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**Outcomes of a marketing knowledge intervention using a metaphoric story-line approach: a mixed-methods study of 5 Israeli SMEs.**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research is to determine the effectiveness of the Kingdom Marketing (KM) intervention for improving Israeli SME marketing knowledge among managers and employees of Israeli small and medium-sized business. The secondary objective of the study was to portray the process of change in participating organisations.

The newly developed KM intervention programme was designed to enhance Israeli SMEs' marketing knowledge and marketing strategy, imparting new marketing skills and allowing SMEs to operate with better marketing knowledge. The intervention uses a metaphoric story-line approach to teach participants in mediator-led sessions to understand and use important marketing concepts, such as the difference between sales and marketing. Although the intervention has been used in business settings, it has not yet been empirically validated using rigorous methods.

This study was conducted using a mixed methods paradigm with an embedded experimental design. Five Israeli based SMEs were recruited to take part in the training programme. The research consisted of three phases. In Phase 1, I administered a preintervention evaluation to measure five variables: awareness of marketing processes, mistaken marketing attitudes, incorrect marketing process beliefs, organisational marketing skills, and marketing need awareness. Participants were also interviewed during Phase 1. In Phase 2, I administered the KM intervention and collected qualitative data in the form of daily open-ended feedback and a researcher diary. In Phase 3, I administered a postintervention evaluation to assess change in the five quantitative variables, and I conducted a second round of interviews.

The findings indicated that the KM intervention programme (a) increased awareness of marketing processes, (b) reduced mistaken marketing attitudes, (c) reduced incorrect marketing process beliefs, and (d) increased marketing need awareness. However, the intervention had no significant effect on organisational marketing skills. Qualitative analysis confirmed that, although the KM intervention empowered participants with marketing knowledge and skills, it did not result in broad organisational changes.

I conclude that the KM intervention programme is valid and worthy of wider use for promoting the survival of SME businesses through marketing knowledge and skill improvement. However, the intervention should be used in conjunction with internal

efforts to translate increased knowledge into lasting organisational change.

**Outcomes of a marketing knowledge intervention using a metaphoric story-line  
approach: a mixed-methods study of 5 Israeli SMEs.**

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## **Glossary**

**Advertisement:** A notice or an announcement in a medium for the public, promoting a service or a product.

**Core abilities:** Refers to a company's unique abilities for operating in a certain manner, sometimes called company DNA.

**Continued professional Development (CPD):** A formal process of lifelong learning for professionals, with the following advantages: personal development; assurance that professionals are up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement; assurance for employers that their employees are competent and adaptable; and development of skills and knowledge

**Graphic language:** A graphical identity, which allows for a conveyance of an idea or message.

**Information systems:** within the organisational settings facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge that in turn allows for individuals operating within it to find and access the information that they require in a timely manner facilitating them to take appropriate action in due time (Rode, 2004).

**Kingdom Marketing (KM):** A CPD metaphoric intervention. KM is aimed at enhancing marketing skills and practices and thereby improving the survival rates of small and medium businesses (SMEs).

**Marketing knowledge:** The extent to which SME business owners hold correct opinions and attitudes about the role of marketing in business success, combined with the extent to which they are aware of marketing strategies and tactics that work for their own businesses. For example, marketing knowledge involves an awareness of the difference between marketing and sales, but it also involves proactive development and understanding of one's own business brand. In the present study, marketing knowledge is measured with five dimensions: awareness of marketing processes, mistaken marketing attitudes, incorrect marketing process beliefs, organisational marketing skills, and marketing need awareness.

**Marketing led organisation:** when the organisation relates to marketing as top priority, the organisation them can transform from a marketing weak organisation to a marketing led organisation.

**Marketing strategy:** The marketing strategy derives from the company's vision and designation. It includes the company's values and deals with the establishment of abilities: resources, skills, unlimited by the company's amount of assets rather by its management skills.

**Marketing tactics:** Manner of execution, the activity itself. The marketing activity usually refers to publicity, guerrilla marketing, online marketing, acquiring media, sales, marketing budget.

**Me too strategy:** When a company uses the same marketing strategy as the competition.

**Metaphors:** Use of the features of one thing to associatively describe another; a simile.

**Organisational culture:** A collection of “interdependent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants embedded in wider material-resource and institutional environments” (Scott & Davis, 2015, p. 32).

**Organisational learning:** A change in the state of the organisation, stemming from new knowledge and meanings that are shared among an organisation’s members and may be explicit or implicit (Law & Chuah, 2015).

**Slogan:** a short, memorable sentence used to describe an idea, a thought, or any other marketing or advertising message.

**Storyline:** Storyline is a strategy and method of active learning, adapted education, and partnership developed in Scotland as a collaborative project between educators and teachers.

**SME:** Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Israel are independent business organisations that have a small impact on their industry, that employ up to 50 workers, and where one person is the manager of a small number of employees.

**SME Survival:** refers to the operational situation of any SME to stay profitable at a level that allows for payments of outgoing expenses and dues.

# **Chapter 1:**

## **Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The concept of this research was planted early on in my personal life and professional career. As the son of a businessman who was the largest distributor of toys in Israel, one of many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Israel, I was intimately involved in my father's business, and I witnessed major changes in the industry that drove many of my father's clients and SME colleagues out of businesses. Many lost their livelihoods.

Business literature has shown that this situation is all too common; SMEs are far more prone to failure and closure than larger businesses (Buchanan & Evesson, 2004; Delmar & Shane, 2003, Honig & Karlsson, 2004).

Thanks to the experiences of my youth, I realized that, though SME owners work tirelessly to keep their businesses alive, they do not have the tools to carry out necessary changes. This view, too, is supported by business literature (Gilmore et al., 2001; O'Dwyer et al., 2009; Jones & Rowley, 2011). Hence, I decided to devote my professional life as a business consultant to helping SMEs in Israel better cope with the challenges they face. My long-term goal is to develop business programmes aimed at improving the strategies SMEs use to cope with their business environments.

The survival of SMEs is important, not only from the personal perspective of business owners, but for the economy as a whole. SMEs form the backbone of every economy, contributing to growth and creating new jobs (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). Therefore, it is crucial from an economic standpoint to identify the causes SME failures and to develop interventions that can help decrease the number of SME failures.

Before they can be effectively used in practice, business interventions should be tested for effectiveness, with the aim of creating tools capable of confronting the reasons for SME failure. Existing research shows that SME failure is often caused by SME managers' inability to cope with internal problems, such as the owner's business education or lack thereof, the owner's inability to control the cash flow, and especially a lack of managerial marketing abilities (BDI-coface, 2006; Moutray, 2007; Shane & Delmar, 2004). My personal experience also confirms that the failure of SME businesses is often caused, not by exogenous factors, such as low demand or economic crisis, but rather by managerial mistakes, particularly in marketing.

Because marketing abilities are essential for a firm's survival (Ries, 2005), they are the

focus of this study. In pursuit of my goal of helping SMEs in Israel avoid business failure, I conducted a sequential, embedded mixed-methods study to test the effectiveness of a new marketing intervention program, called Kingdom Marketing (KM). The results indicated that this type of intervention, based on narrative storytelling, could help SMEs improve their marketing abilities and marketing culture.

