector they are not subjected to the pressure to price and volume manipulate, and the decision to use a price manipulation was taken on the advice of Inside Track. This was outside of their usual mode of operation.

The relationship between Ekleen’s management team and Inside Track is an interesting one. Inside Track are part of a major European Marketing Communications agency and produce sales promotions for major brands and supermarket chains in the U.K. Ekleen saw that using Inside Track and sales promotion as indicative of gaining acceptance from the major multiples and almost as part of a process of gaining admittance into, and respectability within, that particular sector.

Ekleen also run dealer promotions in order to demonstrate empathy with their retailer network. Their position is that they are happy to operate in the discount sector and see this as an uncontested comfort zone where their competitors do not operate. It is in their interests to foster relationships with multiples and small stores in the discount sector in order to operate where their more established competitors seem unwilling to compete.

The fact that Ekleen’s promotional performance was so effective may be related to their low

levels of involvement with major multiples and concentration on discount stores where very little added value promotional activity of this kind takes place. Ekleen's use of added value premium promotions and prize-draws acted as a differentiator in an environment where the main promotional modality was price manipulation. Heavy discounting is a significant causal mechanism in that the context in which the promotions were situated had a significant impact on the way the sales promotion was implemented and its subsequent outcomes. As Raj suggested, 'We went to a BargainCo store and counted the number of sales promotions and there were two, ours and a chocolate bar one'

The multi level approach to promotion acted in contra-distinction to the prescriptive orthodoxy of the sales promotion literature. As Raj identified, 'it was a happy accident that it worked but perhaps if you offer customers one thing...then offering them three isn't such a bad thing after all.'

5.6 Cross Case Analysis

The following section examines the causal explanations and mechanisms and analyses them thematically and across case studies. The four in depth case studies presented above and a remaining nine smaller case studies are presented in tabular form and thematically grouped in order to cross-examine causalities, powers and liabilities. Their inter-relationships are outlined in the following model:

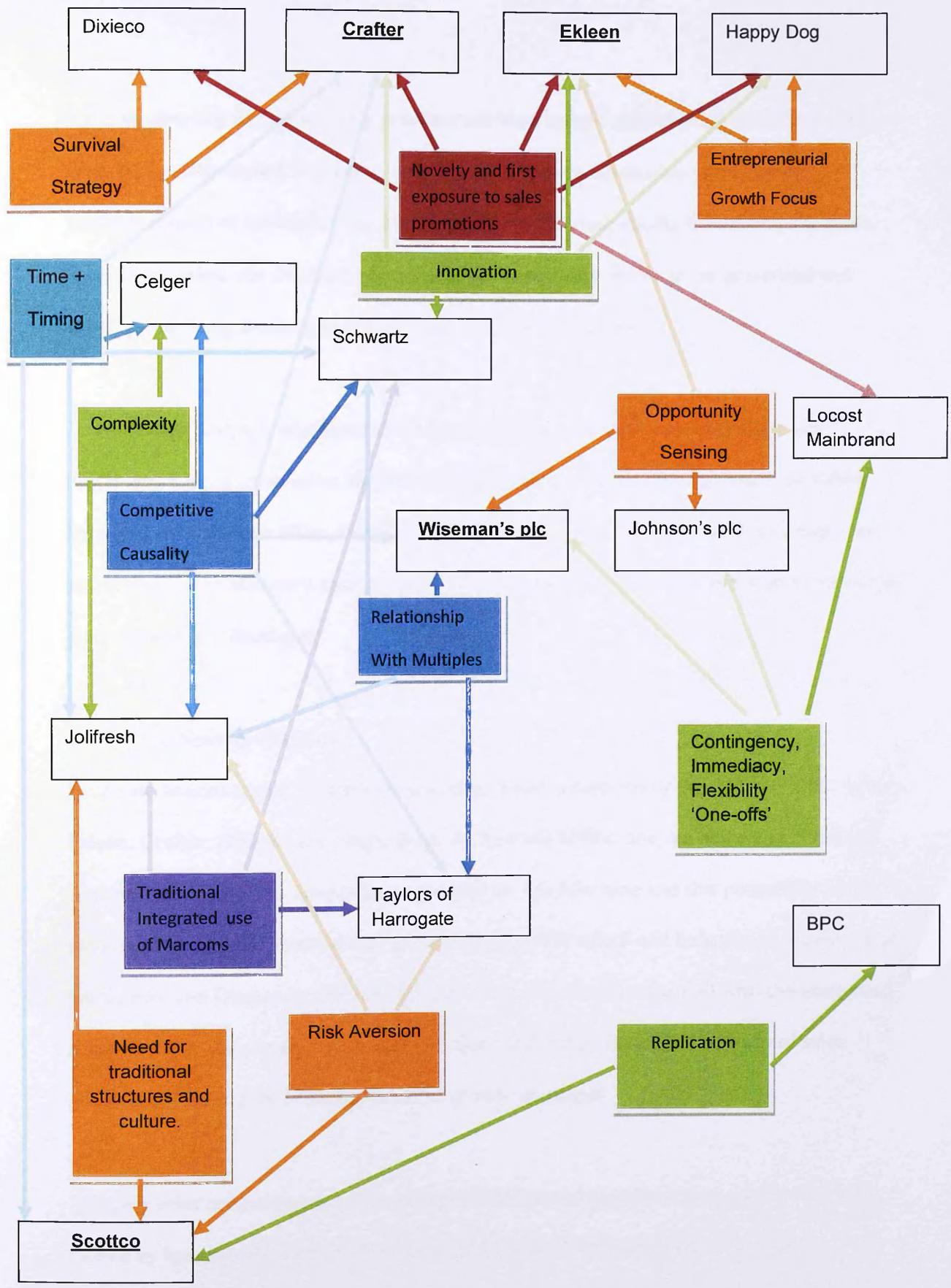


Fig 5.1 The Inter-Relatedness of the Case Studies
 Strong and Weak Causal Relationships impacting on Brands reasons for using Sales Promotions
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The rich diversity each case study presents and the random nature of the selection of the case studies that were researched mean that no absolute tendencies or significant generalisations can be made. The linking of the entities thematically however does allow knowledge claims and the inter-relationship between those claims to be presented and related to existing theoretical and conceptual knowledge bases.

The thematic links are expressed in the following diagrammatic representations and represented in the taxonomic and thematic grids outlined under the sub-headings below. Each grid uses the causalities that informed both the conceptual framework and each case study in order to structure and order the taxonomies from which the causal and conceptual provocations are developed.

5.6.1 The Novelty Causality

Four case studies are inter-related due to their being influenced by this by this causal factor; Ekleen, Crafter, Dixieco and Happy Dog. All four are SME's, one is a restart or 'Phoenix' business. All firms were using sales promotion for the first time and this potentially created advantages and causal liabilities out of such novelty. The causal and behavioural factors that led Crafter and Dixieco to use sales promotions were more concerned with the continued survival of the businesses. In the case of Ekleen and Happy Dog their first use of sales promotion was as part of entrepreneurial growth strategies.

The very different outcomes which emerged from each sales promotion were in the main caused by case specific factors which emerged as each firm attempted its first sales promotion. For Crafter there was a set of critical causalities which warranted a more in-depth examination and case presentation. These are concerned with thoughtless delegation,

loose controls of the planning and implementation phases of the promotion and the Crafter marketing team expectations. The other case studies are identified as follows:

	“Crafter”	“Ekleen”	Happy Dog Brewery	Dixieco
Sales Promotion Format	In Pack/ Web Based	On Pack with Premium	Neck Collar based Premium Giveaway	Paper and on-line entry prize draw
Focal Firm	Business re- start up, focus on imported parts	B2BStart-up newly involved in consumer sector	Lifestyle based ‘family friendly’ localized start up	‘Perceived’ Maverick status in the industry. In reality quite similar to others. Main activity importing musical instruments
Intended Objective	Seeking to bypass retailers using e- commerce	Cement relationship with major discounters. Differentiating a discount brand	Gift Giving Reward and Celebration Data capture (unforeseen)	Used SP as part of broad portfolio of marketing activities. Freedom from media based advertising Data capture

External Entities Customers	Mainly buy on need through retailers	Influenced by formerly being B2B so see retailers as customers	Emergent loyalty especially for organic brand	Customers and target groups and the data they generate in response to SP crucial to Dixieco strategy
External Entities Retailers	Vexed relationship with retailers selling competitors parts using Crafter displays	Strong and growing relationship with two major discounters. Would like	Strong links with pub and restaurant chains. Some leverage with major multiples local' product strategies	Seeking to maintain good relations with their 27 main dealer retailers whilst outwardly pursuing a web based and e-commerce strategy
External Entities Competitors	U.S. Brands and their importers. Highly competitive sectoral relationships	Perception of competitors brands such as as SC Johnson and value ranges from major	Other major and micro breweries.	Compete against other similar sized and set up firms all seeking to handle importation of equipment from US and Far East

		 multiples		suppliers. Thomann has just entered into the U.K. market with huge economies of scale
External Entities Others	 External SP and media consultant	 Use of local SP consultancy possibly as means to achieve brand legitimacy	All locally sourced services for printers, T Shirt makers, web designers	Use of local .I.T consultancy for website and database management
SP Creation	 First Attempt. Thoughtlessly delegated to consultant	 Largely handled by local SP agency. Most expensive options put forward and selected	In house and based on 'happy accidents'	All aspects handled in house. Printed externally
SP	 Via sales		Using existing	Leaflets sent out

Implementation	<p>team and at major events.</p> <p>Disjointed</p> <p>poorly co-ordinated</p>		<p>stockists</p> <p>wholesale and self delivery channels</p>	<p>to dealer and major consumer facing event targetted</p>
SP Outcomes	<p>Low take up rates some failure.</p> <p>Possible illegality</p>	<p>Particularly successful with high take up rate</p>	<p>Sales were boosted although the promotion did not self liquidate</p>	<p>Improved take up and response via website. 8500 names captured from promotional forms and web contacts</p>
Causal Explanations	<p>Timing poorly thought through.</p> <p>Poor control.</p> <p>Over emphasis on impact of web based elements</p>	<p>Combination of promotional forms may have been attractive to consumers.</p> <p>Operating in a promotion free environment</p>	<p>First attempt at SP.</p> <p>Strongly linked to culture and values at the firm.</p> <p>Local sourcing</p> <p>Led to establishment of website to</p>	<p>Need to incentivize take up and develop a more sophisticated promotional stance,</p> <p>Disintermediation of 27 downstream dealers a critical issue if web</p>

		Luck!	reinforce message of promotion	strategy goes ahead fully . Not quite 'there' yet with sophisticated integrated web strategy
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Fig 5.2 Cross Case Study Grid I

From the above grid it is clear that the diversity of outcomes for each of the sales promotions demonstrate how the different intended objectives range from sophisticated and strategic to relatively simplistic. There was also a mix of those organisations that preferred to outsource promotional activity in marked contrast to Happy Dog who largely preferred to run things in-house. Happy Dog's lower levels of expectation and celebratory approach to sales promotion was clearly a significant factor in their management of the promotion. Whilst it did not self liquidate in the accepted sense it did provide Happy Dog's management team with a way into web based promotional activity via data capture. This is in marked contrast to Crafter and Dixieco where the sales promotion had strategic implications both for the focal firms and their retail partners.

The relative degrees of success and failure of the sales promotion also bears some scrutiny. The issues of pre planning and timing also became apparent in the Crafter case which, when combined with poor control and 'thoughtless delegation' to an external entity, had a

detrimental effect on the effectiveness of the promotion which considerably underperformed based on their expectations.

In Ekleen's case, the context in which the case study was conducted had a significant effect on its effectiveness. The lack of promotional intensity in the retail context clearly had a significant causal impact on Ekleen's promotional success. A secondary causality in the Ekleen case was the combination of promotional forms which might be seen as the promotional agency 'getting away with' what they could do, based on the budget provided by an inexperienced client. The Ekleen case is further noteworthy in that their well established understanding of business-to-business markets meant that they viewed the discount retailers they were supplying with consumer sized products as their 'customers'. A wider view of customers and consumer behaviour focussing on the end user was not acknowledged or explored by the Ekleen management team. In essence they were unaware and 'unknowing' of the potential shape of their "markets" beyond their supply chain and distribution network.

