MARKETING EXCELLENCE: MYTH OR REALITY IN OMAN

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The main thrust of this research is to strategically analyse marketing best practice and highlight gaps and areas for further and improvement in Oman and beyond. The main reasons giving rise to this research are to illuminate world marketing best practice which Oman firms, government departments and academia can then use to advantage and benefit the country. This research is based on literature review only, analysis and identification of gaps in literature and knowledge. Research using literature review has the advantage of harvesting latest researches being done globally and then making them available to local institutions at least cost. The limitation is that no primary research was done and deep seated cultural, firm and government level issues may remain untapped. Literature summary clearly shows that marketing success and competitiveness requires high market knowledge and sophistication, blue ocean strategy at times, trust, strategic alliances, R & D, innovation, entrepreneurship, HRM, good financial management, good customer relations, good supply chain, branding and profitable transactions. Oman firms/institutions can use these findings firm by firm as well as across support national institutions to see whether best practice is there, and if not the effects on business and solutions thereof. Researchers believe these findings will help enhance and improve marketing practices in Oman and contribute to development. Colleges and universities can disseminate this new knowledge. Firms can benchmark using these findings. Oman lags behind United Arab Emirates in economic and marketing performance and findings in this research will illuminate possible reasons for correction (see appendix).

Keywords: Marketing, CRM, NPD, Innovation, Supply Chain, Branding.

Introduction

Oman is a developing country in the Middle East neighbouring Saudi Arabia, Yemen and United Arab Emirates, and is pegged at number 28th as least corrupt country, number 57th best in the world in terms of easy of doing business and 50th best in terms of quality of life and 34th in terms of global...
competitiveness rankings. In November 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) listed Oman, from among 135 countries worldwide, as the nation most-improved during the preceding 40 years. According to international indices, Oman is one of the most developed and stable countries in the Arab World. Life expectancy is 77 years. Oman has world class institutions, infrastructure, banks, ports and airports and uses five year development plans since 1980. Oman has world class ports, airports, infrastructure, public institutions and e-government systems, which is good for marketing development. Globalisation is a reality in both United Arab Emirates (Oman’s neighbor) and Oman but Oman is lagging behind in both GDP, tourism arrivals/performance, exports, imports as well as related FDI (refer to attached Appendix 1). It is partly believed now that the level of openness, globalisation and national branding of a country has a lot to do with its FDI, marketing and tourism performance and excellence; the USA, Japan, China, India, UAE, Singapore, Europe, South Korea and Malaysia are good examples.

Justification and Scope

The main reasons giving rise to this research are to illuminate world marketing best practice which Oman firms, government departments and academia can then use to advantage and benefit the country. This research was primarily based on extensive literature review, analysis and identification of gaps in literature and knowledge. Research using literature review has the advantage of harvesting latest researches being done globally and then having them available to local institutions at least cost. A literature review is not all that expensive and can be done easily using the internet, books and other documents. The limitation is that no primary research was done and deep seated and deep rooted cultural and firm level issues may remain untapped. Oman firms can use these findings firm by firm as well as across support national institutions to see whether best practice is there, and if not the effects on business and solutions thereof. Researchers will use this research as a stepping stone and pointer to new areas required for further research in Oman, e.g. export development, CRM, NPD and other areas. Researchers believe these findings will help enhance and improve marketing practices in Oman and contribute to development. Colleges and universities can disseminate this new knowledge. Firms can benchmark to world best practice using these findings. Oman lags United Arab Emirates in marketing performance and findings in this research will illuminate possible reasons for correction.

This research was primarily based on extensive literature review, analysis and identification of gaps in literature and knowledge. Research using literature review has the advantage of harvesting latest researches being done globally and then having them available to local institutions at least cost. A literature review is not all that expensive and can be done easily using journals, conference papers, government policy documents, the internet, books and other documents.

Limitations

The limitation is that no primary research was done and deep seated and deep rooted cultural and firm level issues may remain untapped.