This study addresses the following general business problem. SMEs are often characterized by managers and employees who lack marketing knowledge (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). This lack of marketing knowledge contributes to the rate of SME failure (Moutray, 2007), which is much higher than the fate of failure at larger businesses (Buchanan & Evesson, 2004; Delmar & Shane, 2003, Honig & Karlsson, 2004). SME business failure is a problem because SMEs form the backbone of every economy, contributing to growth and creating new jobs (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). However, no standard, empirically tested intervention tool currently exists to improve the level of marketing knowledge in SME organisations.

In addition, this study addresses the following specific business problem. The KM marketing intervention, which is designed to improve the level of marketing knowledge at Israeli SME organisations, has not been empirically tested, and its outcomes have not been evaluated scientifically. This is a problem because, given the need for an intervention targeting marketing knowledge at SMEs, the KM intervention could improve business outcomes for SMEs in Israel, but its efficacy has not been demonstrated.

This chapter introduces the research study and proceeds as follows. First, I present important background information on SMEs in Israel and the KM intervention. Next is a description of the research aim and objectives. The research questions and hypotheses are presented next. Then, I address the significance and potential impact of the study. A summary concludes the chapter.

## **1.2 Theoretical Background**

### **1.1.1 SMEs in Israel**

In Israel, SME businesses are usually managed by one person: the entrepreneur who founded the firm. This type of management is often associated with a lack of managerial skills. Researchers in other countries have described the common situation in which SMEs are operated by a single person who is very knowledgeable in his or her field of

expertise but lacks business and marketing knowledge (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). Although there exists limited research related to this topic that focuses on Israel specifically, the general geographical diversity of existing research indicates that SME managerial problems are global.

Lack of knowledge contributes to lack of usage of marketing tools to improve businesses' financial situation. When required to increase their revenues, SME owners tend to resort only to sales and promotions, not to marketing, meaning that they take actions that may be useful for enhancing revenues in the short term, but do not consider the medium- and long-term impact of such actions on their businesses (O'Dwyer et al., 2009). In other words, these managers' thinking is purely tactical and anecdotal, not allowing for analytical strategic marketing thinking; thus they lack an important strategic tool for business development. O'Dwyer et al. (2009) noted that marketing decision making in such businesses is "non-sequential, unstructured, informal, spontaneous and reactive," which increases the chances of SME failure, since they fail to use marketing strategy to enhance their competitiveness.

As mentioned above, although it is not the only cause of business failure, lack of marketing knowledge contributes to other business problems and aggravates the state of SME businesses in crisis (Moutray, 2007). In Israel, there exist government programmes to support SME survival, but they tend to deal only with the financial aspects of SMEs (i.e., tax benefits, loans and direct financial support), rather than offering solutions for managerial problems such as lack of marketing knowledge (Bennett, 2008; EY Israel, 2014). These programmes do not reduce the failure rate of SME businesses, because they do not offer a solution for the core factors leading to business failure. As a result, SME businesses keep failing, leaving behind unpaid debts, and needlessly increasing government expenses (Bennett, 2008).

Indeed, there currently exist no standard intervention programmes in Israel specifically targeting SME marketing ability. In addition, the stream of academic dedicated to the special marketing needs of SMEs is limited, with most scholars addressing larger businesses (Reijonen, 2010; Simpson et al., 2006; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). Additionally, many SME owners and managers reject interventions, believing that they themselves know what is best for their businesses. Some SME managers have also expressed aversions to marketing in particular (Furst & Cable, 2008; Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Keskin, 2006). These issues demonstrate a need for a structured intervention

programme aimed at improving Israeli SMEs' marketing skills and ultimately enhancing their ability to survive and to generate profits.

### **1.1.2 Kingdom Marketing**

The newly developed Kingdom Marketing (KM) intervention programme was designed to enhance Israeli SMEs' marketing knowledge and marketing strategy, imparting new marketing skills and allowing SMEs to operate with better marketing knowledge. The ultimate goal is better marketing outcomes and enhanced survival rates for SMEs. I developed the KM intervention on theoretical foundations and on my own practical knowledge, gained through many years of experience working with SMEs in Israel. The KM intervention programme (see Appendix 1) is delivered by a trained consultant, who meets with employees at the SME for a series of four workshop sessions, each lasting two to three hours. In these sessions, participants engage in game-like experiences designed to teach marketing concepts and tools for everyday use in the office. In each workshop, the consultant guides participants through narratives that use metaphors of mediaeval times to bring marketing ideas to learners in a simplified and colourful manner, thus encouraging learners to engage and actively participate in the learning. Following the recommendations of Legge et al. (2007), the intervention was designed to be as short as possible, in order to avoid losing participants' patience.

The KM intervention programme has robust theoretical foundations, including a four-layer pyramid of knowledge from the scientific literature; this is presented in Chapter 2. Briefly, the bottom and most influential layer of the theoretical framework involves organisational culture, which determines how organisation members think and behave while working, and how things are done in the organisation (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011). This is the most important element of the theoretical framework because the KM intervention's ultimate and loftiest goal is to effect profound cultural change related to how marketing issues are perceived and treated in the organisation as a whole.

The second layer of the KM intervention's theoretical foundation involves organisational learning, which is one facet of organisational culture. Learning is a process whereby an individual's potential behaviour changes in response to the individual's environment (High & Pelling, 2003). Organisational learning can be defined, therefore, as a change in the level of knowledge of the organisation, stemming from the acquisition of experience and relevant knowledge (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010). The KM intervention seeks to

change the organisation's level of knowledge related to marketing issues by teaching its members new and better ways of thinking and operating with regard to marketing.

The third theoretical layer involves *continued professional development* (CPD), which is one way of creating organisational learning. CPD is a process of lifelong learning for professionals. Researchers have shown that CPD has the following advantages: personal development; assurance that professionals are up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement; assurance for employers that their employees are competent and adaptable; and development of skills and knowledge (Fraser et al., 2007). CPD is a way of enhancing the organisation's ability to survive by increasing its adaptability to the business environment through development at the individual level.

Finally, the fourth layer consists of metaphorical learning, which can lead to effective CPD. This element of the theoretical framework was inspired by Mills (2008), who proved that it is possible to enhance students' knowledge of marketing skills using jazz metaphors. This suggests that it is possible to use metaphors to effect change in an environment that has reservations about learning new concepts, and that metaphor can be used as a tool for making sophisticated and complicated themes more accessible. Additionally, the KM intervention employs metaphor to overcome resistance to learning on the organisational level (Furst & Cable, 2008; Legge et al., 2007).

In summary, the KM intervention programme was designed to allow SME businesses to acquire essential knowledge in order to develop a suitable marketing strategies, as described by Ries (2005) and in accordance with the CPD theory, which claims that a business must continue to learn at all times as part of adaptation to its business environment. This learning can use metaphors (Mills, 2008) and a storyline to make new marketing knowledge accessible. The KM intervention tool has been piloted in business settings with my clients, but has not yet been subjected to rigorous empirical testing to demonstrate its effectiveness and to evaluate its outcomes. Therefore, my aim in conducting this study was to evaluate the KM intervention as a structured tool for improving marketing knowledge and strategy among SMEs in Israel.

### **1.3 Research Aim**

The following research focuses on SMEs in Israel. Although the KM intervention has been used in business consulting with Israeli SME clients and judged by both moderators and participants to yield positive results, the intervention has never been assessed using

empirical methods of evaluation. Therefore, this mixed-methods research is aimed at determining the effectiveness of the KM intervention for improving Israeli SME managers' marketing knowledge, thus helping them strengthen their ability to keep their businesses active and prevent them from experiencing business failure.