5.6.2 Competitive Liability and the Complexity / Innovation Trade Off

Competitors are identified as a key external causal entity in the initial conceptual model on which the case studies are predicated and this is borne out in the case studies examined here. This clearly has an impact on any study of sales promotions as in Kannan and Yim (2001). One causal liability that has emerged from this work is the way that sales promotion is used in relation to competitors and competitive action and many of the managers were able to describe the size and market power asymmetries of their direct competitors and framed their promotions in terms of responses to these externalities. Whilst the competitive causality could be said to have an indirect bearing on the use of sales promotion

there are three case studies where the external causality brought to bear on each focal firm by competitors is so significant as to have a profound influence their behaviours and choices of marketing communications strategies. Schwarz, Celger and Jolifresh are presented here and their inter-relatedness on this issue is identified by the cross case grid below:

	Schwartz	Celger-Soft Drinks	Jolifresh
Sales Promotion Format	A5 Display Leaflet Prize Draw/ On Pack	POS Leaflets	Win £1 million multi level on on-pack
Focal Firm	U.K. Subsidiary of Canadian based major multi-national	Fourth largest U.K. based soft drinks company by volume but some way behind Coca Cola and Pepsi	Grown organically and then through acquisition. Jolifresh is part of Speciality plc's drinks and foods portfolio
Intended Objective	'Get Colemans!' Increase sales volume and frequency of purchase!	To keep the Celger Brand visible to the retail sector at POS	Build awareness. Cut through clutter in highly contested retail POS environments Promote reintroduced pack changes
External Entities	Brand switchers with high levels of	Brand switchers with high levels of	Customers seek value through pack

Customers	transferability.	transferability	size and price/volume manipulations
External Entities Retailers	Responsive to multiples and smaller retailers needs. Unique in managing point of sales materials through in-store merchandisers. This under threat due to major multiples 'clean aisles' policies	Celger are seeking to build strong relationships with this group to keep their brand visible against strong competition at POS which is heavily contested and controlled	Significant market power in the major multiple sector. Well established relationship with major multiples
External Entities Competitors	Involved in tactical and strategic sectoral rivalry with Coleman's (36% market share) Schwartz have found they can only top 30% with massive through the line spend	Major competitors who can commit larger amounts of resources to promotional activity. Most notably Coca Cola and Pepsico's U.K. operations	Vast size asymmetries with Coca Cola and Pepsi UK operations. Jolifresh have tried to overcome this with mergers with competitors

External Entities Others	Prize sponsors and local sales promotion company selected because they were local		Ended relationship with major agency appointed 'new media' agencies to refocus strategy
SP Creation	Run in conjunction with sales promotion consultancies and prize sponsors. Simple format selected	Kept simple to avoid format change.	Advised by agencies yet complex multi- level structure Basic compliance with ISP guidelines
SP Implementation	Multiple simultaneous running of sales promotions Linkage with other media	2 x sales promotions events run at the same time. Rolled out regionally at different times	Difficult to manage, did not self liquidate
SP Outcomes	Due to complexity and combined spend difficult to	Poor response and take up acknowledged by marketing team.	No overall winner. 11% boost at point

	<p>point out sales promotions as single causal factor.</p> <p>Most promotions below expectations</p>		<p>of sale</p>
<p>Causal Explanations</p>	<p>Impact of use of web based and SMS significant</p> <p>Immediacy of impact on sales attractive to brand</p>	<p>Issues of complexity, poor planning and poor execution</p>	<p>Unforeseen issues with regard to appointment of new marketing manager led to dual role being undertaken by the managing director.</p> <p>Marketing activity in a state of flux</p> <p>Issues with reconciling ongoing ad campaign aimed at children with 'adult' theme of win £1 million unresolved</p>

Fig 5.3 Cross Case Study Grid 2

The key competitive causality in Schwartz's case is to challenge the market and point of sale performance of Coleman's, the market leader. This strategy, aimed solely at 'unseating the market leader', impacted upon and 'drove' all aspects of Schwartz's marketing efforts and marketing communications planning

Both Celger and Jolifresh operate in the soft drinks sector where the key competitive causalities are the size and resource asymmetries of the market leaders, Coca Cola and Pepsico. In the Celger case it is acknowledged that sales promotions often provoke a direct and asymmetric competitive response from their larger rivals. Barbara, Celger's marketing manager, admitted to a strategy of 'seeking to keep up' with the two major competitors that dominate the market categories Celger compete in.

Sales promotions were also used as a kind of exploratory 'test mechanism' to gauge competitor response. "We use it to see what our competitors do"; Barbara stated. "We put stuff out there, and then are surprised when the competition comes back at us with their promotions and strategies."

Time and timing, issues explored in more detail later in this chapter, have a criticality here with both firms claiming to be first to develop promotional innovations only to see the same idea taken up on a far larger scale by their larger rivals.

Both Jolifresh and Celger created and implemented sales promotions with added factors that increased their complexity. However, Ekleen's promotion, despite its complexity, ran well. The Jolifresh promotion performed satisfactorily but with added 'back office' complexities that were, it was admitted by respondents from the firm, compounded by

internal structural issues concerning the make-up of the marketing team.

In the past all three brands presented in this research may have relied on deliberately simple promotions but competitive factors are rendering this approach difficult to sustain if not obsolete. More innovative approaches to sales promotions utilised in order to maintain a competitive stance often in the face of size and resource asymmetries also bring with them additional and often unforeseen complexities. The impact of such complex causalities may be made more acute or mitigated by the structures, processes and actions of the focal actors concerned. What was interesting, were the distinctions between those managers who saw sales promotions as innovative but with the innovation coming from external providers such as a specialist agency. This compared with those who saw the need to innovate sales promotion as part of a wider process of the innovation of marketing communications activity.

In Schwartz's case the competitive causality and intent to overtake their market leading rivals may have led them to try different strategies, tactics and formats in a restless quest for competitive and sectoral advantage. This led to a need for changes to sales promotion on a promotion by promotion basis to respond to what was described by one of Schwartz's marketing managers as "constantly shifting consumer expectations" and that this drove innovative response to the creation of sales promotion and undermined any potential for continuity.

It may be said that both innovation and complexity in the commission, creation and implementation of sales promotions can be seen as a trade off that has implications both for competitive strategy and the success or failure of the promotion itself. In Ekleen's case the

complexity and ‘stacking’ of sales promotions worked well for them because of the ‘something for everyone’ message it presented and the almost promotion free point of sale context in which it took place. Jolifresh on the other hand had less of satisfactory experience which occurred due to internal structural issues in their marketing team with the poor timing and execution of the simultaneous promotions being a direct result of the unresolved nature of this issue.

5.6.3 The Opportunity Sensing Causality

The opportunity sensing causality impacts most significantly on the Wiseman’s and Johnson’s plc case studies. Their decisions to utilise the particular sales promotions came about due directly to opportunities presented to them by external entities such as sales promotions agencies and film production companies. I have purposefully separated this causality from firms such as Ekleen and Crafter where the establishment of a relationship with an external entity, in this case sales promotions agencies was based on outsourcing the activity due to a lack of internal capability or competence. The Wiseman’s and Johnson’s cases were markedly different in that the opportunity sensing causality focused on a search for external partners to act as co-sponsors of the promotion. It must also be stated that the promotions would not have been created and implemented had the marketing teams in each organisation not been open to the potential benefits and part of an opportunity focused culture.

	Wiseman’s plc	Johnsons’ plc
Sales Promotion Format	On Pack Prize Draws	A5 leaflet film tie in with POS materials

Focal Firm	Scottish Based Commodity Milk Producer	Well established market leader in cleaning services sector. Currently reorganizing around new facilities and activities
Intended Objective	Driven by Opportunity to add value	Increase garment throughput and in-store foot fall
External Entities Customers	Commodity Nature of Product = High Transferability	Film company and promotions agency offering promotional tie in
External Entities Retailers	Have sought strong links with smaller retailers. Multiples are competitors	All fulfilment run in house to maintain tight controls
External Entities Competitors	Pre-eminent in Scotland, major multiples are competitors and customers, Complex operating environment	Major player through growth by acquisition. Competition small and fragmented 'mom and pop shops'
External Entities Others	Have used Sales Promotions agencies as go betweens with film companies	Use of network relationship with agencies who assist Johnson's marketing team and opportunity sense for Sales Promotions tie ups

SP Creation	In House, Subverted Pack Design	Established with agencies. Approved at board level
SP Implementation	F+H run in House	Launched simultaneously in all outlets in the U.K.
SP Outcomes	Low % rates some disruption to schedules	2-5% boost in take up across all stores tracked from till data.
Causal Explanations	Heavy emphasis on Sales Promotions for added value and consumer “dialogue” in commodity sector Opportunity sensing approach to potential opportunities Repetition but not replication of promotions under different opportunity conditions.	Usual Sales Promotions activity is volume and price manipulations at the service point. This was first movie tie up and very different for Johnsons’ plc marketing team. Perceived as disruptive. Sales Promotions as differentiating factor in dry cleaning sector.

Fig 5.4 Cross Case Study Grid 3

One noteworthy feature of this particular causality is that whilst one focal firm is a commodity product supplier and seeking to add value to their product at point of sale, the other is a service provider where the main motivation for using the sales promotion is throughput and in store 'foot-fall'.

The Johnsons plc promotion was a 'stand alone' where the opportunity had presented itself and Johnsons' marketing team were looking for opportunities to increase foot fall and throughput. The causalities that led to the Wiseman's case are more interesting in that different promotional opportunities presented themselves from different agencies representing different sponsoring film companies. Quite clearly Wiseman's marketing team were open to accepting such opportunities as they conducted a number of relatively similar promotions over a 6 year period but with different external parties and different promotional mechanisms each time.

Both focal firms seemed to use the external agencies as part of a set of network relationships in order to scan for potential opportunities for promotional tie ups. In the Johnsons plc case study, however, this was more overt yet they had conducted fewer promotions of this type.

The structural and operational factors inside each focal firm were largely similar with small marketing teams both reporting to board level. What was markedly different was the way that Wisemans' marketing manager sought to control all aspects of promotional activity whereas the Johnson's team were happy to outsource activities such as fulfilment and handling.

The competitive and market environments each firm operated in and situated their promotional activities in were also markedly different. Johnson's plc occupied a pre-eminent market position largely due to growth by acquisition. Wiseman's on the other hand had complex market relationships to manage both with smaller retailers and the major multiples (Davies 1994, Gilbert and Jackaria 2002). This is further exacerbated by Wisemans marketing team managing 4 different product ranges, some of which were sold into the major multiples whilst others were not. This placed Wisemans in a position of having to compete with major retailers, who in another market context were their customers.

In both cases, the opportunity causality and the behaviours and changes to processes and systems it engendered were perceived to be 'disruptive' to their existing marketing communications strategies and plans.

5.6.4 The Contingency, Flexibility, Immediacy Causalities

In the literature surveyed above one critical causality that emerges is that sales promotions are simple structure marketing communications entities that can be set up quickly in order to 'manage' a particular situation such as aggressive tactics by a competitors or a localised or product specific sales 'push'. As has been outlined above sales promotions are not always simple to create or manage and often have hidden complexities.

There are however, situations where external and internal causality come together in a particular way and the response is a single simplistic sales promotion. Locost Mainbrand was a particular example of this and as such stands alone amongst the case studies presented in this thesis:

	Locost Mainbrand
Sales Promotion Format	In Store single winner Prize Draw One off event
Focal Firm	Lo Cost are big box discount retailers running out of town store. They have recently acquired Mainbrand a clothing manufacturer who supply them
Intended Objective	Not linked to sales or footfall. Perceived as an exercise in legitimizing Locost's relationship with Mainbrand Staged event for Mainbrand management
External Entities Customers	Identified as unimportant in this promotion
External Entities Retailers	None
External Entities Competitors	Sales Promotions seen as legitimizing activity especially after main competitor Tesco moved into clothing sector and EU 'grey' market issue became significant
External Entities Others	Prize sponsors were many and varied adding complexity in the management of the promotion. Especially in the case of Rawco Mainbrand's supplier who 'piggy backed' on the promotion to raise their profile in the U.K.

SP Creation	<p>Deliberately kept simplistic and used basic ISP guidelines copied from a previous Sales Promotions event.</p> <p>Delegated down from senior management for reasons of speed of turnaround</p> <p>Perfunctory standardized model of Sales Promotions used</p>
SP Implementation	<p>Fulfilment and Handling function run in house and collected from each store regularly</p>
SP Outcomes	<p>Moderate returns although this was not perceived to be critical or even a consideration</p>
Causal Explanations	<p>A highly specific and unusual Sales Promotion</p> <p>No usual or regular criteria on which to evaluate the promotion</p> <p>Strategically motivated and top down delegating at odds with usual tactical marketing activity.</p> <p>Felt like 'real' marketing</p> <p>Complexity caused by stakeholders involved in promotion</p> <p>Simplicity of format seen as mitigating factor given complexity elsewhere!</p>

Fig. 5.5 Cross Case Study Grid 4

Locost Mainbrand is anomalous amongst the case studies presented here not just for the simplicity of the structure but that it was effectively 'window dressing' to manage the in-store experience of executives from another company. It was also expedient to run the promotion as part of quest for legitimacy and status by Locost's senior management who were seeking to lose the 'discount retailer' reputation they had gained. This resulted in the creation and operation of the promotion being delegated to junior marketing staff by members of Locost's board of directors.

Contingency, flexibility and immediacy rather than a planned strategy to increase consumer purchasing behaviour were the watchwords of the Locost/Mainbrand promotion and this places it at odds with promotions examined above, such as those run by Wiseman's plc and Johnsons' plc. In both of those cases the need for flexibility and contingency is apparent and there was some disruption to existing marketing communications budgets and schedules. In the Locost case this is much more marked and the contingency and need for immediacy a much more significant causality.

Finally one positive outcome from the Locost Mainbrand was that the need to run a sales promotion at such short notice galvanised the staff in the marketing team and raised their expectations about what they were able to do with marketing communications. In that respect it refreshed some old routines and processes which had become overused.