Study Design

The study will start with literature review followed by detailed case studies of chosen countries. Oman and UAE mainly will be looked at with a view to benchmarking and learning from their experiences. Other regional countries and global examples will be looked at too to strengthen findings. From what has already been discussed one can clearly see that culture has a lot to do with national development success and failure and will be a major part of our analysis of each country. The history of any country has a lot to do with its national development planning, competitiveness and relations with the world. A lot of issues
are deeply rooted in culture, attitude, commitment and a country’s worldview. The study design helps a researcher do systematic discussion and treatment of issues and helps illuminate issues and indicating the relationships amongst variables. In this instance the main factors would be the 7Ps of Marketing as well as support activities like supply chain management, trade facilitation and lobby and advocacy. Literature review is fairly cheap and easy to use in research. Some deep rooted issues may not be discovered using this method of research, therefore further research will be required (especially field research) to get finer details and highly emotional issues normally associated with marketing.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are:

- Do a literature review on marketing strategy;
- Do a literature review on the 7 Ps of marketing;
- Do a literature review on marketers as entrepreneurs;
- Do a literature review on finance as a support function for marketing;
- Do a literature review on HRM best practice as a support function for marketing; and finally
- Evaluate marketing best practice to identify industry expectations and realities, gaps in knowledge and practice and what areas need further research;

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered by this research:

a. What is best practice for the 7 Ps of marketing?
b. What is best practice for supply chain management?
c. What is best practice for finance for marketers?
d. What is best practice for HRM for marketers?
e. Where are the gaps in knowledge and practice?

Literature Review

Strategic Marketing and Branding Issues

Public perception of a place determines whether it is considered suitable as an investment destination, employer, centre for business or tourism attraction. Findings of a study by Kemp, Childers & Williams (2012:508-515) indicated that brand associations, including attitude toward the branding efforts of the city, perceived quality of the brand and the uniqueness of the brand, were crucial in the branding and positioning efforts of a city to its residents. When strong brand associations existed, residents could develop such a connection to the brand that it became reflective of their self-concepts. When this occurred, a self-brand connection was formed and residents could become advocates of the brand. Therefore place and national branding help business grow and succeed and make marketing effort much easier. Oman has done a lot but could still learn a lot from UAE, the Middle East leader in national branding. Webster Jr., & Lusch (2013:389-399) in their research emphasized the role of marketing saying Marketing must be elevated to a higher level of consciousness, a consciousness that grows beyond solving small, immediate problems to addressing long-term, large problems that go beyond individual customer satisfaction and short-term financial performance to encompass the total value creation system. They said the discipline, in theory and practice, must move beyond a narrow focus on customers to a broader concern for them as citizen-consumers which necessitates a recommitment of marketing to its
fundamental purpose in society, which is improving the standard of living for all citizens by co-creating value at all levels within a socio-economic system. Finally, they concluded that an elevated (systems) concept of marketing must focus on micro, meso and macro systems with an understanding of the purpose and shared vision for each system, a clear identification of responsibilities, and a focus on resource effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, value creation for all stakeholders is now at the heart of modern marketing philosophy.

Dubai is probably one of the best known examples of a city brand that has established itself in a very short period of time while riding the waves of globalization, Govers (2012:48-57). This has resulted in a schizophrenic image among the global audience combining Middle-Eastern stereotypes with images of a modern, rich, glamorous metropolis. However, while the image of modern Dubai has been challenged by the global financial crisis, it seems that competition in the region has stepped in. This article therefore studies the competitive brand position of Dubai, compared to Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bahrain, through content analysis of global social media using Radian6. It shows that Dubai has attracted and still attracts most attention in mainstream as well as social media. Therefore, all in all, it seems that Dubai still has a lot going for itself and now competes with the likes of London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Amsterdam, Moscow and Brussels.

An article by Sim (2012:83-98) presents a case study of Abu Dhabi's 'energy re-branding' since 2005 when it declared its intention to transform itself from an oil exporter to a total energy giant that also embraces alternative (renewable and nuclear) energy. The first part of the article identifies the benefits of this policy for Abu Dhabi's external diplomacy but argues that the real driver is the emirate's domestic gas shortage and its effects on economic diversification. The second part of the article discusses the motivations and interactions of local and foreign agents by focusing on the implementation of alternative energy platforms. It therefore provides a rare glimpse of the policy-making process in Abu Dhabi. The final part of the article examines the extent to which energy re-branding may be linked to a process by the government to reiterate, reinterpret and repudiate Emirati identity in order to enhance government image in the twenty-first century. These two articles argue that nation and place branding can generate a lot of business for a city and country. The question now is:- Is Oman doing enough? If so why does it continue to trail the United Arab Emirates which hogs the limelight in the whole Middle East?