In addition to empirically evaluating the efficacy of the KM intervention, the secondary objective of the study is to portray the process of change in organisations participating in the intervention. The qualitative aspect of the study will allow me to study the change process that takes place during and after the KM intervention. Such a description could contribute to the research understanding of organisational change in Israeli SMEs, enabling future researchers and practitioners to design effective interventions and improve business outcomes. The methodology of the study is described in detail in Chapter 3.

## **1.4 Research Questions, Objectives, and Significance**

In order to achieve the research aims described in the previous section, this study is guided by two overall research questions, one pertaining to the quantitative aspect of the study, the other to the qualitative. Because the first research question is primary and the second addresses an additional research aim, I utilized a sequential nested mixed methods design to answer the research questions (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). The methodology of the study is described in detail in Chapter 3.

**RQ1.** Does the KM intervention programme enhance Israeli SME businesses' marketing knowledge?

**RQ2.** What is the meaning of the KM intervention programme for participants, and how does the KM intervention change SMEs' organisational culture?

The objectives of the quantitative portion of the study were to

- Use a closed-ended questionnaire to determine participants' pre- and post-intervention scores for the following five variables: (1) awareness of marketing processes, (2) mistaken marketing attitudes, (3) incorrect marketing process beliefs, (4) organisational marketing skills, (5) marketing need awareness.
- Conduct quantitative analysis to determine whether participants' scores were significantly different pre- versus post-intervention.

The objective of the qualitative portion of this study was to understand participants'

subjective perceptions of the KM intervention in order to describe the organisational change process resulting from the intervention. I accomplished this as follows:

- Conduct pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews to explore participants' perceptions of the intervention and generate rich descriptions of the organisational change process
- Collect open-ended feedback and researcher notes during the process of the intervention to understand the process of change on a day-to-day basis

Because this is a qualitative research question, there are no formal hypotheses. However, based on the literature review (presented in Chapter 2) and theoretical framework, I supposed that the KM intervention would change participants' perceptions of marketing, particularly with regard to marketing processes. I also supposed that the intervention would increase the extent to which participants engaged in collaborative efforts related to marketing, including the development of new marketing strategies and tactics. Finally, I supposed that the KM intervention would lead to personal empowerment, new energy for marketing, and a renewed belief in the SME organisations' potential to advance in their respective markets.

Demonstrating the effectiveness of the KM intervention programme for enhancing marketing knowledge will allow business consultants worldwide to use this tool as part of the consulting process aimed at improving SME marketing and business success. Therefore, the results of this study will be significant for business consulting practitioners, because practitioners will be able to add the KM intervention programme to their toolboxes. They will be better able to help SMEs deal with marketing challenges. Additionally, this study will contribute to the effort to disseminate the KM marketing intervention to business consultants (described in Chapter 6). Furthermore, this study contains a detailed description of one researcher's experience with the KM intervention. This description could aid practitioners in delivering the KM intervention in a method that will be most effective for their clients.

From an academic perspective, this study represents a major contribution to research literature on SME marketing. The existing body of literature related to SME marketing remains limited, and there is especially a paucity of research focusing on Israeli SMEs in particular. Therefore, this study adds to the research knowledge on SME marketing, SME organisational change and organisational learning, and the effect of targeted intervention

programs on SME business environments. These are understudied areas, and future researchers will benefit from the findings of this study as they continue to address the literature gap related to Israeli SME marketing.

## **1.5 Summary**

This chapter introduced the mixed-methods study aiming to empirically evaluate the outcomes of the KM intervention among SME organisations in Israel. I described the background of the study, including the development and structure of the KM intervention programme. This study is guided by the general business problem of SME failure due to a lack of marketing knowledge, which is troubling because SMEs contribute to growth and create jobs (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). No standard, empirically tested intervention currently exists to improve the level of marketing knowledge in SME organisations. This study sought to address this gap.

The remainder of this research report is organized as follows. Chapter 2 contains review of research and theoretical literature related to the research topic. Chapter 3 contains a detailed description of the materials, methods, and procedures for the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research, and Chapter 5 discusses those findings. Chapter 6 summarizes and concludes the study.

# **Chapter 2:**

## **Literature Review**

## **2.1 Small and Medium Enterprises**

### **2.1.1 Characteristics of Israeli SMEs versus other SMEs worldwide**

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are independent business organisations that have a small impact on their industry, that employ up to 100 workers, and where one person is the manager of a small number of employees (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003; Reijonen & Komppula, 2007). This definition is standard and currently accepted by most SME scholars, including those in Israel (Soomro & Aziz, 2015). However, individual countries may have their own definitions of SMEs. In Israel, the definition includes businesses that employ less than 50 workers (Friedman, 2005; SBA 2014). Because the present study takes place in Israel, I henceforth define *small and medium enterprises* using the Israeli definition of businesses employing fewer than 50 employees. For comparison, the European Union, the SME classification includes businesses that employ fewer than 250 workers (ENSR, 2004). In the United States, an SME is defined as a business that employs less than 500 workers (Moutray, 2007). After weighing the options, I decided to adopt the Israeli definition because this study focuses on Israel, this definition was also observed to be correct and with adequacy by me via my professional work in the field.

As for Israel, where the current study takes place, SME businesses employ 1.1 million employees, which constitutes 55% of all employees in the public sector (Friedman, 2005, SBA, 2014). Recent data from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) indicate that 51% of Israeli businesses do not employ hired workers (i.e., the owners are sole proprietors), while 70% of businesses employ up to 4 employees, and 92% of businesses employ up to 20 employees. According to the CBS data, new SME businesses created in 2012 created 84,400 job openings in Israel (CBS, 2013), establishing the fact that SME businesses constitute a large proportion of Israeli business, and they make a significant contribution to the Israeli economy. Given their substantial influence on the Israeli economy, SMEs are worthy of special consideration to keep them healthy and profitable. For comparison, in the United States, 99.9% of businesses are SMEs; they create 1.86 million jobs annually, employ 50.9% of the labour force in the private sector, and account for 50.7% of local business production in that country (Kobe, 2005; Neiman & Krimm, 2009).

SME businesses are mainly entrepreneurial businesses. Although entrepreneurship is not

limited to SMEs, it is customary to assume that SMEs are the major manifestation of the entrepreneurial spirit, since they are usually founded by a small number of people who established them as a vehicle for their entrepreneurial ideas (Carree & Thurik, 2010; Parker et al., 2012; Wennekers et al., 2010). Because of their entrepreneurial nature, compared with larger businesses, SMEs have some unique characteristics, which are described in the following paragraphs.

## **2.1.2 Unique Characteristics of SME Businesses**

### **2.1.2.1 SME organisational characteristics**

The size of SME businesses fundamentally affects their characteristics: these businesses have limited resources (such as finances, time, and marketing knowledge), a lack of specialist expertise (owner-managers tend to be generalists rather than specialists), and limited impact in the marketplace. Additionally, they are considered to be very competitive, innovative (O'Dwyer, 2009), and able to create better networks with their clients. This contrasts with larger companies, which are generally more established in the market, are well known, and have more resources than SMEs, but adapt more slowly than SMEs to fast-changing business environments (Wincent, 2005). Thus, SME businesses are considered the main trigger for economic growth (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999; Audretsch et al., 2001; Garcia-Tabuenca et al., 2011; Grilo & Thurik, 2008).