5.6.5 Causal Relationships: Focal Firms and the Major Multiple Supermarket Chains

The bargaining power of the major multiple supermarket chains in the U.K. grocery sector and beyond cannot be overstated. This is a significant external causal factor and has a particular influence on promotional strategies pursued by grocery firms. Focal firms employ

sales promotions which operate in contexts where retailers have mediating powers. As the marketing manager from Taylors of Harrogate said "...all we do is price and volume manipulations that's all the supermarkets want. We could do...I would like to do more interesting promotional stuff... but its volume packs all the way"

Policies such as 'Clean Aisles' pursued by the major multiples has caused a shift in the way that sales promotions are formatted and presented to consumers. One notable change has been the move to on-pack promotions and away from shelf and floor based dispenser displayed materials. Both Schwarz's and Jolifresh's relationship with retailers and the way in which such organisations managed their retail space led to a causal impact on the way that the promotions run by Schwarz used on and in-packs and stickered packs with a web link. This was seen by Stefan, Schwarz's marketing director as being almost like a 'game' or like 'smuggling something in'. In the Schwarz and Jolifresh case studies this is not seen as a major causal factor as it was not seen as a major influence of promotional format due to both focal firms supplying other retailers outside of the major multiples

The relationship between Wiseman's plc and their competitors/allies in the supermarket sector has already been alluded to earlier in this chapter. As Wiseman's is a more in depth focal case, in this cross case analysis these causalities will be explored further in relation to Taylors of Harrogate and others.

	Taylors of Harrogate	Wiseman'splc
Sales Promotion Format	On Pack with Premium and Giveaways	On Pack Prize Draws

Focal Firm	Well established family run firm with conservative outlook	Scottish Based Commodity Milk Producer
Intended Objective	Reinforcing 'values' in pack design in order to encourage loyalty and trialling	Driven by Opportunity
External Entities Customers	High need to influence 'pull' from customers via the major multiples	Commodity Nature of Product = High Transferability
External Entities Retailers	Strong need to comply with major multiples' policies as evidenced by price and volume manipulation	Have sought strong links with smaller retailers. Multiples are competitors
External Entities Competitors	Major multiples own brands. Traditional well established competitors. Smaller innovative brands selling tea and coffee variants Competitive and complex grocery sector	Pre-eminent in Scotland, major multiples are competitors and customers, Complex operating environment
External Entities Others	Some assistance with web based aspects in proto format by local	Have used Sales Promotions agencies as

	web design company	go betweens with film companies
SP Creation	In House Careful of pack design conventions	In House, Subverted Pack Design
SP Implementation	Use of external F+H House	Fulfilment and Handling run in House
SP Outcomes	Small sales revenue boost from EPOS data	Low % rates some disruption to schedules
Causal Explanations	Sales Promotions significant part of marcoms activity since scale back of 'Above The Line Activity' Separate strands of promotional activity run as isolates. Problematic relationship with major multiples	Heavy emphasis on Sales Promotions for added value and consumer "dialogue" in commodity sector

Fig 5.6 Cross Case Study Grid 5

Whilst both focal firms perceive the influence of major multiple supermarkets as a key causality in the way that sales promotions are created and managed in each case this happens in a different way and for different reasons.

For Taylor's of Harrogate their relationship with the major multiples is one of dependence. That the multiples stock, and can be encouraged to continue to stock Taylors' products is a critical issue for them. They are particularly prepared to manipulate price and pack volumes in order to comply with the requirements of the major multiple supermarkets. Whilst running on-pack promotions such as the one examined in this study, Taylors are somewhat constricted by their pack design and brand heritage. Their unique packaging and caddy designs which they have done much to establish and protect affects their ability to run large scale on pack promotions and impacts on the types of sales promotions they are able to conduct.

Wiseman's on the other hand have a very different relationship with the major multiple supermarkets. They supply premium products such as low fat milk like 'The One' to the major multiples but not their commodity 'black and white' pack milk range that is supplied to other downstream retailers such as smaller convenience store chains. This clearly causes complexity in terms of their external relationships with the major multiples who are both customers and competitors.

5.6.6 Replication and Risk Aversion Causalities

The inter-connectedness of these two causalities and their strong influence on Scottco as one of the in-depth focal case studies meant that I have linked them together in this subsection. In the Scottco and British Potato Council (BPC) cases, and to a lesser extent the cases of Taylors of Harrogate and Jolifresh, the issues of risk aversion and the replication of sales promotions over long periods of time have a clear causal relationship:

Variables and Causalities	Scottco	British Potato Council
Sales Promotion Format	Prize Draw A5 Leaflet or Scratch-card	Scratch-card
Focal Firm	Traditional Paternalistic Scottish Firm	Representative Body for Potato Growers
Intended Objective	Reward? Repeated format means original intention lost.	Raise awareness Reassurance Sales support for retail end of industry 'Piggy back ' on World Cup
External Entities Customers	Strong image of type and behaviour of customer	
External Entities Retailers		Considered key downstream stakeholders. Upstream stakeholders are

		growers also perceived as customers
External Entities Competitors	Others in the retail sector. Little awareness from Scottco managers	No direct competition
External Entities Others	Few	Printers and scratch card makers
SP Creation	Run In House Same format repeated year on year with little deviation. Large prize fund and 'lavish' prizes	Created in house based on repetitive format. Only visuals were changed. Requirement to present a 'fresh face' each year
SP Implementation	Strong controls through in store aspects and sales management system	100 Cards per outlet sent to 1200 retail outlets
SP Outcomes	Low take up rates. Other outcomes articulated	In store increase in sales of 29% claimed during duration of promotion and World Cup event.
Causal	Heavily influenced by	Low importance placed on

Explanations	internal structure and systems. Repetitive due to this	promotional activity due to it only being small part of overall activity.
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Fig 5.7 Cross Case Study Grid 6

In both cases sales promotions were repeated year after year with little insight as to why this was occurring. Whilst the replication causality seems to be significant in both focal firms the risk aversion causality seems to have a greater bearing on the way that Scottco creates and manages its sales promotion. In Scottco's case this has a further causal relationship with structural inertia, embedded institutional routines and a traditional paternalistic structure all impacting on the way that the firm perceives and uses sales promotions. It is also possible to identify managerial and structural issues also impacting on Jolifresh. In the Jolifresh case, however, it was problems within their senior management team which had a direct bearing on the issues that emerged when they implemented two sales promotions simultaneously.

In the case of the British Potato Council the replication was thoughtless and bound up in the low status accorded to sales promotions within the organisation, in that marketing communications activities of this type were not seen as part of BPC's core activities.

Scottco's risk aversion and unwillingness to change the promotional format year on year led to a repetitive 'cookie cutter' approach to the use of sales promotion. What emerged from the Scottco case were the major resources that were committed to the promotion most notably in terms of the prizes offered. Had the promotion been a relatively minor part of

their marketing communications activities or considered unimportant, then like the BPC case the replication and unwillingness to change any aspects of the promotional format might have been more understandable.

In the Scottco case the replication and risk aversion causalities were bound up with, and emerged from the organisation's structure and culture. This was further exacerbated by the Scottco marketing team's perception of time and timing. This temporal causality impacted on Scottco's sales promotions both in the way that the sales promotions were repeated annually and then eventually seasonally once more finely tuned systems were put in place.

The Scottco case demonstrates the way that the stable characteristics of a promotional campaign will emerge when it is replicated again and again. Within a critical realist ontology structures and institutions such as markets are not fixed entities. All such structures are open to potential mutability as they are social in their construction and development. Scottco's replication of one sales promotion format is almost entirely constructed within the firm and like Ekleen they were not acknowledging the existence of customers as a mutable causal entity beyond the marketing manager's attempts to describe the 'typical Scottco customer'. This approach is in marked contrast to Schwartz's marketing team, whose approach to "constantly shifting consumer expectations" led to an innovative 'churn' in a way that framed promotional activities.

5.6.7 The Integration Causality

In previous chapters an examination of the literature on marketing communications carries over much of what is known as Integrated Marketing Communications into studies of the utilisation of sales promotion. Whilst focal firms in this study such as Locost Mainbrand ,

Johnson's plc and Wiseman's plc overtly used sales promotions as one off entities in given situations or brought about by opportunities in given contexts, there is little evidence in these case studies to suggest that much integration of sales promotion with other forms of marketing communications takes place. Only in the cases of Taylors of Harrogate and Schwartz was integration of sales promotions with other forms of marketing communications identified as significant. Scott's (1976) examination of the potential synergies that accrue from combining various forms of the same promotional technologies is not antithetical to the integrative approach but puts forward an interesting and different perspective. The "intragrated" structure of the Ekleen promotion however, revealed that Toop's (1966) model of the benefits of integration of both coupons and promotional competitions still holds some credence, and that the competition entry form provided a vehicle on which to 'piggy back' the money off coupon. When combined with a premium offer and placed into a retail context were such promotional activities were not the norm resulted in a significant consumer uptake.

What provides a further potential question is whether as in the Ekleen case, "intragrating" sales promotions as a process of promotional 'stacking' could be used outside of the context that Ekleen were operating in. Outside of a 'discount' retail context the reverse may hold, as in the Celger and Taylors of Harrogate cases where this approach significantly increases the complexity of promotional activity and even has the potential to cancel promotions out in a process known as "cannibalisation" .

5.6.8 The Temporal Causality

The significance of time and the timing of promotional activities is noteworthy most notably in the extant literature in relation to purchase timing. Time whilst an external contingent

factor in most organisational analyses is fundamental as a causal power when related to sales promotion activity yet much empirical research still employs a careless rather than a meta-theoretical construction of time. Often such approaches border on the atheoretical in that terminologies such as “short term” and “long term” are used interchangeably. A focal firm’s emphasis on sales promotion and the way that it ‘boosts short term’ performance was identified as part of a general hypothetical discourse about reasons to use sales promotion as part of my conversations with marketing managers. However when dealing with the specifics of each focal firm’s use of sales promotions it was not perceived as a key causality put forward by the managers as their own reason for using sales promotions.

Brannon and McCabe (2001) highlight the use of time as a framing mechanism for sales promotions and present a deeper analysis into the specifics of time framing around promotional activity. Temporal sophistication in marketing communications has attracted some academic interest (Chiang et al 2001, Barry 2002) and its use in multiple and differing contexts has received little concerted empirical attention.

The immediacy of sales promotion was a key factor in situations where firms were involved in particularly competitive market contexts, or where the objective was to directly challenge the market pre-eminence of a competitor. This is particularly obvious in the Schwarz case where the causal impact of their attempts to unseat Colmans had a distinct effect on when and how promotional activity was used.

The temporal causality and the powers and liabilities it engenders in organisational processes mean that managers often have limited time frames in which to deal with factors that impact on their brands, citing limited spans of attention before being asked to or in fact

moving on to the next activity. This came out in the case studies presented in this study. Whatever utility is contained in promotional activity is therefore ultimately shaped, distorted and eroded by time as in the case of the Happy Dog Brewery promotion whose focal actors were unsophisticated in their approach to temporal framing of the promotion and as result ran it for a particularly long time.

The planning processes and use of sales promotions across annual or quarterly calendars are predicated on temporal frames, but that subsequent price manipulations are often used a response to a particular contingent issue. In some of the cases presented in this research the decision to launch a sales promotion event was highly specific with key dates plans and calendars which informed the managers. One of the issues that emerged from the research was the way that managers identified “triggers” from both internal and external contexts that informed the decision to use sales promotion activities. Some, such as Scottco were highly formal, regularised and linked to specific “seasons”. Since Scottco is a clothing retailer, this is unsurprising.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

This study has asked fundamental questions about why focal actors, in this case marketing managers choose to create or commission and implement sales promotions. The fundamental entities within each of the case studies I have outlined enable me to posit the view that each sales promotion can be treated as examples of a process influenced by a particular form of organisational and managerial activity.

Typically the utilisation of any form of sales promotion is considered evidence that other

processes are taking place. These might be creating, planning, managing or evaluating the sales promotion. This is not a credible assumption to make neither is the uniformity of promotional form a given in the way that those that define “promotions” to be price manipulation suggest it might.

Within firms there are additional emergent properties such as the potential impact of structure, hierarchy, geographical location and industry and product category; specific behaviours that can impact upon managerial behaviours and decisions and other social processes as was markedly the case in Scottco and to a lesser extent Wiseman’s and Jolifresh.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the concluding remarks for this thesis and some comments concerning the contributions it makes to the body of marketing knowledge related to sales promotions and marketing communications. It is structured around the theoretical, methodological and practitioner focused contributions that this work makes. Finally, there is a reflection on the research process and the limitations of the thesis and directions for future research are also considered.

I did not initially set out with the intention of presenting empirical data that has not been presented before, in a way that had not been attempted before. The main intention was to 'find out' about a phenomenon I was interested in and re-orientate myself with an area of marketing communications I was involved in as a practitioner. The research and findings presented here show that there are substantive differences between the managerial practice of sales promotion and the way that sales promotions are treated in academic research. The contributions identified in this chapter also come from the contextualisation of sales promotion in both organisations and markets/channels. This is combined with the methodological novelty inherent in the use of a critical realist approach and managerially focussed case studies in an examination of sales promotions.