The international environment is becoming more competitive and demanding, Sharma (2013:38-44). He says in addition, higher education and innovation are becoming more critical for countries to be able to benefit from the increasingly globalized international environment, therefore, South Asian countries had to improve their skills and innovation capabilities in terms of management education systems. He suggested ten points which should be the focus area in creating world class business management education in South Asia that included academic delivery and curriculum, quality of business management faculties, cutting-edge initiative for professional development, business management curriculum in sync with market needs, corporate relations, events/festivals, B School and public-private and cross-border research partnerships, information and communications technology in the delivery of programs, more positive institutional culture, faculty incentive and evaluation systems, internships/summer projects. Does Oman have all these activities/qualities in its universities and to what extent? Internship is still not a norm in Oman as well as incentives and prizes for researchers. So how can Oman excel in its marketing efforts competing with the world?

Marketing Theory

Traditional marketing concept of the four P's (Product, Place, Price and Promotion), now 7 Ps, in the twenty-first century is doing more harm than good (Brown, 1995). Hill (2007) points out that, the marketing mix was created half a century ago for an overall less-global marketing environment, it is therefore easy to see why many have their doubts. Since the 1950s the marketing mix metaphor has been used to describe the content of marketing activities. Admittedly, it has been a useful metaphor, but the more customer contacts occur outside the functionalistic realm of the marketing department, the more
problematic it has become (Grönroos, 2006). Drivers such as: globalisation, deregulation, fragmentation and technology have helped change consumers by making the world smaller and giving them a wider choice. At the same time technological advances, deregulation, pressures for productivity, increased emphasis on quality, an aging population, and innumerable other factors are presenting new challenges and new sources of competition (George, 2012).

Given this situation, a lot of authors agree that models, theories and concepts are not marketing solutions, but the products of marketing thought, and only the starting point for businesses to understand consumers’ demands (Hill et al, 2007). The scope of the concept of marketing is moving gradually beyond the classical 4Ps (product, price, promotion, place) that have framed the discipline for so long, that is customer value can be derived from any element or combination of elements in the total supply chain, not just on the final product package. Marketing is about identifying (a) where value-adding conversions can take place and (b) how and why customers develop and change their views as to what constitutes value (Park, 2003). Customers both in business-to business and end-consumer markets are now using the internet to ferret out all available alternatives from around the world, thereby arming themselves with an unprecedented amount of market knowledge (Parasuraman, 2003).

**Market Orientation (MO) and Entrepreneurship Orientation (EO)**

Marketing concept has been evolving over the last few years towards the concept market orientation. Market orientation is an activity that seeks market intelligence, dissemination of information and taking a dynamic action to respond to the market (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). It includes the anticipation of the needs of the customers and proactive acting to meet their needs. Thus it is very likely to be strategically oriented towards fulfilling the customer’s needs (Hurely and Hult; Morris and Paul, 1987). Kohli and Jaworski (1990) identify that marketing concept as a cornerstone of the marketing discipline. Thus marketing term is seen as a traditional one but the core for all related disciplines. Literature on marketing orientation was either investigating firm performance or product innovation. In addition, researchers posit that marketing orientation is a source of competitive advantage for the firm. On the other hand it has a positive relationship between MO and firm performance (Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden, 2005). Findings show that market orientation is also positively related to profitability (Narver & Slater 1990; Ruekert 1992; Slater & Narver 1994), customer service and retention (Narver & Slater 1993), sales growth (Slater & Narver 1994; Greenley 1995a), new product success (Slater & Narver 1994), growth in sales revenue, employee satisfaction, commitment and trust (Ruekert 1992), overall business performance and employees’ organisational commitment (Jaworski & Kohli 1993), and innovation-marketing fit, product advantage and interfunctional teamwork, project impact performance, and new product success (Atuahene-Gima 1995; 1996). On the other hand, Entrepreneurship Orientation represents one of the areas of entrepreneurship research where a cumulative body of knowledge is developing. It can be defined as “the strategy making processes that provide organizations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions” (e.g., Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003).

**Contribution of Finance to Marketing Strategy**

In an organization, the relationship between finance and marketing plays a very important role. This interface has a direct impact on various issues like product investment, brand valuation, business development and growth, expenditure and budgets. But there are wide differences in the approaches followed by these two disciplines in the organization.