SMEs' special characteristics also make them vulnerable. They may suffer from a shortage of resources, which prevents the use of certain techniques and marketing tactics that require large amounts of resources (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). SMEs may have difficulty pricing their products, because market pricing may be unsuitable for the special structure of SMEs' revenues and expenditures. Therefore, SMEs have difficulties predicting future demand for their products and cannot effectively divert resources for future production (Luna-Reyes et al., 2009; Wolff & Pett, 2006). These organisational characteristics mean that managers of SMEs must often adopt different approaches compared with those that would be called for in larger businesses. The following paragraphs describe these managerial differences.

### **2.1.2.2 SME management and leadership characteristics**

These unique characteristics of SMEs also influence the managerial patterns of such businesses: SME businesses are characterized by a relatively small structure, with little managerial hierarchy. Additionally, they usually lack administrative functions, owing to

the small size of the business. Thus, they do not have designated staff members assigned to tasks like marketing. Therefore, the business owner is often in charge of administrative tasks (Honjo & Harada, 2006).

Because SME owners are the main (and sometimes only) managers in SMEs, they have a decisive impact on the management of the company (Freiling, 2008). The entrepreneurial vision in such businesses is manifested in organisational qualities such as innovation, creativeness (Coviello et al., 2006), business flexibility, and market compatibility (Carree & Thurik, 2010). Managerial capacity therefore plays a more important role success among SMEs than it does among larger organisations.

In SMEs, *managerial capacity* is defined as a combination of knowledge, abilities and talents, personal qualities, awareness of what is happening, status/knowledge, and motivation or impetuses, all of which contribute to effective business management (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). SMEs are managed differently than larger businesses, owing to their special characteristics (Cheng, Lourenço & Resnick, 2016; Gilmore et al., 2001). The managerial structure of such companies is usually simple, the social structure informal, the connections between the members are often non-hierarchical, management is usually not based on defined objectives, managerial tools known are not used, and the business is usually managed less effectively than larger companies (Staniewski, 2016; McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003).

The management methods used in SMEs usually reflect the status and beliefs of the owners, rather than conclusions derived from known management methods. This is often described as adaptive behaviour, and its purpose is to bring about attainment of immediate or short-term objectives. At the same time, SME owners are usually highly involved and have high motivation to succeed (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). Ries and Ries (2009) claimed that any organisation might achieve business success if the managers think creatively. They offered a theory of marketing management success: “What makes a good marketing executive? A person who is highly visual, intuitive, and holistic. Typical characteristics of a right brainer.” The skills that Ries and Ries (2009) described may be rare in SME settings.

### **2.1.3 SME Survival Rates and Failure Reasons**

Due to the vulnerabilities of SME businesses (paucity of resources, knowledge, experience, and market influence), such businesses have a very high rate of failure

(McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003) and low survival rates. As discussed earlier, high SME failure rates are a problem for the entire economy.

In Israel, a survey conducted in 2013 found that 12% of businesses fail in their first year of operation (a larger survival rate compared with 2006 data), and 58% of businesses fail in their first seven years of operation (CBS, 2013). The failure risk assumption for all businesses in the country is 5.88 on a 1–10 scale. In comparison, the risk assumption for SMEs in their first year of existence is 6.8; this decreases to 6.5 in the third year and 6.35 in the fifth year. The reality in Israel is that businesses with a turnover of less than \$2 million have a 50% likelihood of failing, which is higher than those with a larger turnover (BDI-coface, 2006). All this suggests that Israeli SME businesses are inherently vulnerable.

Globally, it is estimated that about half of SMEs fail, with 75% failing during the first five years (Buchanan & Evesson, 2004). Other estimates are even higher. Boyle and Desai (1991) claimed that 67% of new businesses fail during the first four years, and half of start-ups fail during the first 18 months. Other statistical data show that the survival rate of SMEs is country dependent; the survival rates of SMEs in Australia, Sweden, and the UK are over 80%; in Italy, Luxemburg, Finland, and Spain, approximately 70%; and in the United States, less than 50% (Shane & Delmar, 2004, Honig & Karlsson, 2004). The literature strongly suggests that intrinsic reasons, such as lack of marketing knowledge and practice, are the major causes of failure, affecting failure much more than extrinsic factors such economy or business competition (Friedman, 2005; SBA, 2014).

### **2.1.3.1 Definition of SME failure**

There is no clear consensus among researchers as to the definition of SME failure (Ropega, 2011). For the purpose of this study, *SME failure* is defined as the discontinuance of SME business for any reason or formal bankruptcy (Watson, 2010). This definition does not include businesses that are barely surviving. As Lussier and Corman (2015) pointed out, there may be few differences between failed businesses and those that are still surviving. This is a drawback of the definition of business failure. I considered adopting a broader definition of SME failure for the purpose of this study, but there currently does not exist “a reliable and valid set of variables that can distinguish success from failure” (Lussier & Corman, 2015, p. 21). Therefore, after weighing the options, I determined that the definition cited above, which is the most common, was the

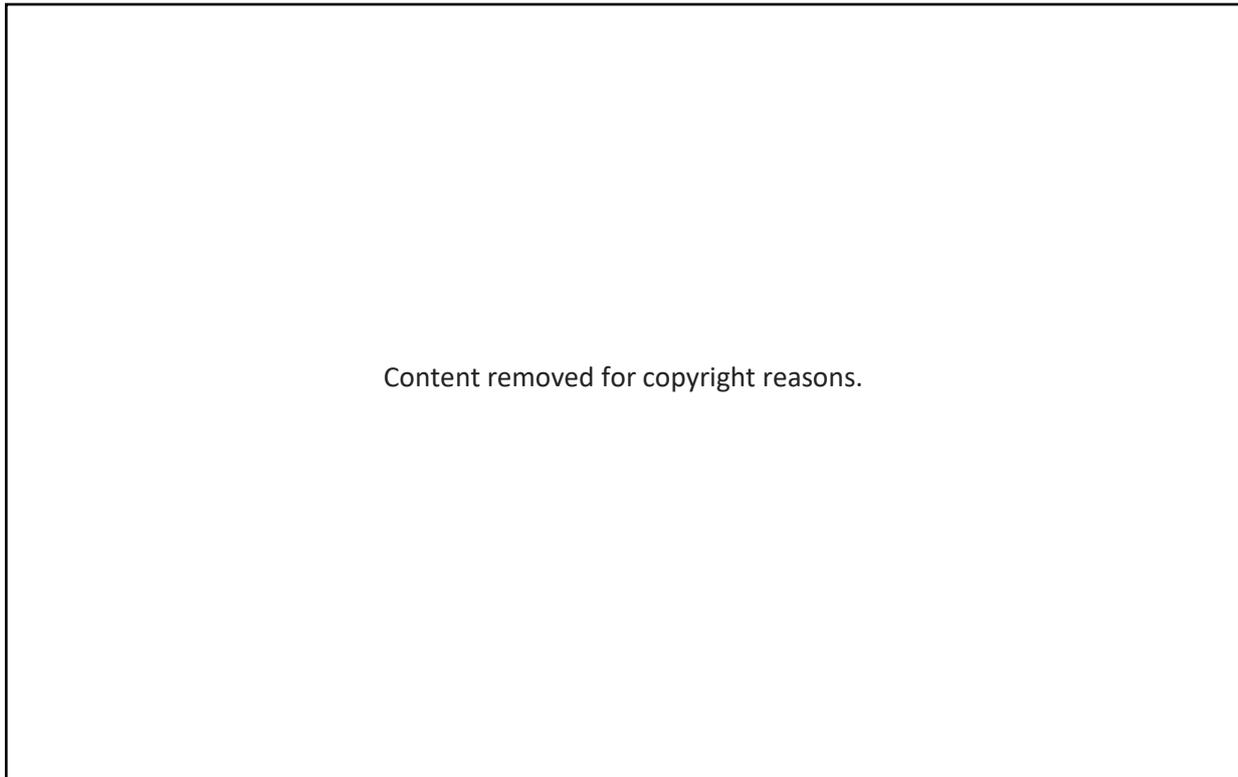
most appropriate for the purpose of the current study.