I have however found the process fascinating, with some of what I discovered confirming, and perhaps more interestingly, other aspects disconfirming, what I expected to find. The

contributions presented in this chapter have emerged from that process of confirmation and disconfirmation.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

The main aim of this research was for me to revisit and re-examine that which had been significant to me in my work as a marketing communications practitioner. This thesis eventually sought to develop richer explanations of what sales promotions were through an examination of why and how they are used in both a managerial and business context. My motivation therefore was not only to make an original contribution to academic knowledge in an under-researched area, but also to "find out" about the phenomenon of sales promotions and its, processes, strategies, mechanisms, techniques, and outcomes and enhance my own personal knowledge in this area.

The model used was a 'bottom up' model of theory building. It is accessible and starts from a position that theorisation concerning the uses of sales promotion has largely been ignored in the marketing management or marketing communications literature. I am therefore 'building' some of the contributions presented here from a low-level base of previous research.

The potential for theoretical development stemming from this research comes from three distinct but related perspectives which are inter-related with the themes that initially emerged from the literature review. Firstly, there is a contribution to the theoretical body of knowledge from a definitional perspective. In the literature review in Chapter 2 I had examined the definitional issue that informs studies of sales promotions and the discourse

that has emerged from it. Secondly there is a contribution to the sales promotion literature through examination of the theoretical impact of examining the structural and contextual factors that affect sales promotions practice. Finally there is an exposition of the contribution made to the wider marketing communications literature.

6.2.1 The Definitional Contribution

It needs to be restated here that there is an unresolved definitional issue that runs through empirical research into sales promotions. In earlier chapters responses to this issue have been dubbed a 'definitional discourse'. Expanding the definition of sales promotions was not the original intention behind the thesis, neither did I set out to redefine or reconceptualise what sales promotion is. Nonetheless the criticality of the definitional issues facing sales promotion and the need for an ongoing re-evaluation of the definitional discourse meant that there was a need to present a synthetic definition of my own at the end of the literature review.

The research question that was posed in Chapter I concerned the fundamental nature of sales promotions and why and how they come to be devised, created and implemented in the way they are by marketing managers. This was in part due to the early definitional issues raised by this study and partly based on my interest in finding out what had changed in the field from my perspective as a practitioner. The need to examine and provide my own definition of what sales promotions were took me into an area of the study I had not envisaged and it was useful for me to find works by Yeshin (2006), Peattie and Peattie (1994) and Simpson (2006), authors who all seemed to share the same definitional concerns.

Previous researchers have noted that promotional activities are structured in a variety of ways whilst others have chosen to eschew that model in favour of a narrower definition and research framework. The definitional discourse around sales promotions can be viewed as largely shaped by those whose definition of sales promotion is deliberately reductionist and limited to price manipulations or singular forms on the one hand. On the other hand are those who seek a more expansive and all encompassing definition of what sales promotions are.

By default any research such as the kind presented here that takes a multi contextual view of sales promotion adheres more closely to the more expansive view taken by Yeshin that there are multiple promotional forms. I have advanced this view by drawing on the conceptual framework developed for this thesis. I suggest that the focal firm's structure, processes and managerial character, and the business context it is operating in, makes each sales promotion contingent upon and, by default, unique to that context.

My contribution to the definitional discourse can therefore, be expressed in the following way. It is I suggest, satisfactory for Chandon(1995) to treat sales promotions as stand-alone entities within, and characterised by, their context or their relationship to other entities within the marketing communications mix. What is problematic here is the way that he arrives at this view with little causal explanation. For Chandon, sales promotions simply come to 'be' with no apparent causation. A sales promotion merely 'is' and what is under scrutiny is its effectiveness. The same remark applies to Yeshin's view of sales promotion(s) as a taxonomic group of entities which all apparently fulfil a similar function and role. The problem here is the criteria for inclusion and the research processes that inform how sales promotions come to be.

I suggest that there are a combination of causal factors and processes at work here. It is possible to define sales promotion by its type or process as in Peattie and Peattie (1994). Refreshingly they seek to define sales promotions both by their 'otherness', a non standardised form of marketing communications and the channels they operate in and groups they are linked to. I go further and suggest that the definition of a sales promotion is dependent on causal explanations of process, organisational and business context and the temporal frame in which sales promotion comes to be.

Whilst under-researched disciplines and subjects require progression through theoretical, contextual, methodological and empirical frames, there is now a small but growing academic interest from both the consumer behaviour and managerial perspectives into such reasons for the use of sales promotion. By generating case studies which point to other possible wider definitions of what sales promotions come to be and why, there is the potential to enhance marketing discourse by drawing on a wider sense of the diversity that sales promotions have come to represent. In this multi-contextualised view, contextual specificity and diversity represent a key contribution to the definitional discourse in that there has been little presented by marketing academics in the past that treats sales promotions in this way.

6.2.2 The Theoretical Contribution to the Sales Promotion Literature

The under researched and under theorised state of the study of sales promotions, in contrast to its continued, and in some areas, growing use by marketers and organisations; provided this dissertation with a unique opportunity to hold up to critical scrutiny the existing literature.

The complexity of sales promotions and the constant reinvention of new forms of promotional activity highlight not only problems of definition examined above but of under-theorisation in that the literature does not reflect the way such processes and promotional forms operate in context.

There are a number of research discourses on the use and efficacy of sales promotions, the most dominant being that within the rational economic frame. This approach uses a nomothetic positivist approach in order to present narrowly defined problems which are solved through the robust use of data. The usual form is a comparison between two brands or firms using the same or different promotional tools and processes whilst analytical variables and comparative data are used in order to compare and contrast performance.

Behavioural epistemologically grounded research goes one stage further in that consumers and their purchase habit are brought into the robust quantification process outlined previously. Within these epistemological 'streams' it is also possible to include other forms of research discourses explored in the literature review above. These are most notably an integrated communications perspective and a practitioner focused approach out of which is growing a nascent discourse that concerns managerial practice in sales promotions and to which this thesis is one contribution.

I have eschewed the well established nomothetic positivist, behavioural and integrative perspectives in favour of managerially focused case studies and a critical realist ontology and epistemology. What emerged from the case studies was the start of a tentative research agenda that seeks deeper causal explanations not only for the reasons for the use of sales promotion but "what" is used, "why" and "when". One significant issue that emerged early

from the case study research was that sales promotion was not merely represented by rational economic constructions and the price and volume manipulations as put forward by the earlier literature examined. I also suggest that sales promotions are predicated on potentially sophisticated, but hitherto under researched constructs that are drawn from temporal, technological, behavioural, structural and contextual factors. To date these are largely unexplored and this thesis represents a contribution to this research discourse by exploring such themes within the case studies presented.

As the research developed and the epistemology changed from a deconstructive and descriptive/analytical one to a critical realist one that focused on managerial actions in the firm, the need for a defining taxonomy of promotional forms and an overarching definition of sales promotion decreased. What grew up in its place was a more explanatory view of sales promotion. This grew out of knowledge gained during the research process that concerned the structures, mechanisms and entities that emerged as part of each sales promotion. I suggest that the act of developing the research in this way and the use of a different epistemology, has in itself, represented a contribution to the theorisation of sales promotions. Further to this notion is the contribution that has emerged from the juxtaposition of the sales promotions as entities and the organisational and market contexts in which they are created, implemented and evaluated (Workman et al 1998).

6.2.3 The Theoretical Contribution to the Marketing Literature

Researchers in the field of sales promotion have pursued, often in an unquestioning way, two major lines of enquiry predicated on either consumer responses to sales promotion or the effectiveness or otherwise of promotional activity and promotional forms. At present

the diversity and growth in the use of sales promotions suggests that there is no potential for a unified orthodoxy or overarching definition of what sales promotions are, or how they are utilised by practitioners and theorised by academics.

Marketing academics, at least from a positivist episteme, have failed to reconcile sales promotion in its variant forms with their research paradigms and instruments. They have in essence rushed to analyse and evaluate what it does before adequately defining what it is. This discourse is at its most robust in the advocacy of a positivist framing of a rational economic treatment of sales promotions where pseudo science and experimentalism as opposed to research conducted in its natural context in its social and organisational settings are the norm. There is a need to scrutinise such discourses from a critical perspective and to raise questions as to whether such an approach reflects the way in which sales promotions should be researched or are conceptualised by academic and utilised by practitioners.

This study seeks to underscore the significance of sales promotions within the marketing communications mix. It highlights the critical importance of exploring a hitherto under-researched area of marketing communications using a previously unused methodological approach and research perspective. Whilst not as grand an objective as Brownlie (1999 p3) identifies ‘...new perspectives which could contribute to the development of mainstream forms of theory and research and the popular representations of practice they have to offer’, the critical stance taken in the research nonetheless seeks to make a contribution to and advance current theorisation around sales promotions.

At this point I take the perspective put forward by O'Driscoll and Murray (1998) who suggest that theory building within specialisms such as marketing communications has been significant and growing, but remains under developed and in some cases unsophisticated.

This proliferation of perspectives and positions whilst interesting, has not, to date, resolved the issues of definition(s) or paradigmatic disputation encountered earlier in this study.

The need to widen theorisation within the field of marketing communications in general has long been of issue. Zaltman et al (1982) representing an early call for a 'think' if not a 'rethink' about the nature and form of marketing communications has resonance here.

There are also a wealth of prescriptive discourse within the mainly practitioner focused literature concerning the actions of those commissioning and managing sales promotion in given situations and contexts with optimum prescriptions supported by robust data. There has been very little research into what marketing managers and those concerned with the execution of sales promotion actually think and do as part of the process. The main area of potential contention within this thesis is that sales promotion and its use by managers is a more complex phenomenon than the existing literature would suggest.

One particular instance of this explicit contribution is where there is conceptualisation based on untried combinations of promotional activities which present themselves at a level above single promotions but that are below integrated marketing communications strategies. I have dubbed these "intragrative" promotional activities. This is a concept that emerged from the Ekleen case study. Hutton's (1996) robust examination of integrated marketing communications promotes the view that firmer foundations for the integrative paradigm are required for further development and I echo this view in suggesting that sales promotions as an isolated entity might need to undergo the same process.

Marketing communications in its various integrated forms is currently subject to critical disputation. This is due to a number of factors most notably the impact of new(er) technologies having a disruptive effect on the traditional “building blocks” of traditional IMC models. Marketing communications is in the midst of radical transformation and this is having a disruptive and disintegrative effect. In order to attempt to understand the potential changes that such transformation means, there is a need to develop newer conceptual models, methodologies and research tools in order to continue to examine the structural and contextual aspects of marketing communications. From a marketing research perspective there is little in the existing literature that accommodates such a view especially when considering forms of marketing communications which are subject to external and technological dynamic change.

6.3 Methodological Contribution

This thesis examines the phenomenon of sales promotion using a case study methodology based on a critical realist ontological position consistent with the work of Bhaskar (op cit) and Sayer (op cit). The use of critical realist ontology with its retroductive research processes, facilitates deeper and potentially more nuanced understanding as to not only what sales promotions are but why and how they happen.

As with other qualitative research strategies, the use of a critical realist ontological position meant that case studies are constructed from wide ranging data such as formal and informal access to, and meetings with, actors, observation, interview, quantitative performance data

and the scrutiny of printed materials and artefacts. Critical realism offers a more sophisticated treatment of the phenomenon in terms of accepting the notion of causalities. It also accommodates managerial discourse alongside other forms of organisational data. This in turn leads to the presentation of richer, deeper and more contextually focused accounts. These are in marked contrast to the more superficial ahistorical accounts of the impacts and advantages and disadvantages of the published accounts of sales promotions found in the literature review of this thesis.

Critical realism's use of events and structures as the basis for research and the way that such an approach uses real, actual and empirical domains, all point to its potential suitability for studies of sales promotions. This focus on objects and structures and the differences in causality that lead to the event of a sales promotion occurring is also crucial to this study. It emphasises the pre-conditions and causal factors that shape events. It is therefore particularly useful to examine the way that managers frame events such as the conceptualisation, creation or implementation of a sales promotion.

Critical realism represents a more inclusive and yet expansive and emancipatory ontology and this has a particular resonance with the framing of sales promotion as both a marketing communications tool and managerial phenomena. The way that critical realism allows for the development of sophisticated forms of causal analysis presents the researcher with a number of contingent and potential ways to approach the research problem. This is especially useful and emancipatory in fields where little research has been conducted. This focus on underlying processes, in this case managerial processes, that cause sales promotions to be produced, has presented an ontology, based on, for example, habitual use in some cases, risky first ventures in others. Whilst not ontologically consistent, this

approach nonetheless provides another step in the process of understanding sales promotions from a managerial perspective.

By using a critical realist methodology, I have also acknowledged and sought to inform existing research on sales promotions by addressing the idiosyncrasies and informal differences in the construction of sales promotion in each context. This is not through the comparison of variables using a nomothetic methodology but rather through examining each case in its own case context. This work should not however, be viewed as a vehicle to attack or defend the truth claims of one or other epistemological perspectives. Neither does it make claims itself concerning the ubiquity and applicability of critical realism for all research contexts. I have acknowledged, although not uncritically, other approaches to the study of sales promotion and have commented on their suitability to produce data and findings which informs the study of sales promotions. In this, and in my own choice of ontological position and methodology, I am mindful of the critique by Danermark et al 2001 of research methods that say “very little about alternative methodological strategies”.