While marketing is the creative side-driven by passion and idea which involves hard work, time and effort as well as a positive attitude, finance is focused more on seeing the benefits and rewards of hard work as well as evaluating the worth of hard work. While marketing influences and is influenced by parties in the market such as customers, suppliers and competitors, finance focuses on meeting the
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expectations of the institutions providing finance and shareholders. De Ruyter and Wetzels describe marketing and finance as living in “different thought worlds.” For instance, financial managers often recommend keeping the inventory levels low to maintain the efficiency of working capital. Such a recommendation helps to free up the working capital, reduce the funding needs and thus helps in creating value for the firm. On the other hand, marketing managers recommend maintaining high inventory levels to meet customer demands for availability choice opportunity (Ko de Ruyter, 2000). The differences in approach of marketing and finance are also visible in the research orientation of the researchers in these fields. Finance researchers examine stock price movements to draw major conclusions regarding investor expectations of future cash flows. Thus, viewing from the perspective of owners, stock price is a major dependent variable on firms’ decisions (expenditures on advertising, debt levels) and firm characteristics (financial ratios computed from financial statements) are key independent variables. On the other hand, to measure, the firm’s performance, the marketing academic researchers embrace measures such as sales, profits, or market share. They tend to study customers and their managerial, societal, or behavioral issues and reactions related to marketing strategies. As a result, major dependent variables are attitudes, behavior and perceptions of the customers (purchases in stores, clicks on the World Wide Web (George Hozier, 2000).

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on marketing-finance interface. In their study of 42 firms from Switzerland, Weissbrich and Krohmer (2011), explored five key managerial challenges among marketing, sales and finance actors; namely:

- Reach high levels of mutual understanding.
- Implement an intelligent incentive system.
- Manage marketing performance.
- Balance power among marketing, sales and finance.
- Achieve price excellence (Dirk Weissbrich, 2011).

To overcome these challenges, Weissbrich and Krohmer(2011) suggest ensuring cross functional cooperation, cross-functional training, ensuring that marketing & finance people regularly get direct customer contact and managing and optimizing marketing costs together with finance (Dirk Weissbrich, 2011). Businesses have realized that the customers are not only their target audience for advertisement, they are important stakeholders-investors too in their businesses. Customer satisfaction and stock prices suggest customer satisfaction lead to excess returns and that satisfied customers are economic assets with high return/low risk (Luo,2007). Further, Luo and Nguyen(2008) observed on the basis of abnormal portfolio returns compared against the risk adjusted benchmark portfolio that customer satisfaction is related to stock prices (Luo & Nguyen,2008). Following standard event study methods, Kim and Morris (2003) have examined the investors’ perception of a company's advertising as reflected in the stock price performance at certain peak advertising periods in the short term. The relationship showed negative relationship between the two (Kim & Morris, 2003).

Srivastava, Shervani & Fahey(1998) have noted that marketing focus is shifting from success in the product marketplace to enhancing shareholder returns. As a result marketing is involved with developing and managing market based assets like customer relationships, channel relationships and partner relationships. Apart from delivering superior customer value and competitive advantage (Srivastava R K & K, 2001), these market based assets effect the shareholder value by improving cash flows, reducing the risks of uncertain cash flows and increasing the value of cash flows (Srivastava R K, 1998). Srinivasan and Hanssens (2009) have developed nine major propositions to show how marketing creates shareholder value which include the impact of brand equity, customer equity, customer satisfaction, research and development and product equity, and specific marketing-mix actions on the formation of value (Srinivasan Shubha, 2009). The effect of marketing is not uni-sided; it is dual: finance supports marketing and provides the required resources without which marketing function in an organization would not be able to perform effectively. As marketing activities can influence financial performance, finance activities can also impact marketing strategy. As rightly observed by Minton and Scharnd(1999), the increased stock returns or cash flow volatility may reduce marketing expenditures and shrink marketing and R&D
activities (Minton & Scharnd, 1999). Similarly, capital markets can play a critical role in changing, maintaining or abandoning specific marketing initiatives (Markovitch G. & Yeung, 2005).

As is observed from the above analysis, there is still a lot to research and analyze on the relationship between financial actions and marketing performance to achieve excellence. There is lot of ground to cover on the relationship between financial actions and marketing programmes, role of finance in supporting marketing, effect of financial decisions on marketing performance-to name a few. An in-depth research in the above areas could lead to achieve excellence in marketing and business’ performance.