SME failure can be caused by several factors (Watson, 2010). One of these is closure of the business due to not meeting profit goals. Some SME businesses close because the owners feel that they could attain better profits from a new business, or because the owners sell the company and leave with a profit. An owner may equally dispose of the business to prevent further losses. In such cases, part of the capital invested in the business belongs to the owners, so that the business fails even if they do not go bankrupt. Due to the complexity of this definition of failure and the difficulty of tracking owners' reasons for liquidating their businesses, there are no estimates of the number of SMEs that end in this manner.

### **2.1.3.2 Two-dimensional model of SME failure**

Boyle and Desai (1991), following a meta-analysis of 30 articles on the subject, suggested a two-dimensional model to explain SME failures (see Figure 1). The first dimension (vertical axis in Figure 1) divides the reasons for failure between internal reasons, which are under business managers' control, and external reasons, which are not under managers' control. The second dimension (horizontal axis in Figure 1) divides failure reasons into administrative problems and problems related to business strategies. Although this model was developed several decades ago, researchers still use it to explain failure among SME businesses (e.g., Laitinan & Lukason, 2014).

*Figure 1: Typology of reasons for SME failure according to Boyle & Desai (1991).*



Boyle and Desai's (1991) seminal work can serve as a framework for categorizing reasons for SME failure identified throughout the existing literature. For example, Ries' (2005) typology of firm strategy emphasized the influence of a competitive business environment, which falls into the internal and strategic categories in the Boyle and Desai (1991) model. External pressures that may lead to failure are much greater in today's hypercompetitive market (Gottinger, 2009). Since SMEs tend not to have strong brands (Ries, 2005), their ability to compete in the market is low. In addition, size raises further difficulties, such as a small number of customers, which leads to a dependence on a few customers for the business' success and survival (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). Finally, banks may consider SME businesses as risky borrowers, hindering the business' ability to secure needed funds and leading to bankruptcy (Laitinen & Lukason, 2014).

BDI-coface (2006), in their extensive research of Israeli SMEs, showed that new SMEs are negatively influenced by the fact that the manager, who is also the entrepreneur, performs all administrative work. The negative influence is attributable to the manager's lack of time, knowledge, and experience in dealing with administrative and financial issues. For this reason, the BDI-coface (2006) identified internal factors as contributing

more to Israeli SME failure than external factors.

### **2.1.3.3 Incorrect marketing process beliefs**

Turning to internal reasons for SME failure, research indicates (Brouthers, Nakos, & Dimitratos, 2015; Denis, Kumar, Yusoff, & Imran, 2015; Jovanov, 2011; O’Kass & Sok, 2013) that small firms find it difficult to conduct market research, measure the efficacy of promotions, and price items (Jovanov, 2011). Business owners may also believe that marketing will not help their businesses succeed. This is demonstrably false, as Stojanovski (2012) indicated: “Characteristics [of SMEs] include inherent weaknesses with respect to capitalization and marketing awareness and practice. Many observed problems stemmed from businesses failing to practice marketing or produce marketing strategy and plans.” Therefore, a lack of marketing and capitalization awareness constitutes the definition of *incorrect marketing process beliefs*. (In the present study, this variable is measured quantitatively; see Chapter 3 for the quantitative operational definition.)

### **2.1.3.4 Marketing need awareness**

Problems arising from faulty strategic management are more critical than administrative problems. Strategic problems may undermine the foundations of the business, causing it to collapse due to loss of customers and market share, followed by inability to create enough cash flow to keep the business running (Van Scheers, 2011). Failure due to strategic reasons occurs when the managers do not give sufficient attention to issues critical for business survival, delay repair actions, or carry out repair actions in an incompetent manner. These, in turn, may be caused by a lack of *marketing need awareness*, defined as an awareness of the need for marketing in generating market share and cash flow (Ropega, 2011). (In the present study, this variable is measured quantitatively; see Chapter 3 for the quantitative operational definition.)

Although strategic management of a business is a vast area, many scholars have pointed to SME failure in marketing knowledge. They have argued that strategic marketing is a critical resource for SME survival, because it helps managers to cope with the fundamental shortcomings of SMEs and to compete with larger businesses (Van Scheers, 2011). Research in Israel and worldwide supports the notion that proper business marketing strategy can make the difference between failure and success.

An Israeli study has revealed that major causes of failure are problems involving sales or

a lack of strategic planning in company politics (BDI-coface, 2006). Another Israeli study found that 24% of surviving SMEs managers attributed their successes to strategic marketing abilities (Friedman, 2005; SBA, 2014). This was the most significant factor of success, followed by financial resources. The importance of marketing has been confirmed in international research literature (Bates, 1990; Bruderl et al., 1992; Moutray, 2007; Ries, 2005; Shane & Delmar, 2004). Van Scheers (2011), claimed, “Lack of marketing skills of SMEs definitely contributes to the high business failure rate” and has a negative impact on SMEs’ success (p. 5048). In research conducted in South Africa on 1,000 SMEs using a positivistic paradigm, a definition of marketing skills challenges encountered by SMEs was provided. Based on this research, it can be concluded that raising the level of marketing need awareness may help SME owners improve their chances of survival.

### **2.1.5 SME Marketing**

So far, it has been established that SME businesses suffer from high rates of failure, which has a negative impact on both entrepreneurs and the national economy. Business failure was found to be caused by a complex combination of external and internal factors, yet lack of strategic marketing ability was found to be a major factor leading to failure. In addition, it seems that SME businesses have a unique management structure, because one person often takes all the management responsibility, and he or she decides on every aspect of organisational conduct. This section deals with the significance strategic marketing and focuses on the marketing abilities of the SME manager in particular.