Easton (2010) suggests that critical realism as a methodology is more robust and analytically sound when applied to specific contexts such as case studies. It is especially appropriate for studies of sales promotions that are time framed and structured. The main purpose was not to compare cases to each other or to search for a single stable analytical variable with which to evaluate the effectiveness of each individual promotional activity. Instead I sought to examine deeper causalities and explanations which whilst not predictive have the potential to widen understanding of the phenomena and to contextualise and re-examine the way that promotional technologies were used and perceived by marketing managers and others. By utilising a critical realist perspective in an under-researched field of study to

open up and gain some understanding of the complexities mechanisms and structures that have to date been an underdeveloped theme in the literature I was able to “dig” deeper and say more about what I found there. I suggest that the novelty in using critical realism and a case study methodology represents a contribution to the debates concerning research methodologies used to study marketing communications and sales promotions of which to date there has been little.

In taking a managerial perspective, the central and defining element for each case was a face to face interview with the particular manager responsible indirectly or directly for a particular sales promotion. Given the mix of different discourses, contexts, accounts and research processes that were brought to bear on the issues, there is the temptation to suggest that no research process and case context is pre-eminent. Underlying processes and structures emerged within the research and the approach to data collection and early case study presentation reflected this in an emergent reshaping of such processes. This is not, however, the model of constant research redesign implicit in a grounded theory approach where each research interaction is episodic and there is a reflexive period of redesign before the next. Neither does this use a fixed research instrument that is then applied to each research context. The way that case based research allows for emergent phenomena to “come into view” assumes a criticality in this work.

Within this doctoral research I have presented 4 in-depth case studies drawn from a cluster of 13 case studies that reflect the way that managers choose to use and think about sales promotions within different organisational contexts. Collectively the case studies provide a wide reaching and fine grained examination of the use and deployment of sales promotion but from a managerial perspective rather than the normal rational economic or behavioural

perspectives surveyed above. There has been little treatment of sales promotion as a case study based 'event'.

Often case based research is emergent in the way data becomes available and the way that the structure of cases became more concrete. This is particularly so where the phenomena or contexts under examination are under researched and the research is literally "exploratory". In the case of the research presented here the case studies were not longitudinal in the accepted sense, nor did they take a purely historical approach consistent with that of Donaldson (1985) who focuses on case studies as historical entities. The case studies presented in this work represent a mix of real time, historical and formal and informal gathering of information. Qualitative based case research is however subject to the issues thrown up by the complexity of each case context.

In applying critical realist ontology I have also sought to develop an analytical framework that is robust enough to examine the managerial process of deploying sales promotion activities seeking explanations rather than predictions. In the analysis of the case studies I sought reflexivity through a constant re-examination of what had happened in each case against what managers and others had said, done and the outcomes.

The novelty and contribution to knowledge of the ontological position taken and the methodological and analytical approach provides a new research focus within an existing context and terrain. It is not intended to be a challenge to the current marketing or marketing research orthodoxy, more the contextualisation of existing knowledge and methods in new and hopefully "fertile ground". I feel that this is a key contribution of this thesis and 'signposts' the potential for wider and more far-reaching research.

6.4 Managerial Implications/Contribution

The implications of this study from the practitioner perspective present both a problem and provides the potential for further research. Wierenga (2002) suggests that there is an identifiable gulf that exists between practitioner and academic knowledge constructs in the marketing field.

I would argue that the gap between practitioner and academic treatments of sales promotion is widening due to emergent structural changes in technologies and the approaches taken by organisations to the use of marketing communications. It is generally acknowledged that there is a time lag between real world phenomena and published academic research. However practitioners face a choice between, on the one hand, atheoretical prescriptions, (one manager talked of the difference between 'real' marketing being that taught in universities and through the Chartered Institute of Marketing and the type of work she was expected to do in organising sales promotions); simplistic frameworks and prescriptive discourses and, on the other hand, sophisticated analytically framed models and highly specific data that might not be applicable or possible to implement in their own organisational context.

In this thesis I have identified some theory / practice inconsistencies in the existing academic discourses on sales promotion. By abandoning the paradigmatic and epistemic centred approaches that I found in previous studies, and by using case studies within a critical realist frame, I have sought to examine sales promotion from the hitherto unexplored managerial perspective. In this a contribution to the existing marketing knowledge on sales promotion

is implicit. Rather than focusing on the type of theory practice inconsistencies that can be found in the existing sales promotions literature I have sought to integrate the theory *within* the managerial context. This represents one of the major contributions of this study and an especially different perspective than that taken in previous research into sales promotions activity.

The focus of the study was the role and decision processes of marketing managers and their actions; the unit of analysis, the sales promotion itself. One critical outcome of that has been an emergent view of what sales promotion represents to such marketing managers. In the act of acknowledging the role of marketing managers and others in the organisation involved in sales promotion, my contribution lies in advancing the perspective taken by Simpson (2006) and others which is to concentrate on the 'why' of sales promotions rather than the what.

The implications of this work and the contribution of this work for practitioners and their knowledge is small and emergent but nonetheless represents another step in what is a developmental agenda that treats sales promotion in an entirely different way. I have grouped the remaining contributions in this area around three possible perspectives; managerial, organisational and strategic.

6.5 Managerial Understanding and 'Unknowing'

The case study method used here takes the research into the organisational context and in this it becomes a study of marketing managers and those involved in the creation and management of such sales promotions in context. The assumption of other researchers examined earlier in the thesis is that marketing decisions are supra-rational and concerned

with best practice and optimal economic rents and outcomes. This discourse particularly suits a rational economic view of sales promotions where the effectiveness of narrowly framed courses of action can be evaluated.

Each of the conceptualisations of sales promotion that emerged from the case study and the conceptual framework presented in the early part of the thesis all draw attention to parts of what is a complex mix of mechanisms that inform the process of producing a sales promotion 'event'. What emerged were two particular contributions to the debate and around managerial use of sales promotions.

Whilst it is acknowledged that marketing managers may need to develop greater understanding of what sales promotions are and do, ensuring 'best practice' outcomes was not always evident. The reasons for deploying sales promotions, understanding of a promotion's processes and legal and ethical constraints were not always evident. Sales promotions are highly contextually specific and the reasons for deployment, as in the cases of Scottco and Locost Mainbrand were not always apparent. There was often managerial 'unknowing' about why sales promotions were in use other than replication of activity from the previous year. This is also evident in the way that unrealistic expectations as in the case of Crafter were allowed to inform the decision making process around a sales promotion's use.

Issues emerged from the research concerning the way that the processes of sales promotions were managed. These issues presented both a contribution to our understanding of why sales promotions can be used that can also be used to disconfirm the rational economic view. There is therefore, not one optimum best practice typology for

sales promotions and indeed as the case studies in this thesis suggest there were some well managed sales promotions activities, others were thoughtlessly delegated to external providers, with some success as in the Ekleen case. There was also fairly obvious mismanagement. The contextual specificity of each case study suggests that there is no overarching generic model of best practice that can be communicated to managers. A potential area for future research might be to examine a larger number of cases in order to identify areas of common insight drawn from the managers themselves as to ways to manage sales promotions effectively and common mistakes and pitfalls. I therefore feel that my thesis makes a small and early but important contribution to developing a wider set of 'practice issues' which can be informed by a more expansive managerial discourse.

6.6 Organisational Processes and Sales Promotion

The deeper immersion into organisations that came from using a critical realist informed case study method was an especially unique, liberating and interesting experience for me as a researcher. This is commented on in Chapter 4. As stated earlier, central to this study is a deeper understanding of sales promotion as a contextualised 'event'. This view of sales promotion as an event was previously put forward by Blattberg and Neslin (1989). I have however gone further in suggesting that such an event is grounded in a specific context and that this is an important causal variable. Such a context might be in the structure of the managerial team as in the Ekleen case where this factor had different implications for how the sales promotion emerged than, say, the Scottco case. Both sales promotions were shaped by the managerial processes that were embedded in the organisations. Also of significance is the way that the managers of a particular firm perceive themselves and their marketing communications/sales promotions activities. This was particularly significant in

the Dixieco case study where their perception was that they were 'outliers' doing things very differently to others when in fact they were not.

This is also true of the business context in which the sales promotion takes place as in the cases of Wiseman's plc and Schwartz Ltd where the market and competitive context in which organisation was operating shaped the sales promotion and the firms' use of sales promotions (Kannan and Yim 2001). Such contextual factors, to date, have been understated in the existing research. My contribution is to present a model which seeks to integrate diverse contextual factors from both within and outside the organisation that informs the practice of deploying and managing sales promotions. The framework presented here is robust and reliable. It helps to explain how sales promotions come to be what they are. It is by no means comprehensive or predictive, and future research should allow me to develop it further. However it does not necessarily tell managers what to do. That may never be possible.

6.7 The Strategic Implications of the Use of Sales Promotions

This study furthers understanding of the reason why sales promotions are used by managers and the deeper processes and mechanisms that inform such processes. There is a criticality that informs the use of sales promotion by managers, not in terms of the creation of sales promotion but instead issues concerning sense making, implementation and integration as discussed above.

There is an emergent perspective not found in the research presented here that suggests that sales promotions should be seen as more significant strategically. As an ex-practitioner

I might have once subscribed to this view as an advocate for the use of sales promotions either integrated with, or in preference to other forms of marketing communications.

Peattie and Peattie (1994) describe the way that narrow definitions and what they term as a process of “bundling” of promotional activities together, in terms of both empirical study and to some extent managerial discourse, has proved ultimately to be a limiting, tactical, short term, negative and futile way of approaching research into and the practice of sales promotion. I partly take issue with this and cite the Ekleen case where despite thoughtless delegation and a commodity product, a sales promotion that bundled various forms in this way generated successful outcomes.

Much of this view has depended on whether sales promotions are perceived to be effective when they are used in isolation or integrated with other marketing communications forms. In the research presented here I cite the cases of Taylors of Harrogate, Scottco, Wiseman’s and Schwartz where sales promotions were underused or used as the lead communications tool with other marketing formats as in the Schwartz case, and as the lead off point from which other marketing communications activities were developed as in the Scottco and Wiseman’s cases. These models of integration do not follow the above the line / below the line bifurcations but instead are temporally framed with sales promotions acting as the lead and leading activity from which other elements of the communications mix are developed.

It is defensible to present a model of sales promotions as a strategically significant element of marketing communications, but not in the way the extant literature suggests. It is insufficient to merely suggest that promotions have a strategic significance and “push them upstairs” to a strategic level in the way that Peattie et al (1997) suggest. I believe that sales

promotions have the potential to assume a strategic significance for brands in both their communications mix and marketing strategies, but that this remains unresolved or the causal mechanisms undiscovered and that it requires a more sophisticated research treatment that to date it has not had. Yeshin's (2006) views are significant here in that they give credence to this view. Such a stream in the research presented here constitutes both a contribution and an emergent and exploratory theme for a potential future research agenda.

By way of a summary of this section the contributions presented here represent additions to a growing body of knowledge in an under theorised yet fast growing area of marketing communications. There are time lags between innovations and practitioner actions on the one hand and the presentation of academic research on the other. The methodological and conceptual position my own research has taken and the provocations that have emerged from the case studies I present represent a contribution to the body of academic knowledge concerning sales promotions. I suggest that there is a potential shift in the deployment of sales promotion activity but, in the contexts I examined, it has not yet taken place. My research also highlights the vast potential for further research in the managerial context that would yield possibly more insightful contributions that address the knowledge needs of practitioners concerning the use and management of sales promotions.

6.8 Reflections on the Research Process

Much of what passes as instruction to research students early in their careers suggests that there is a need to "anchor" one's research to an existing body of literature. The metaphors for the literature review process include "staking a claim", "laying out an area" and even "building a robust defensible position". Brown (1999) writes of "clearing space".

My role as both researcher and ex-practitioner was a useful entry mechanism into the focal firms, and my use of case studies and a critical realist ontology prevented my research 'expectations' from becoming divorced from the organisational context (Alvesson and Wilmott 1996). Whilst sales promotion practice and strategising has not to date been the subject of participant observation, my involvement in some aspect of the organisational processes around sales promotion has been a useful starting point. Seeking out the views of marketing managers, other marketing team members and others regarding their involvement in sales promotion has provided me with insights upon which to reflect on my own practice as both academic and ex-practitioner. In this I am minded of the need for reflexivity as suggested by Thompson and McHugh (1990); researchers need to "have the capacity to reflect upon themselves so that values, practices and knowledge are not taken for granted" (p31)

My own axiological "problem" here was to escape my own subjectivity as an ex- sales promotion practitioner and academic. In this research I sought no "law like generalisations" for practitioners, rather to advance the methodological diversity of using critical realism in another context and the contextual diversity of examining sales promotion from an emergent managerial perspective. In this I hope that I have in some small way answered Simpson's (2006) call for new and more diverse forms of sales promotion research.

The original impetus for this research was an examination of the way in which sales promotions were informed by managerial processes and other causal factors. Early in the research process however, a decision was taken to examine the wider context of sales promotions activity rather than just ludentic forms such as promotional competitions and

prize draw. This impacted on the choice of case organisations as they were drawn from an initial data set drawn up by engagement with archival material. This I would suggest might have skewed the results towards more ludentic forms and away from other forms in particular price and volume manipulations although these did emerge alongside other promotional forms in the research process.