**Contributions of HRM Towards Marketing Excellence**

Service organizations need to understand what service business they are in or want to be in, and their target market. They should identify the needs of the target market and then deliver according to market expectations (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). As previous research has established (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988) there are expectation proportions of service quality general to all services. There are five proposed dimensions of expectations and fixing a suitable matching price which allows an organization to deliver expectations and achieve the perception of superiority relative to the competition. As Schuler and Jackson (1987a) advocate, deciding on which strategy is the best strategy to pursue depends on several factors — certainly customer wants and the nature of the competition are key factors. Marketing and human resources aren’t as separate, they have a vital relationship. A company needs to attract profitable customers to achieve decent sales numbers. Sometimes customer expectations and customer satisfaction may be unjustified, infeasible, or unproductive to meet. Thus to understanding the customer, people skills is required.

1. It is believed that human resources (employees) signify remarkable assets and the way these assets are managed can easily make or break the profitability and growth potential of an organization (Normann, 1991). Normann (1991) contends that people are important in analyzing and interpreting the marketplace, their creative capacities are vital to create and refine the product offerings and the service delivery system, their unrestricted capacities construct the “fit” between the product offering and the customers’ needs, and they are the “face” of the service organization at the “moments of truth.” Similarly, Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1990) assert that people can be endowed with a significant source of service quality or uniqueness that cannot be duplicated by even the most technical and sophisticated machines.

When employees get a situation to work in a constructive climate, with the right to implement their ideas to their job, the expected result is more contented towards customers, and that would provide competitive financial performance to the company. It often includes a stronger market value. Therefore, the vital role of HR is creating and sustaining a workplace culture with people management practices. This becomes an initiative that encourages, reward and support behavior focused on quality service. Thus, a study on the link between service climate, customer satisfaction and human resource management becomes the need of the hour.

2. Findings by Schnell et al. (1991) proffered that high financial performance and business strategy were all linked with the core HR philosophy where human resources are essential to the firm’s success and that they are an asset to be invested in rather than a cost to be minimized. Employees and customers are psychologically linked together (Schneider & Bowen, 1985), HR policies, practices, and procedures unintentionally influence customers and are helpful in the achievement of future strategic objectives. That is, if a service group pursues a market-oriented strategy they can meet or exceed the expectations of its particular market segment. Customers’ attitudes toward service quality would be an important criterion on which to evaluate the success of an organization. In addition, if customers’ attitudes are affected by employees’ attitudes toward internal HRM practices, then the strategy of meeting customers’ expectations would likely be integrated with the HRM practices of the firm.
A company’s human ability provides a matchless competitive advantage in the global arena. In order to optimize that unique capability, human resource professionals must design and foster an employee culture that directly aligns HR practices with organizational goals and actively contribute to the bottom line. These Policies and Procedures are the strategic link between the Company’s vision and its day-to-day operations. The question is why HR policies are important for business development? Can employees value their roles and tasks within the limits or policies and procedures allow management to direct operations? A detailed study can be conducted to identify the relationship between the policies and the growth of the business.

3. There is a great influence of globalisation in many organisations significantly, with various implications for human resource management (De Cieri & Kramar, 2008, p. 502). Competitiveness is promoted and intensified internationally by globalisation, especially when changes are required particularly in strategy, working system, technology and management.

Organisations are considered as social system and the most important element in this system is human resources. Human Resource is the major factor that is considered for the effectiveness and the efficiency of the organization. An organization needs effective managers to achieve the objectives of the organization in the globalised environment. Thus, a study is essential to know the factors that influences the global environment during change of strategy.

In a research paper on immigrant labour to find to what extent the observed location pattern is driven by network effects or by traditional location factors, like the structure and behaviour of the local labour market, housing market, public goods, and local tax rates the researchers found out evidence of a very strong network effect, Ukrayinchuk & Jayet (2011:313-333). It concludes that this network effect is a very important location factor and implies that a location may attract current immigrants mainly because it attracted previous immigrants from the same country or region, even if the traditional location factors are not a source of attractiveness. Good examples abound in Oman and the GCC where large numbers of Indians, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Philippiinos, Chinese, British, American, South African, Tanzanian and Sudanese immigrants/expatriates are found in Oman and the GCC attracted by their kith and kin. One’s own nationals are a natural comfort zone and less conflict is experienced and cooperation is at its maximum. Practices, language, culture, food, leisure activities and rites and rituals unite the team. Marriages may be easier too for the young and aspiring immigrants without the need to go back home. Traditional HRM theory ignores this reality. GCC countries could exploit this factor to advantage.