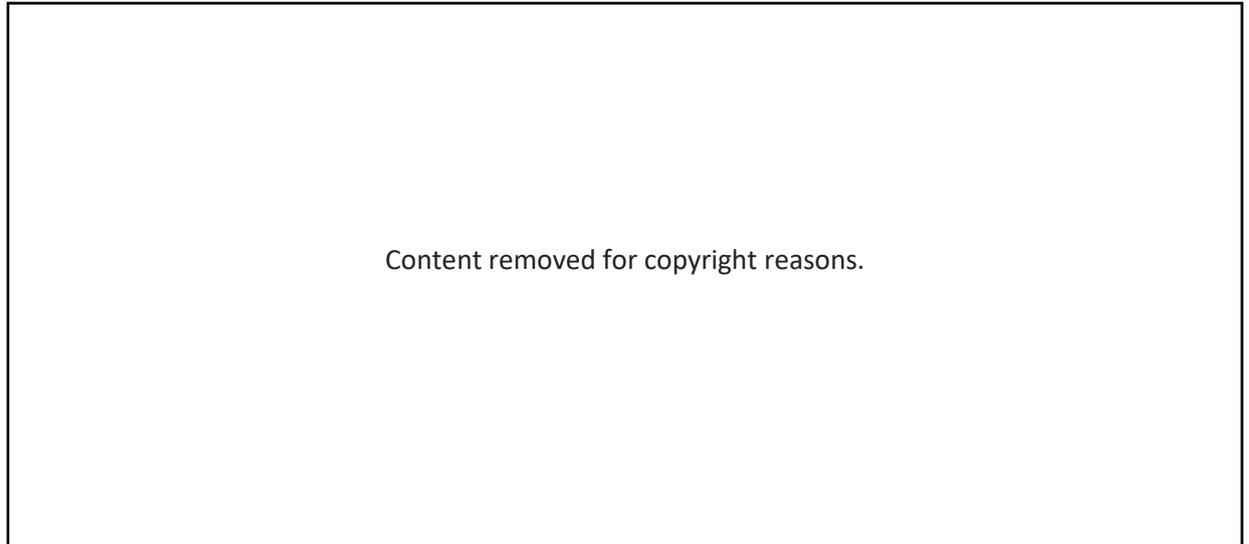
Unique marketing knowledge is crucial for SMEs. Ries (2005) argued that business survival depends on the ability to establish a unique place in the market, which will differentiate it from other businesses and create a competitive advantage. Creating such differentiation is achieved by adopting one of several marketing strategies, and the lack of such strategic thinking and planning will result in a loss of market share and market position to firms who did create a competitive advantage (Ries, 2005).

The importance of strategic marketing is widely supported by many scholars, and this topic is emphasized in the titles of many leading books on the subject of marketing, such as *Blue Ocean Strategy* (Chan & Mauborgne, 2006). However, few scholars have addressed SMEs specifically. No clear definition exists for SME marketing (Reijonen, 2010; Simpson et al., 2006; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009).

### 2.1.5.1 Marketing-led organisations

The lack of strategic thinking among SME managers is one of the main causes of SME failure (Simpson et al., 2006). Simpson et al. (2006) developed a two-dimensional model of the behaviour of SMEs in the realm of marketing (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of SMEs according to the model of Simpson et al. (2006)



According to this model, businesses can be classified on two axes (see Figure 2). The first axis divides the place of marketing in the life of the organisation (internal focus) from the relevancy of marketing for the organisation (external focus). Simpson et al. (2006) claimed that companies generally have to strive to reach the stage of a *marketing-led organisation*. Some businesses do not see marketing as a relevant or important subject, since the owners are not interested in increasing the volume of their activity or do not wish to put in the work it entails (these are *marketing-independent organisations*). Others see the relevancy of the market but have yet to sufficiently implement marketing methods (*marketing-weak organisations*). Finally, there are organisations where, paradoxically, high importance is attached to marketing, but its relevancy to the business management is low (*marketing-dominated organisations*). The researchers identified three main routes through which organisations can become marketing-led companies, as specified in Figure 3.

*Figure 3: Ways of transitioning to a marketing focused company (Simpson et al., 2006)*



Simpson et al. (2006) validated the model in an empirical study of 143 small businesses in the United Kingdom. First, they found that the model largely reflects the behaviour of SMEs, which means that its capacity to interpret the behaviour of the companies is high. Second, they found that 57% of the businesses examined were marketing led, 36% were marketing weak, and 6% were marketing independent. Only one company was found to be marketing dominated. It was also discovered that the regular route that companies took to change to marketing led companies was Route B (see Figure 3). The companies increased the awareness level of their workers about marketing, and then took steps to accelerate the use of marketing methods in the organisation. Route A was used in only a few cases, in companies that had a dynamic managing staff, which was highly motivated and highly skilled. Route C was almost never used, due to the difficulties involved in the need to change the status of the organisation on two axes and all at once. Path A, the most frequent path, corresponds to the design of the current study, which sought to improve SMEs' performance by increasing marketing awareness and beliefs among SME employees.

The Simpson et al. (2006) work is not without weaknesses. For example, it does not consider the strong relationship between owner/managers' mentalities and the financial performance of their enterprises. Moreover, the subjective approach has been used widely in empirical studies. Using subjective measures based on executives' perceptions of performance has been justified by several authors (Hakimpoor, 2014). In addition, the Simpson et al. (2006) model may not fit developing countries. Often, smaller businesses rely on classical models provided for bigger players (Chaston & Mangles, 2002). Moreover, existing models are limited and are mostly based on developed nations,

neglecting entrepreneurs from developing countries (Mi & Baharun, 2013).

Although, using the Simpson et al. (2006) terminology, SMEs should ideally strive to become marketing led, few SMEs in developing countries fit this classification (Chaston & Mangles, 2002; Mi & Baharun, 2013). One explanation may be that current marketing theories offer little practical advice for day-to-day marketing activities. Thus, many SME firms are unnecessarily vulnerable through inadequacies in their marketing practice (Stojanovski, 2012). This supports the need for interventions that help SMEs in Israel and elsewhere to become marketing led.

### **2.1.5.2 Barriers to marketing development among SMEs**

The above-mentioned difficulties are enhanced by barriers that prevent SMEs from becoming marketing-led organisations. These barriers help to explain why SME managers do not conduct their businesses differently, despite the robust body of research on the importance of marketing. Notable barriers include a focus on short-term planning, a failure to distinguish between sales and marketing, and a lack of resources. These are described in the following paragraphs.

There are two perspectives regarding the conduct of SME business managers on marketing issues. First, SME managers generally demonstrate a high level of motivation to succeed, have great flexibility, and adopt a customer-facing approach. Second, there are strategic marketing issues involving SMEs that are counterproductive to their success. Managers are not aware of the market and the opportunities it presents (Gilmore et al., 2001; Jones & Rowley, 2011; O'Dwyer et al., 2009). Jones and Rowley (2011) reported that businesses that do not invest in managers who have expertise in marketing risk compromising their entrepreneurial prospects. As discussed, SMEs often focus on short-term planning (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). This attitude results in influences on the allocation of resources, such as funds and knowledge (Jones & Rowley, 2011). Resources that might be dedicated to longer-term, strategic marketing activities are therefore unavailable.

Another barrier is that, in SMEs, the lines between marketing and sales are blurred, and the manager performs both functions without distinguishing between them. In effect, many SMEs focus on sales and are not involved in marketing, but they may not be aware of this distinction (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). Marketing and sales are different in approach and perception; marketing has long-term effect and sales is related here and

now. Sales, however, may not be successful without a strategic marketing scheme (Ries, 2005). Several researchers have argued that SME owner-managers do not engage consciously with intangible assets of the firm as they find it easier and more accessible to measure tangible aspects of their activities, such as sales (Grant, 2015). This failure to distinguish between marketing and sales defines *mistaken marketing attitudes*, which contribute to SME business failure. (In the present study, this variable is measured quantitatively; see Chapter 3 for the quantitative operational definition.)

Lack of resources is a barrier to hiring professionals and more staff to deal with marketing (Litinen & Lukason, 2014). Therefore, the manager's level of knowledge and expertise in marketing can be a determinant of the business' survival. Complex management theories are perceived by SME managers as unsuitable for the management of their businesses, and therefore SME managers do not use them (Hill, 2001; Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Keskin, 2006; Knight, 2000).