The research questions I started with raised the need for a fundamental examination and, in some cases, personal redefinition of every aspect of this study especially methodologically, contextually and analytically and my only hope is that I have not disappointed in my execution of these objectives. In this I answer the research question with not one answer but many case examples. Sales promotions are potentially as varied, and in my opinion as interesting, as the focal organisations and managerial actors that created and implement them.

6.9 Limitations of the Research

What I have found in the case studies and subsequent emergent findings is that even in the limited number of cases I examined, the diversity of uses for sales promotion and reasons for its use advanced by managers meant that such classification whilst not impossible represents a unique and complex challenge to researchers in this field.

The generality of any data was never the issue, neither was the reliability and consistency of any measurement instruments, nor was any predictive element which would only be a crude guide for a number of given the number of contexts and potential responses. This heterogeneity is implicit in the use of case studies but nonetheless had significant

implications in the early stages of the study, in that at first I was “swamped” with data across contexts and found the process initially unmanageable.

The practical and resource constraints are acknowledged in the methods chapter as being bound up in issues of time, access and managerial mortality/continuity. The research presented here seeks to provide a deeper, more informed perspective on why promotional activities are used and the ways that they are used. It is however limited by time and the word count of this thesis. Whilst a limited number of case studies are used, I believe that the research strategy and methods utilised represent a useful and parsimonious exploration suited to the scale and scope of this type of study which has the potential to be expanded in the future. Using such multiple case studies however, presented me with a wide range of contexts and contextualised materials with which to examine contemporary developments with regard to the use of sales promotion.

Methodologically perhaps the most significant emergent factor was one that I had not envisaged. Early in the research I had felt that in a quest for some rigour it would be useful to time frame all of the promotional strategies I was examining by starting from the inception of the promotional decision making phase through to final evaluation. One of the first major research problem I came up against was that sales promotion activity was not temporally regular nor was it organised in this way. There were issues of contingency most notably in terms of the length of time spent on promotional activity, the levels of delegation both internally and externally, from organisations who expended large amounts of managerial time on sales promotion activities to those who outsourced them. The secondary defining factor was the amount of time given over to the life of the promotional activity itself of which there were wide variances.

Perhaps the greatest limiting factor was the problems thrown up by my role as “research reporter”. Any researcher’s epistemological and ontological position will have an influence on methods and views on the strengths and inherent weaknesses of any methodology. My own ontological “presuppositions” (Ackroyd and Fleetwood 2000, p10) have had to be sublimated as part of this research process. The greatest difficulty I felt I faced was as an ex-practitioner to avoid making evaluative statements within the reportage of the research.

Whilst it would have been possible to make such statements in the case study reportage to have done so even implicitly would have represented a betrayal of trust. Within such reporting it is difficult to avoid building in implicit and assumed values and the one that I felt most had to be sublimated was the view that price manipulations and promotions were “bad” and by default more sophisticated forms of promotional activity were “good”. This opened out into a lengthy but ultimately futile debate as to whether certain forms of sales promotions were more suited to particular contexts, research methodologies and epistemic traditions. This is, of course, ultimately futile and self defeating as a research ‘logic’. In the subsection below I have therefore, outlined remedies for the shortcomings identified and provide an outline agenda for future research in this area.

6.10 Directions for Future Research

It has now been nearly 25 years since Rhea and Massey’s (1986) call for greater research into sales promotions from many and varied angles. There are now a range of unique and prescient challenges for anyone researching into the phenomena of sales promotion. Rapid change and increased use by marketing managers have come at a time when there are changes in communications technology and the potential widening of the types and forms of

sales promotions activity. This has already been hinted at in thoughtful positions taken up by Yoon and Kim (2001), Oliver and Shor (2003) and Yeshin (2006 pp134-135) who have begun to assess the integration of web-based models of sales promotion activity. Whilst that has not been fully examined in the context of this thesis it nonetheless provides a potentially fruitful avenue for future research.

Research into sales promotion, I contend is hampered by narrow definition and a search for regularity, which may often not be there. The focus on hypothesis testing from a largely positivist perspective has also restricted the potential for further conceptualisations and deeper understanding of sales promotion. I therefore, feel that the time is now right to revisit Chandon's (1995) "state of the art literature review". There is potential for a reassessment of this seminal work. The issues contained there provide provocations for a wider review of the literatures that impact upon our critical thinking about sales promotions rather than being merely about sales promotions.

It is unlikely that critical realism or the theoretical provocations that have emerged from this study will, in the short term, have any impact on the dominance of the quantitative and rational economic or behavioural epistemic traditions. In the longer term, critical realism, and its potential to explain phenomena in temporal and contextual ways may provide greater explanation that will inform research in the field of sales promotions and marketing communications.

The use of the ontological position of Critical Realism opens up the field of study of sales promotions to greater potential for theoretical development and enhancement. Developing understanding of the entities, in this case sales promotions, organisations and other

contextual entities such as competitors or customers opens up a potential for wider study of causal powers and liabilities. Contextualising the mechanisms of sales promotion within organisational or market contexts that determine events and outcomes represents a potentially and transformational direction for research into sales promotions and marketing communications in general.

One key question that has emerged from this research and is not addressed either in the wider literature or in practitioner guides is why firms become involved in promotional activity of this type at all. This provides a fertile area for the development of a research agenda and future research is clearly needed to present a more thorough examination of the managerial process behind the use of sales promotion.

My own research interests that have developed out of this study are as follows: Firstly the way in which marketing managers make unorthodox decisions about the use of sales promotions and other forms of marketing communications provides the first research provocation. Secondly the theme of 'intragrative' marketing communications such as sales promotions being combined with other sales promotions formats rather than with other elements of the marketing communications 'mix' has the potential to provide another area of potentially fruitful research. To this I add a third category, that of the potential of sales promotion to transform both the marketing communications mix and competitive and market positions of brands. This remains unexplored but has the potential for collaborative research across sectors, categories and academic specialisms.

The use of longitudinal ethnographic cases and real time case studies that track one particular sales promotion were considered as part of this research but were discarded due

to the pressures of time and access. These can now be explored as an antithetical position to the narrow snapshot analyses of other epistemic approaches. This may potentially include participant observation or an action research stance dependent on the level of immersion in the case context.

More case examples drawn from wider sources would help to support the conceptualisations and provocations made here and provide greater in depth knowledge concerning the managerial processes that lead to the creation and implementation of sales promotions. The widening of the number of case studies whilst not for reasons of statistical generalisation would provide an emergent and ongoing stream of new examples of, and contexts for, the study of sales promotion. In this I seek to reflect the nature of contemporary changes in sales promotions practice.

Further research might also compare the processes across product categories and across promotional forms and structures or try to reconcile a managerial and consumer perspective by conducting open inter and 'intra group' research. One possible way forward might be to embed Simpson's (2006 p225) conceptual framework of sales promotion success in other categories and contexts. As in the case of Scottco and Johnsons plc, little attention has been focussed on sales promotion by service providers (Venkatesh and Mahajan 1993, Fam and Merrilees 2001).

By way of a final comment I end this thesis with a quotation, from Baker (1993) who states:

"...until now the topic of sales promotion has been something of a Cinderella amongst academic researchers. This clearly does not reflect its importance in practice..."

Baker was but one of a growing number calling for more research into sales promotion and deeper understanding of how and why it is used. And his sentiment remains true today. My hope is that this study has in some small way answered that call.

Interview conducted June 25th 2004 Venue: Wisemans plc Headquarters, Paisley Scotland

DM OK.... Can I focus on the one artefact that I have from you which is the Magic Roundabout themed on pack....

JR Yes...

DM ...and if you can sketch out...because it was used in 2005

JR Yes...

DM ...so can you give me a bit of background about that

JR Really to set the scene as far as on-pack promotion is concerned. We usually get involved...our product is a commodity product. So when people buy milk its usually...either our milk or somebody else's...So our whole reason for getting involved in sales promotion on-pack is probably very different from other products or other brands because, our reasoning for using it is not for sales generation and sales growth...One of the main areas in which we get involved is what we term added value to a commodity brand and for years we have carried out a full programme of on pack promotion on our black and white brand....and that is really to add interest and add value to our products and to

our brand. So we are offering the consumer a bit extra and we are engaging with the consumer, engaging the brand directly with the consumer and also through that engaging directly with our direct customers ...the retailers. And giving them another reason why they should be stocking our milk and not somebody else's. That's really where that comes from.

In terms of the Magic Roundabout promotion that you have there ...we really need to go back to 2001 when we were approached by a promotions agency

DM a sales promotions agency ...a creative?

JR Yes...to get involved in a promotion for a film called Ice Age, which was a 20th Century Fox production. They were looking to get involved with brands and products to do joint promotions and as this was something we have never done before...and we thought the opportunity fitted quite well. Where other dairy companies had got involved with actually selling their space on pack. It's always something that we had steered clear of you know because we are forcing this onto consumers ...onto their breakfast table... we are very conscious that whatever we want to do on pack whether its charitable messages or fun messages or sales promotions we are always conscious that it has to fit well with them and offers them something as much as they won't or can't think we are trying to just make money out of that space on their breakfast table...that kind of effect?

DM Sure yes...

JR So we had thought it fitted quite well for us in terms of us carrying this on pack so it would make the packs more interesting and we were also offering added value through the prize fund for consumers...which is how the promotion came about using Ice Age from 20th Century Fox. So we ran that sales promotion...and how we actually ran that was through stickers inside of the screw caps in the packaging...and we had different scales of prizes with different stickers...so that was our first foray into it...so that was dependent on the dairies putting these stickers inside the caps so it was completely random and everything...but...but all the prizes actually didn't get claimed

DM Right.

JR The things is with the message on packand you look under the cap and there's a big sticker there...you know but it just didn't happen (laughs)

DM OK (laughs) yes!

JR We got great retailer feedback saying the packs looked great but it just didn't actually...you know....happen in terms of claiming the prizes!

DM ...Didn't actually self liquidate?

JR Well because the prizes were there regardless cause that's what the film company put up for us to promote on pack...so the prizes were there regardless...but they didn't all go...

DM ...and which agency was that?

JR It was 360....they are called 360degrees I think. They're a sales promotion agency .

DM So that then takes us back to 2001?

JR Yes I am pretty sure it was 2001 yes it wasNo! 2002!

DM 2002?

JR Yes that's right 2002!...and that's the first time we got involved in it...and then we got involved with 360 again with the X Men

DM Right

JR Again...anything that we have done with films it has to be a good fit with the brand and with the product. Ice Age was an animated cartoon aimed at families....X Men also family but a wee bit edgy.

DM Sure ...yes.

JR So we wanted to push the envelope a wee bit with the brand, and it was ...things about X Men that allowed us to do that...you know the packs were all black with the different X Men characters on them ...so we got involved with them again.

DM ...so you lost the black and white pack on that

JR yes but only for the time of the promotion and then we went back to the traditional black and white pack...but the packs looked great...they really stood out in the dairy section....you know in fridges because everything else is usually...the packs traditionally use white for milk or they are white and the fridges are white ...so it looked really different...

DM OK

JR and the Magic Roundabout was with another agency...not 360.

DM So X Men was when ?

JR X Men must have been about 2003

DM and then we move through to Magic Roundabout which was 2005...

JRyes aha 2005

JR ...oh and we also did Garfield in 2004

DM right so basically one per year

JR yeah ...its kind of worked out that way....as we have a full schedule especially with all the different packaging..throughout the year...

DM right...

JR and after Magic Roundabout we also did Nanny McPhee which was with another agency....obviously I think the film company choose different agencies

DM yes aha...

JR and different films have different agencies and different promotions and intentions, but obviously they will be familiar with what we have done on pack in the past.....so Nanny McPhee was our latest one...which was I think...was it Christmas last year...

DM so Christmas 2005

JRyes!....so that was around that time....

JRbut also we did another one sorry! We also did another one called Good Boy and that was Christmas 2004 I think

DM right...

JR so that was another one that we did...but they are very much along the same lines as the others, the film company or the agency representing the film company contact us...to see if we'd be interested...and we see whether we have a space in our schedule...where if we think it's going to be a right fit for us to get involved with and we...we look at everything else that is going on around it at that time.

At the end of the day it's the film company who put up the prize fund, but it's for us to run the competition with the branding on pack...and that's basically how it happens,

DM OK basically how its constructed

JR But what we've done this time is changed ...or some of the times changed the mechanic on pack...for Ice Age and X Men we used the sticker option, you know the kind of instant win, but it just wasn't working...we just didn't feel we were getting the redemption...

DM why was that...

JR I don't know if folk just weren't paying attention to it or...it didn't enter their mindset...oror I'm not too sure. The others though we have had amazing....responses and redemptions on. The Good Boy promotion was one where you had to write a poem or story....and we got hundreds and hundreds from that. But the biggest by far was the Garfield and what we asked consumers to do was collect six caps and send them in and we got thousands upon thousands of entries...

DM and that was still a prize draw

JR aha...however we ran the same mechanic for the Magic Roundabout and the redemption wasn't as high...and it was exactly the same mechanic so I don't know why ...or what turns them on

DM Right

JR Because in terms of the film property they were both quite well received films that did well...and both well known ...but in terms of our on packs it was the Garfield one that really did it.