Conclusion

Literature summary clearly shows that:-

- Marketing success and competitiveness requires high market knowledge and sophistication, blue ocean strategy at times, trust, good customer relations, good supply chain, branding and profitable transactions, cost control, new product development, product life cycle management, R & D, private/public cooperation/coordination, high-tech industries, TQM, sophisticated management, good trade agreements, government incentives and commitment, natural resources endowments (sometimes), trade agreements, peace and stability, good governance and transparency, R & D, superior education, ease of doing business, strong trade facilitation, good reward structure, career development, staff retention, lobby and advocacy and solid public infrastructure.
- Policy consistence is of paramount importance in long term marketing development as well as incentives and national branding.
- World trade is shifting from the Western world to China and the Far East and rest of Asia driven by lower costs which come about because of low salaries, sweatshops and abuse of labour. Is this now a return to slavery or a reversal of all gains for labour and quality of life? Researchers are divided with no convergence on any position to explain this rather confusing development.
Further research is required. The gap that we have is about the effect of Oman culture on marketing performance, positive or negative. Oman has a long successful history of glob trotting scouring for business leads and has many friends in the world. That is a good foundation to build on. Balancing Oman culture and marketing excellence is always difficult as some girls do not join the labour market after graduation due to pressure from family and cultural reasons. Then how do you Omanise and mainstream women into the economy and trade globally one on one with other nations?

- Companies in the USA and Europe spend large sums of money financing politicians to get their ear, support and government tenders. It is an existential strategy for most companies. That nullifies the 7 Ps of Marketing theory which says understanding your consumers and giving them value is the only reason for success as well as studying competitive dynamics. Oman firms may not get any business in Europe and the USA because of this. Modern marketing requires a political as well as a business mind for success. Literature ignores this. Closed markets use selected government approved suppliers too. Protectionism and anti-dumping measures nullify marketing theory which assumes perfect competition. Buy local strategies by many countries also stifle fair competition and nullify marketing theory of the 7 Ps. Oman does most of its business with countries in the Middle East for cultural and religious reasons. The 7 Ps of Marketing ignore this obvious reality and mislead academics and society. Sometimes countries direct companies to give business to specific countries and firms as they return political favours, e.g. GCC countries, EU, NAFTA, SADC countries, India and Russia and others. India and Pakistan and are sworn enemies and this limits the volume of trade and cooperation between these countries. This does not follow any marketing theory but is a political strategy. These are the contradictions and gaps that further research must illuminate. Understanding political economy has been ignored by marketers for too long.

- Even if SMEs spend large sums of money on training they are prone to lose their staff to bigger firms, government and MNCs which offer better salaries, job security, status and prestige, better conditions, better packages and career growth. This nullifies the HRM theory of HRM development as SMEs are being used as training grounds by powerful MNCs who poach their staff. Literature ignores this reality. The same happens with developing countries which lose skills to NICs and developed countries for the same reasons. The quality of life in NICs and developed countries is simply too good. The brain drain is partly driven by salaries and benefits package but also by quality of life, peace, tranquility, prospects, opportunity, access to resources, rule of law and low corruption levels. Literature largely ignores this too.

Oman firms can use these findings firm by firm as well as across support national institutions to see whether best practice is there, and if not the effects on business and solutions thereof. The researchers’ experience in Oman society confirm that a lot has been done but more needs to be done in the areas of qualitative and orderly localization of jobs (Omanisation), getting women into marketing, professionalizing marketing, having a marketing professional association, offering marketing degrees at more institutions to create skills which are in critical short supply nationally, employment creation, horning lobby and advocacy skills, benchmarking, having smart partnerships with academia, attracting more tourists and FDI, competing with regional branded powerhouses like United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Researchers will use this research as a stepping stone and pointer to new areas requiring further research in Oman, e.g. marketing research, e-business, lobby and advocacy, export development, CRM, NPD and other areas. Oman’s work is cut out for them in improving marketing to global standards.

Further Research

Since this was purely a literature review researchers encourage other researchers to do further research (preferably primary research) on issues like:
- Trade agreements, productivity, HRM and marketing in the Oman Arabic context;
- Omanisation in the work setting;
- customer service and cultural dynamics in the Oman/Arabic world;
- CRM, innovation, marketing and women’s participation in business;
- marketing excellence and its limitations in Oman.
- marketing research and marketing strategy.

References


APPENDIX

OMAN/UNITED ARAB EMIRATES COMPARISON

OMAN TRADE STATISTICS – IMPORTS, EXPORTS & GDP

OMAN

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GDP per capita US$26,519 (2012)

UAE TRADE STATISTICS – IMPORTS, EXPORTS & GDP

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GDP per capita US$48,158 (2012)