### **2.1.5.3 Training and interventions for SME marketing**

Education programmes could be effective in enhancing SME managers' ability to think in a strategic manner. Studies show that SME managers think that the best way to learn is by experience, so they demonstrate a high level of scepticism regarding the need for a training programme that would provide them with knowledge of the fundamentals of marketing, or regarding the practicality of such training programmes. Furthermore, managers perceive the costs of the training programme to be excessive, and the benefits as insufficient to justify the cost (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). However, education on marketing for SMEs would provide these companies with the necessary tools for their special requirements, to enable them to survive and develop. Such an educational programme should be suited to these businesses' beliefs and existing modes of operation, and to the needs of their managers (Culkin & Smith, 2000; McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003).

Although there is an abundance of textbooks on marketing for SME managers, the literature reports that no formal training method has proved to be effective in such settings. Existing trainings yield unsatisfactory results due to resistance to change by some of the managers, or lack of compatibility between the specific needs of managers and the contents of the training model (Apmg, 2014; The Change Management Institute, 2014). In addition, these programmes have little success in changing the organisational

culture of these businesses to a more marketing-oriented one; thus, all the changes achieved are in the short term and have no impact on the organisation in the long term (Fox, 2007).

Researchers have found that an organisation with learning capacities will result in a better marketing outcome and will survive longer than an organisation with no organisational learning capacities (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010). Although learning of marketing issues is crucial to the SME organisation, *resistance* to learning by managers or employees might be a barrier to accomplishment (Fox, 2007). SME managers object to learning marketing issues and new marketing knowledge. As Burton (2005) described the reasons for this resistance:

There is no requirement for marketing qualifications for graduate marketing positions. Graduates from any discipline are considered; there is no relationship between marketing education and the company; there are few marketing directors on the boards of large companies in the US and UK; there is no real status for marketing practitioners or academics; marketing textbooks are largely of the ‘how to do it’ variety; there is discrepancy between academic and practitioner knowledge, i.e., in designing.

Resistance to SME training programmes also stems from the perception among business managers that they do not have the time or the desire to deal with complex and sophisticated theories; they fear that the weaknesses in their current management will be exposed to outside viewers, or that formal education will lessen their capacity for entrepreneurial thinking. These fears prevent SME managers from obtaining training in marketing subjects and, consequently, lead to the failure of numerous businesses (Copley, 2008; Devins & Johnson, 2002; Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010).

Furthermore, although the literature describes how to preform actual management change in some organisations (The Change Management Institute, 2014) and some studies even offer methodologies of change (Apmg, 2014), change involves challenges for all organisations (Fox, 2007). In SMEs, managers are responsible for their change processes (Frese et al., 2003; Spangler et al., 2004), and, thus, the manager’s resistance to learning can create a non-learning organisation. Managers who resist learning are a liability to the entire organisation, because learning in the organisation is crucial to create competitive advantage and profits (Castro & Neira, 2005).

The Kingdom Marketing intervention, which is the focus of this study, is designed to help SMEs succeed by overcoming barriers to learning and change and imparting employees with knowledge and attitudes needed to succeed in marketing. The following section describes the Kingdom Marketing Intervention.

## **2.2 The Kingdom Marketing Intervention**

The Kingdom Marketing (KM) training and development intervention programme is aimed at enhancing SMEs' organisational knowledge of marketing theory and practice within the context of the organisation's place of business (see Appendix 1). The programme draws on the body of knowledge accumulated in the fields of marketing and on the Continued Professional Development (CPD) paradigm. The KM intervention adapts existing knowledge to SMEs to suit the special needs of their managers and their unique cultural and marketing contexts.

The KM intervention programme is based on a series of four workshop sessions, each lasting two to three hours, held with SME executives and employees in their offices. The workshop is conducted by a professional business consultant who has prior knowledge of the organisation's structure, politics, daily routines, and conduct. This knowledge helps the consultant to interact with organisation members on their own terms, using game-like experiences to help them better understand the challenges their organisation faces and devise solutions to these challenges using tools offered by the consultant.

The theoretical foundations on which the intervention is based are detailed in Figure 4, and further discussed in the subsections below. The goal of the intervention is to raise awareness and knowledge of marketing issues in organisations and help organisations become more marketing led (Simpson et al., 2006). The four layers of the theoretical foundation are organisational culture, organisational learning (a facet of culture), CPD (a way of implementing organisational learning), and metaphors and storyline approaches (a way of enacting CPD).

Figure 4: The theoretical foundations of the KM intervention.



### 2.2.1 Organisational Culture

In research on organisations, no unique definition is offered with relation to SME rather than to organizations in general, there is no single organisational culture that can fit all companies. Rather, each company must formulate its own unique culture, because each has specialised goals that it wishes to achieve (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011).

Organisational culture may offer a shared system of meanings, which forms the basis of communication and mutual understanding, thus allowing for effective communications within the organisation. However, organisations use different resources and processes to guide behaviour and change. Organisational culture plays influences the use of managerial tools such as strategic direction, goals, tasks, technology, structure, communication, decision making, cooperation, and interpersonal relationships; which all contribute to the organisation (Martins & Terblanche, 2003, Valencia et al., 2016).

Three definitions of organisation are common. The first, called the rational system definition, defines any purposeful, deliberate cooperation among people as an organisation (Scott & Davis, 2015). Critics of this definition suggest that it fails to capture organisations that may arise spontaneously, such as communities and social movements. The second definition is the natural system definition, which holds that an organisation is

any collective whose members recognise the importance of the collective and work to perpetuate it (Cooper, 2015). Although this definition is more encompassing than the rational system definition, it is less applicable to the study of SMEs, since it fails to capture the importance of the organisation's context and environment. A third definition is the open system definition. According to this definition, an organisation is a collection of "interdependent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants embedded in wider material-resource and institutional environments" (Scott & Davis, 2015, p. 32). This definition synthesizes the other two and introduces a new emphasis on environment, suggesting that organisations' activities and successful completion of goals depend on both internal and external factors. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, such a dynamic, context-dependent understanding applies well to SMEs.

Indeed, scholars have argued that all organisations have a relationship with their environment; they affect and are affected by it (Fox, 2007). Scott and Davis (2015) clarified the nature of this environmental relationship, noting that, while organisations can be studied as entities in themselves, many consider organisations as consisting of individuals, and some are interested in organisations as constituent parts of broader social structures. In the case of SMEs, organisations consist of individuals who, through pursuing both common and disparate goals, influence the business's products and services, as well as its perception in the public consciousness. The public, along with policymakers, economic conditions, and other factors, influence the business in turn. After weighing the different points of view, I chose to adopt this open systems definition of organisations for the purpose of this study. Therefore, I define *SME organisation* as an open, actively managed system consisting of one or more individuals, whose success is characterised by the nature of its interaction with the business environment, which includes internal and external factors.

Schein (2011) defined *organisational culture* as:

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as they solve problems and situations of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked effectively validating its use and thus suitable to be taught to new members as the correct way by which they should perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 241)

Most other definitions throughout the literature suggest that a commonality is present

between organisational members in relation to common values, assumptions, beliefs, norms, functions and processes, all of which are passed on to new members of an organisation and can be acquired through socialization processes (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011; Thompson & Phua, 2012). Some have argued that organisational culture is the way organisations do things (Katanga, 2014). However, this definition is too vague; it does not differentiate between controllable and non-controllable factors, between tactical and strategic choices, or between individuals and groups. By contrast, Schein's definition emphasizes problem solving and organisation members' perceptions, yielding a definition that is broad enough to encompass many aspects of the organisation but specific enough to be meaningful to researchers and practitioners. Therefore, after weighing the different points of view, I chose to adopt Schein's definition for the purpose of this research.