DM That's really interesting because that sort of flies in the face of the received wisdom that chance based on pack promotions get higher redemption rates than skill ones but what you are saying is that whilst Garfield obviously did really well the interesting one is that the Good Boy one which was skill based also did well and that there was a big difference between Garfield and Magic Roundabout...that having to send in a poem somewhere along the way attracted their attention and lit them up and they saw fit to respond and that you can't just say that a format like a prize draw will get their attention.

JR aha because that one was about their dog or their pets and asking people to write in with things to do with their pets....and I don't know whether it was just that...

DM was that aimed solely at children...

JR No...not at all you get right across the board....all ages writing about their pets...funnily enough ...people who probably don't get out enough.

DM (laughs) right.....OK in terms of redemption rates...off hand can you sketch out...you know quantify the redemption rates for some of these promotions

JR It still...in terms of the volumes of packs we send out because its related to the packs we send out.... that's in the millions of packs that go out

DM OK and what comes back?

JR The Garfield one we got well over a thousand.

DM OK aha...

JR So it's still in terms of points of a percent....granted....but it's still quite high over time and what we are looking at...

DM OK can I just ask ...why....I understand that companies approach you

JR aha

DMand that you have moved from the sticker option to other on pack promotional formats...but why...what's the basis of the choice of those sorts of format for promotional activities...is that decided on in house by you or is that brought in by people like 360?

JR They'll probably suggest...like we'll get an agency like 360 phoning us with film properties that they are looking to punt and to get people ...brands to work with...and it's just a case of internally we'll have a discussion on whether the films ...whether they're going to actually do anything and whether they will be successful and whether it's the right kind of thing for us to associate with....and even whether the film itself is right for us to associate the brand with...and that is the main crux of the matter...and they we think about how we can package this to offer the consumer something...

DM Thanks for that, that's really interesting...given that these have happened at specific times, would you say that they are typical of Robert Wiseman's use of sales promotion in general or do they stand out in relation to your overall marketing communications strategy?

JRI would say that they are only part of it and we are very conscious to have different things running, you know... throughout the year...I have brought a couple of other samples in....in all that we do we always say that we are community minded, we are charity minded and fun minded. This is one on pack that we have recently run with the vet's school in Glasgow and also the Vetaid charity and this is the first time we have ever got involved in anything like this, and this is text to donate operation which is completely new for us...

DM OK

JR and this is if people want to get involved with the charity we are promoting on pack, they can text in to donate, so that makes up a part of what we are doing. Other ones that we have done, like in 2003 we got involved in National Osteoporosis Day so that's just using the packs for awareness raising charitable ...and just running now we have been using labels as well and these have been running for Remembrance Day on pack. So the type of draws and sales promotions only make up a part of our on pack calendar, how we use on packs throughout the year.

DM Right...and how does that fit with other marketing communications...I notice that you have very strong corporate identity branding on the vehicles

JR Yes ..yes

DM Colleagues, students, relatives...when I said I was coming up to Robert Wiseman...they said "Cow painted Lorries on the Motorway" but how does it fit with other aspects of Robert Wiseman's overall communications?

JR It very much is a core part of what we are about, because of the commodity nature of our product again it is very hard, when it comes to actually marketing it because. We sell milk,

that its...that's our business and who we are....when you go into a shop it's our milk or somebody else's. When it comes to the black and white brand....on pack promotional....promotions are quite an integral part of that, because its one avenue open to us at the point of sale...where we can try to create a bit of a USP, in terms of what the brand is and what we are about. It fits with the whole black and white cow....slightly humorous angle to the brand...and this on pack thing build on that and says...we are you know humorous but we are also about adding value in some way for you the consumer, very much trying to engage with you...and it's a way of giving the brand personality really....so that's where we see it coming from and that on pack really is core for us...

DM ...so what other forms of marketing communications do you do in addition to all this good stuff that's going on on-pack?

JR In terms of the black and white really very little...

DM So are there others in the Wiseman...

JR Yes...

DM ...like Fresh N' Lo for example

JR yes there's Fresh N' Lo and The One....which is our one percent branded product, launched about....two and a half years ago...and it is a standalone brand in itself because its one percent fat ...but still tastes like semi skimmed but still has its kind of own...communications strategy....so we do a lot of above the line advertising with it...

DM right...

JR We do T.V. advertising with it...we do press, P.R. in store promotions you know sampling...things like that....that stands alone...and we also entered into a licensing relationship with Disney ...so we are now Disney licensees for fresh milk products....so that's a relatively new relationship and we have an an incredible promotional product tie in...with Pirates of the Caribbean just now...and we are developing that relationship so again....that's the kind of area where we are looking to get involved in above the line and sales promotion in terms of sales

driving initiatives and we are having conversations about you know...building this into the strategy for next year...a lot of sales promotions stuff a promotional push that will be used for a completely different reason than for what we do for the black and white brand ...and that will be actually trying to generate a real increase in sales...

DM ...so basically if I can summarise you run three different types of brands and they all have a kind of different type of communications strategy...

JR yes...that's right

DM and the main focus for the black and white brand has been on pack sales promotion with some community related but also mainly games and draws...

JR yes...that's it...

DM OK thanks for that...the other thing that I am interested in ..is based on Magic Roundabout...and I only have this one to go on...you seem to run your fulfilment and handling in house...?

JR yes

DM That is interesting...has that gone also for X Men, Garfield and the others...

JR (sounding surprised) yes...of course...all of them we've run in house...

DM right...so can you just take me through that...and how that came about...because that's actually quite interesting, because a number of other managers I have spoken seem to want to get rid of that fulfilment and handling function and outsource it...

JR yes...we have been involved in it from the other side...and this is another one to throw into the mix for you....We are involved with an organisation called the Scottish Dairy Marketing Company...and this has been set up to generically promote milk in Scotland ...This basically comes from what I was saying about what we can do with black and white...because...if we push...promote milk...by default...we are promoting everyone's milk...consumer's think milk...but they don't...might not link us to it.....

DM OK I see...

JR We have come together with other dairy companies and the Milk Development Council to run a campaign that is advertising and promoting milk...above and below the line...that's promoting milk as a drink and a healthy product the Milkstache campaign?

DM Yes

JR using celebrities...and within that last year we did on pack sales promotion across the dairy companies....and involving the retailers and their own brand for instance...Asda, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's all ran it with their own label...and this to get a bean cow...a wee bean cow cuddly toy...a beanie. And consumers had to collect tokens and send that in with money to a fulfilment house...and you got the cow back....and ...and what I thought about that was it was very much out of our control...completely out of our control...not only were an agency running it for us and a fulfilment house fulfilling the promotional...handling the responses...We were only one of the organisations that were involved in it...and what I felt was there were occasions when there were delays...in fulfilment and if people had bought Wiseman milk to collect the tokens...it was to them a Wiseman promotion...they would contact us when there was a delay or they didn't get their beanie cow...so...and you could we were phoning up trying to make things happen but you could not automatically solve that persons problem...pr prevent that problem from happening at all because...of the lack of control...Whereas with the promotions that we have done ourselves...on pack...the real benefit for us is that like with the on packs we believe that everything about...that goes on as part of the promotion communicates something about the brand...so what is said on pack...how then if you put in an entry how quickly you find out if you have won or not...and how that is communicated and how then your prize is delivered ...and everything about that...and we are bringing that in house...where we feel we can have control over that....also to ensure that it is done properly to our standards...to try to make sure that the consumer has a feel good factor about the whole process...

DM and did you take that decision

JRit really is a kind of consensus of thinking

DM right

JR across the team...and also there weren't sort of huge....it wasn't too onerous a job..its that as well, which you have to balance that up with...because we had an idea about how things were running...and about...with a definite size of prize fund....we knew how big a monster we would be dealing with kind of thing...so that again bolted on to the whole things of wanting the experience for the consumer to be correct...allowed us to bring it in house and I think there was a general consensus and a general feeling about that...that that was how it should be.

DM OK....Do you think there are any limitations in using the same type of promotion repeatedly? Because you have this with the film driven thing and you have run

JR Yes....

DM you've changed the mechanic a few times

JR yes

DM or are you quite happy in something that's a model.... a sort of comfort zone that has worked well for you

JR I think...you know...we are keen to change...you know after we did Ice Age we got asked to get involved in Ice Age 2...when it came out and it was the same with Garfield and Garfield 2...and it's kind of OK yeah well we've been there and we've done it

DM So you didn't promote off Ice Age 2 or Garfield 2?

JR No we didn't do either and we were like...nothing against those films and we hope ...are sure they will do well but we are keen to keep it all fresh...and I think...I think it's more about the property we are associated with rather than the actual mechanic...and I think that as long as that is fresh enough and its of the moment and all the rest of it I think that's fine...

DM OK Moving across to this...we have looked at the black and white brand and the on pack such as Magic Roundabout here...

JR Yes ...Fresh N Lo

DM ...so moving across to this the Fresh N Lo product, and this style book which I picked up in the foyer ...

JR yes

DM There's a couple of things that's come out in terms of this promotion

JR of course

DM I'd just like to move...because it is part of your other products...portfolio and I'd just like to explore that its run as a kind of different...a kind of different market position and profile ...so I am just kind of interested in the kind of promotions that you ran ...like you ran one here that's "Drive Across America in a Cadillac" very very early on back in gosh 1994! This must be a brand that's kind of Scotland and very Northern basedbecause I am not ...I've not come across this one...and I have tried to collect hundreds of these back to...

JR yes...aha well Fresh N' Lo' that's right Fresh N' Lo is a purely Scottish product, a Scottish brand...Fresh N' Lo' was the first ever semi skimmed milk to market ever! It was beaten to market by a day by a dairy company down south...

DM right

JR and this before any of the supermarkets had their own label semi skimmed it was completely new to market ...and it was Scottish Farm Dairies that launched the product. We acquired Scottish Farm and the product in 1997, through the then acquisition of the Scottish Pride business, so we have only been directly involved since then...But at its time it was like our product The One, it did have a USP it was a brand to shout about and it did have something unique, that the sales promotions and everything else helped to support. When it was the top grocery brand you know it grew and grew and it still has a huge following in Scotland...but ...it is still semi skimmed milk but some consumer still say it tastes different, and ask for it by name and have to buy Fresh N' Lo' rather than other semi skimmed milk...and it's still got great brand loyalty...and this is why still get involved in doing bits and pieces with it...I joined the company

here in 2000 so I wasn't involved directly with the Fresh N Lo' promotions but the one that I do remember...that I was involved in was the talking carton

DM This one here the win a Ford KA

JR Yes...which was a fantastic success, but you did get people moaning because with the winning talking carton they didn't actually get their milk

DM ah...right (laughs)

JR so that was a bit of a hindrance for some folk

DM so this carton had

JR had a whole mechanism in it that once the carton was open it talked but the carton had to be water filled...because obviously you couldn't actually have milk

DM of course....yes...

JR so you would get people who would go out to the shop come back open up the carton for the milk for their breakfast cereal or cup of tea and the carton would talk to them but they still wouldn't actually get their milk....so that sort of added to the whole chat and buzz about the promotion

DM so did you run some kind of P.R. activity on the back of that

JR oh yes....and around that time we were sponsoring shows and radio breakfast shows so that added and there was a lot of chat and buzz about the brand and that came to the fore...

DM so can you take me through the mechanism...so this was mounted in the pack and you had this on pack...

JR yes

DM and this P.R. says it was won in stores in Asda in Aberdeen, Tesco and Botterils Convenience Store in Hamilton...

JR yes....

DM so were they won by consumers in those stores or was it the store that won the car...

JR yes, consumers who bought their milk at those stores

DM so there was a spin off for the retailer....

JR absolutely

DM and how did that go in terms of response

JR great and great P.R. around it.....and we worked with Tetrapak who are our carton providers and they were very much involved in developing the mechanism and the carton, and producing the packs for us because there had to be specific packs, then get them into our distribution chain, so they could be sent out

DM Brilliant

JR It was... it was a very good one...

DM Because I love to find new examples of....and that is one I haven't seen used in that way

JR aha... and it was years ago, as well that's the thing because we still talk about doing something again with the talking cartons again. But it's actually funny how the mechanics and mechanisms haven't really moved on....so it will be pretty much of a nightmare to run!

DM and have you done anything else on Fresh N Lo since, promotional competitions, sales promotions

JR ...nothing really the most recent stuff we do with Fresh N Lo is we sponsor the Great Scottish Run, like the equivalent of the Great North Run...we are the Title sponsors so it's the Fresh N Lo Great Scottish Run and we promote entries...on pack to generate entries and we have managed to grow that from 15,000 to 25,000 in the years we have been involved....

DM so if I can summarise the commodity aspect of the black and white brand drives a need for on pack sales promotion and promotional competitions and prize draws...whereas the others have added value in terms of health fitness low fat etc...but the black and white needs more of a draw through point of sale

JR yes...

DM whereas the others use ...above the line and other forms like sponsorship...

JR that's right

DM OK great thanks for that ...that's great ...lovely

DM OK can I just move on to look at some of the management issues if you don't mind

JR aha

DM just to dig a little bit deeper...

JR No problem

DM ...into some of the management issues and process's around sales promotion activity if you are OK with that

JR yes... sure.

DM Can I just clarify what is actually your title and role...

JR I am the marketing manager....I joined the company in 2000 and there was no-one here at that time that focussed specifically on marketing...its really because of the nature of the business and the brands ...that we didn't really have anything going like The One going, or the Disney link up going at that time or the on packs like these....so it was where did marketing actually fit? My boss at that time the sales and marketing director had already been involved in things like on pack promotions and different things but through the assistance of the sales team. So I was brought in to do marketing specifically and the role has grown and we now have a department of only three (laughs).

DM Right

JR So that's really where that's come from

DM OK Thinking about...let's focus on black and white and what you have done in marketing management terms and the way you have managed the communications strategy over the last three or four years

JR aha

DM Thinking about the sort of decision processes. You have already mentioned that you have run a schedule across the year and I am quite interested in how that's framed ...so I will

ask you more about that in a moment...but ...you have said that the promotions have been purely people approaching you

JR aha

DM kind of ...it's not like you have to go out looking for these opportunities...seeking or even thinking about the themes, creatives or mechanics

JR Yes...

DM But if you just want to take me through decision processes about using promotions and prize draws how those are taken and if you can give me a little bit of insight into that....

JR How it normally works is ...is that when we are trying to plan a schedule for the communications strategy for the year, we have got a kind of mix of different things. That's generally that's why it has worked out why we do one of these sort of on pack competitions a year because we try to schedule it against other different things be it charity messages or fun messages or those kind of things. So that's where that kind of fits in and then once we get approached by the agency because we want to get involved and we think it is the right fit with our brand, we will then identify what we can do on a basis in terms of how much we can kind of develop the property the themes and the artwork and everything involved. For instance one of the ones we were going to get involved with was the Sean Connery film The Extraordinary League of Gentlemen

DM Right

JR We thought very dramatic ...good fit for the brand but there was so many restrictions put on the artwork the pack and what we could actually use...and do....we withdrew from it...because it...it would have been completely you know sacrificing....the promotion we could do and how it looked on pack and we were just weren't willing to do it...we didn't see the benefit...because what we are keen to do when we get involved in these things is that we are keen to get involved with as much of the pack as possible...it's not just about...taking a panel or a pace or the label on the carton. It's about getting things fully integrated into the

design...That's really a big part of the decision process when we are running prize draws you know...whether to do that or not...so why a lot of the time we have got involved in a lot of cartoon type things...

DM So there are control issues about the packaging....

JR Yes...definitely ...

DM so that's the decisions about the... whether to get involved...what about how you do these things...are they decided in house or

JR Sometimes ...but in other cases the agencies come to us with the mechanic and the format already because that's determined by the total prize fund...but often we will say we can do this ...or that it would or wouldn't work for us in terms of what we want to do with our packs...

DM In what way...?

JR Well...to give you a sort of example....we got involved with...approached by a promotions agency to do an on pack around the film The Da Vinci Code....and it was a big film...it was looking like it was going to be a big film at the box office a success, but we thought about the... I suppose the ...well the politics of it really....and what the film was saying and whilst it was a big film and companies were involved in promotions on it....so it would have been a big thing to get involved in....we thought that were some political things going on there, that might not work for us....or be good for the Wiseman brand and our consumers would see it as too political...not political really....but controversial....

DM and so you do have to take the decisions to walk away from promotions because it's not right for the brand...

JR that's right....we ...I think we thought about it for a while and talked it over and decided.....so we weren't involved in that....

DM OK thanks for that....thinking about the structures of the promotions and how that happens do you ...where do you get the structures for these promotions from, how do you decide to run a prize draw or a competition say

JR well we have run promotions on pack with our brandsso we have those to look back on...and there are some like the talking carton where we might probably use them again...like I said...but sometimes the agency just comes up with themn and we think OK

DM right...OK

JR like the bean cow promotion I told you about...that was put together by an external agency....

DM oh OK and who was that....

JR a firm called (blanked) they're a specialist sales promotion agency

DM here....in Glasgow

JR no in Edinburgh

DM anyone else....

JR we have done some things with Lime Communications

DM...yes I know Lime in London right

JRaha yes...and as I said sometimes we talk to Tetrapack about the possibilities of doing something because they do all our packaging

DM OK Can I just ask you about you run these promotions almost as ...in an episodic way...is that a purposefully managed process

JR aha

DM So why did you use those promotions at that particular time...was it just the opportunity was there for say black and white or did you sort of analyse it or think about things

JR I think...we have a sort of idea about what is going to happen and when and why but then ideas or the chance to be involved with ...like the film promotions and we just have to...sort of really decide to go along with it...because if we delayed things then I think...the

companies wouldn't want to....might walk away, so we have to sort of balance up what we are doing and what needs to be done with what is on offer at any time....

DM and as we discussed you changed the mechanics over time as you run these things...what's the process ...do you go back and evaluate and then pick up on something else and then move forward....I know you said your first on pack had a very low response rate because people just didn't pick up on it or whatever

JR yes ...

DM and then you changed that and you went from chance to skill with Good Boy...I am kind of interested in those processes in terms of how is it just try something else or is it re-evaluated

JR Absolutely!

DM ad hoc....?

JR Its quite ad hoc because we do have the ability...and the flexibility to do that...as long as it not going to cause us a complete operational nightmare...for instance something that's going to impact...like the caps...when we did the instant win with the "win" stickers in the caps ...that was all done in department so we can check that out beforehand...but other stuff we have sort of got the flexibility to try on our own to do...so we have just tried to give it a go and done other things when we feel when it is right to give it a go kind of thing.

DM So really within Wiseman's you have operational freedom and that's great to say OK we can try that or where do you get the ideas and constructs from...those sort of ...well like the poem competition...why use a competition like that at time?

JR Its mainly things we have been involved in before, you know we did a promotion ...it was national smile week ...this was years ago...When we got involved with the British Dental Association

DM Right

JR and it was linked to a toothbrush promotion and we asked anybody if they wrote in with a story or a poem about milk and teeth, they would be sent a free toothbrush...we got loads of entries for that...so

that when we got involved in the Good Boy film link up...we thought oh lets try that again...because it's about a boy and his petand that would fit quite well ...and the caps one ...we just thought well yeah...that's a pretty good idea so lets try the caps...

DM OK ...do you...do you pre test anything?

JR In what way?

DM Say in one store before its launched

JR (laughing) No!

DM Ok

JR We just wing it!

DM Just wing it?

JR Yes!

DM That's great...I'll quote that "just wing it"

JR Yes....and I think it makes sense of what we are trying to do here...because it's not...it's not ...what's quite good with us now in dealing with brands like The One because we can use a lot of the experiences with other brands, such as the black and white and say will it work with The One, and stuff that we have done because we have had the freedom you know....we are not having to show a upturn that's instant with this because we are not doing it to grow sales as long as it fits OK... we have got pretty much the flexibility to do what we want...which is good.

DM So why do you use sales promotion?

JR As I said before it's about added value for our consumers, they get something out of engaging with the product..other than just milk, and for us to add value to our packs...

DM OK can I just ask about evaluationand perceptions...and then I think that's pretty much it really...

JR No problem

DM You've already said there's kind of a fun element and that you push on pack both for that and the commodity aspect of black and white. Are there any other benefits to using promotional competitions, for data capture, reassurance or product engagement anything like that...

JR We've never done anything in terms of data capture, this is one of things where we've got involved in the vet school promotion. We're very much like...because it's a text to win, it's like "oh how does that sit with us the brand...and how does it sit with the consumer". So we are very much like how does this go down...in terms of the stakes involved we have not actually used that for any data capture...at this stage. Really it's just a kind of whole brand awareness thing and its really for that.

DM So purely at the point of sale where they make a buying decision.

JR Aha! Or basically just engaging with our brand....because they are not making a choice at point of sale between us our somebody else its just basically getting the consumer to engage with us at point of sale, or engage with us with our products on their breakfast table for instance this Remembrance one we've done, we've had phone calls to our helpline saying how fantastic consumers think it is...and we've had letters about it and its really engaged with the consumers and they have said Thank You for doing this, it's great and we are moving into new areas geographically as the business develops, this is the first....we have taken over a business in the South West of England and this is ...this will be the first promotion we have run down there so it's kind of introducing people to the brand and giving them a bit more information about us and saying we are the kind of brand that will get more involved in these type of things...so help...it helps with the perception of us as a brand as well.

DM In terms of evaluation...you said that you operate on fairly low response rates...do you examine ...is there some kind of boost to sales as these things run...do you kind of track them...track them over time.

JR No.....because people just buy as much milk as they need...so the fact that they can win a holiday is not going to drag them out to buy more. You do get the type of person who will enter a competition say fifty times and you think...right you have either hounded your friends and family to do the collect the caps thing or just bought more milk to enter that...but that is very kind of one off type...sort of professional competition entry people. But out of that...we do not analyse sales ...sales at all. This is something...some kind of discussion we have had to have with Tetrapak because they see it as kind of sales generated. Because if it generates sales for us it will generate sales for them because we use more of the cartons. But its like ...that's not why we are doing it...it's to make sure people keep buying these cartons of milk and the retailer keeps stocking...buying these cartons of milk because we offer them something that other dairy companies can't.

DM Right and we have also talked about black and white as the core brand

JR aha

DM because you have very strong brand identity...how do you think these things work against strong brand identity, you said you rejected one film promotion because you said it didn't fit with what you thought you were about, how does it relate to brand?

JR It's got to be so integrated with what we are about...got to be integrated.....There's no point....our black and white brand has such a strong identity and if we are going to put something on pack...it has to intrinsically fit with it...it is a very fine balance you know you've got to, we've got to go with them. One of the one's we did on pack was very black you know for Halloween ...so very black and scary and we got a couple of complaints off that, but then

you think well our brand we do sometimes like to push it a bit...and we are you know forward thinking and all this and the kids loved maybe grannie didn't and that happens.

DM Can I askyou did mention that one didn't actually self liquidate because you didn't get enough

JR aha oh yes!

DM and that's quite common I have spoken to other managers who have said the same thing...

JR oh yeah

DM ...but you said you don't really data capture but how do you follow up in terms of people who have won prizes...a presentation or local P.R.

JR yeah we do local P.R. generally in terms....on the back of that...and there is generally personal contact with us right through in terms of the fulfilment with the prize....we will work with them directly....because what happens more often than not in these things is you get a prize fund, and there is so much restriction involved...in terms of when holidays can be taken or the specification of the prize , so try to put as much as possible on pack and to make consumers aware of these things...but still when they have won it...you want to reiterate information just to try and make things run more smoothly...

DM and so because you have run that in house ...you are managing the whole process and kind of managing the tail end of the promotion, and you don't outsource that aspect

JR No, you see there will be people for them to speak to directly, because obviously we are there as the point of contact if things were going wrong if we feel that or they think that are not receiving what they should we can always go back to that and rethink things for them to accommodate them wherever possible and its negotiated between us and the prize fund sponsors...which is usually the promotion company...like with the film promotions...

DM Given that there is black and white which is strong and you have had these strategies running on the other two brands which is very....how do you perceive your promotional

competitions and prize draws do you actually think of them as being different from that of your competitors...

JR Yes!

DM Why?

JR I just think, I know some of our competitors get involved in promotions and promotional competitions and that kind of thing....and I know some of them have been involved in actually selling the space on pack as panels commercially, whether it be for Travel Agents or other things but I don't think...competitors do it as extensively as we do it...with as much flavour to it....

DM and given the retailer relations through the Ford KA promotion

JR yes....

DM do you replicate that in the supermarkets, how does it define your relationship with the supermarkets?

JR well...because the black and white brand...it really isn't in the supermarkets it's not an issue...we don't...about that....it doesn't have an impact on them directly...but because the black and white brand....I also like to think that not only is it branding a commodity product in to the middle of our brand in the middle ground....the centre of the market but that it's also our corporate brand...so that's again why it's so important that on packs and promotions fit and ...so if they are aware of these promotions or they see these promotions going on...it also gives them a sense of what we want them ...the supermarkets to perceive about us as a company...so but then the retailers that the black and white brand is involved with...is in their stores, then it's something that they do want to talk about...we...it's something that we use...the promotions and on packs...we use them as a selling tool into them...also the price, product quality and all the rest of it....but this is a kind of added value that we give to them on a commodity...

DM Do you audit competitors ...these other brands, promotional strategies and items

JR No

DM You don't bother...

JR No

DM That's interesting....final couple of questions

JR Yes

DM Have you entered these things yourself?

JR (Laughing) No I've not! Have I done anything myself like an on pack? No...I've not no...

DM OK....and where do you think...where do you see this going nextboth within Robert Wiseman's and in general....is there anything coming up that will be vastly different

JR Yes

DM within commercial confidentiality of course....

JR yes....well we are doing something with the Scottish Dairy Marketing Company next year into next spring , which will be along the same lines as the bean cow one we did last year....which is going to involve the dairy companies that were involved before....for instance it will run on our black and white...also Graham's Dairies who are based up here it will run on their packs and will also run on Tesco and Sainsburys' own label....in Scotland....and without disclosing too much it's kind of a spoof on Ebay

DM Right!

JR so that's one to look out for in the new year

DM will do...

JR and I think we are very interested in how that one comes out....OK?

DM Thank you very much Joanne

JR No problem!

DM Thank You

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