The field of organisational culture in scientific research began to emerge in the 1980s, as a way of documenting processes that have an impact on the functioning of the organisation and its effectiveness. Research in the field derives from the real world, and it helps managers understand that organisational culture affects corporate behaviour, which in turn helps the organisation to achieve its goals. Consequently, researchers in organisational culture and business managers in the field began to collaborate in an attempt to document these processes and to test outcomes empirically (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Ester & Green, 2015).

Cultural factors play a key role in determining organisational outcomes. The organisational culture is related to employee performance, because it affects the way employees behave in a company and the way they think about it. It defines the values that the employees must embrace, increases the employees' commitment to their job, and makes them more willing to expend efforts for the company, thus contributing to the organisation's success (Levine et al., 2013). Managers use organisational culture to focus their employees' attention on the company's priorities and to define how they want employees to behave (Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, 2007). Therefore, organisational culture contributes to a business's success (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011).

Although Schein's model of organisational culture remains the most commonly used today, there are other, competing models gaining traction in organisational literature. Additionally, researchers continue to uncover factors that influence successful organisational culture change at the managerial level. The following subsections review the development of thinking from Schein's theory to the present day and critique various

views of organisational culture change (Briody et al., 2012)

### **2.2.1.1 Schein's three-layer model of organisational culture**

Schein (1990) created a three-layer model of organisational culture, suggesting that organisational culture includes a line of products that are visible, symbolic, and have subtle effects, which people in the organisation consider important and because of which the people take action. The three layers vary in the degree of visibility to organisational members.

In the external layer of visible products, explicit cultural patterns are evident, producing tangible outcomes (Schein, 1990). This dimension is evidenced in ceremonies that the organisation arranges (such as joint activities, or, at the other extreme, public reprimanding), stories about employees, ceremonies to award prizes and certificates, stories circulating among people in the organisation concerning the history of the organisation or its leaders, and the unique language that members use (abbreviations, special images, a unique jargon) (Briody et al. 2012). This is a visible layer, meaning that it is easily noticeable for SME managers and staff and SMEs usually address it (Schein, 1990).

The next layer, deeper than the preceding one, is the dimension of values, which represents the beliefs of the organisation about how things should be done, as well as a belief in the organisation (Schein, 1990). The values of the organisation play a major role in shaping the boundaries of behaviour and attitudes of the employees in relation to the organisation. Values include excellence, attitude toward employees, and attitude toward leadership. This layer is not visible, meaning that it is less noticeable by SME managers and staff. It is shaped by SME managers who believe in an intuitive manner with no strategic thinking (Schein, 1990).

The deepest layer is that of basic assumptions, which are not conscious or direct, and it contains cultural codes, such as how the organisation should go about solving basic problems of social order (Schein, 1990). The basic assumptions of the organisation include how it relates to its environment, the goal of the organisation, who it serves, employees' perception of the organisation (e.g., driven by money or also by love of the profession), the nature of human activity in the organisation, and the nature of interpersonal relations. This layer is also not visible, meaning that it is harder to notice for the SME managers and staff (Schein, 1990).

This three-layer model is criticized as offering no direct guidelines to different sized organisations, no association between culture and organisational performance, and no guidelines to what will cause better effects for the organisation. Moreover, Schein (1990) wrote during a period when the United States had not yet completed its transition to a service economy, at a time when manufacturing was still a primary economic engine, and most large corporations were strongly hierarchical. Hence, it can be argued that more modern examples are needed. Nevertheless, the theory is still used by contemporary organisational culture scholars and researchers, and it forms an important foundation for the current study.

The KM intervention was developed to address each of the three layers proposed by Schein (1990). In the visible layer, the KM intervention changes how marketing issues are dealt with in the organisation; it emphasizes marketing as the centre of organisational life, as manifested in the shared experience and language of the organisation with regard to marketing. In the second layer, the KM intervention emphasizes symbolic marketing manifestations such as logos, and it makes marketing an issue that unites all members of the organisation. On the deepest level, the KM intervention teaches that the stories and symbols of the organisation must be altered to include marketing ideas and behaviour as an integral part of the organisation's life.

#### **2.2.1.2 The competing values framework and Hofstede's theory**

Cameron and Quinn (1999) and Hofstede (1986) developed alternative theories of organisational culture. Cameron and Quinn responded to the critique that Schein's (1990) model is inappropriate for smaller organisations, whose cultures might not include all the layers Schein described. Hofstede responded to the critique that Schein's theory does not sufficiently account for individuals' existing cultures as they interact with organisational culture.

Cameron and Quinn (1999) proposed the competing values framework (CVF). The CVF model of organisational culture defines two axes upon which each organisation chooses to build its organisational culture. The first axis is construction, which examines the extent to which the organisation places emphasis on flexibility or control (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Some organisations allow their employees to shape their own behaviour, while others exert a great deal of control over employees. The second axis is focus, which examines the extent to which the organisation's perspective is internal or external. An

organisation whose focus is internal has more inter-organisational components in its organisational culture, such as employee satisfaction (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

These two axes create five types of corporate culture (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). One focuses on the group and is characterized by flexibility and an internal vision, in which group dynamics are very important, team values are emphasized, and group members' needs are addressed. The second organisational culture is flexible, focused outwards, and is a culture of development, emphasizing entrepreneurship and innovativeness. The third organisational culture is rationalism, which is focused outwards and has a high level of control over employees. This kind of organisational culture tends to stress values such as productivity, achievement, and attaining goals. The fourth organisational culture is bureaucratic culture and is characterized by strong control over employees and internal centralization. Here, the emphasis is on the regulation of employee behaviour, employees' job security, and a constructed business environment. The fifth organisational culture is balanced, and places similar emphasis on all four of the previous organisational cultures (Gregory et al., 2009).

Hofstede's (1986) theory, integrates several cultural dimensions to provide an understanding of how existing cultural processes influence an organisation's operational capacity. The dimensions include individualism versus collectivism, femininity versus masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. Hofstede sought to provide a balance between personal culture and organisational culture. In contrast, Schein's (1990) theory provides an analysis of organisational culture, but does not identify its relationship with an individual's personal culture. Additionally, through the utilization of Hofstede's theory, it may be easier to develop an analysis of varied cultural components and their impact on organisational culture.

The KM intervention aspires to contribute to organisational culture change by moving SMEs from flexible and inner-focused cultures to more controlled and outside-vision cultures, aiming for deepening of organisational marketing skills and more long-term orientation on individual and organisational levels. As described above, most SMEs typically use unfocused methods when trying to carry out marketing tasks, and are thus flexible. The KM intervention seeks to change that culture to one with more control on marketing behaviour and towards marketing goals. As for the other axis, the literature has described SME managers as not paying enough attention to the business environment,

resulting in underperformance with respect to marketing. The KM intervention aims to change the organisational culture towards one that pays more attention to the business environment.

### **2.2.1.3 Organisational culture and individual perspectives**

An important goal of the KM intervention is to bring all organisational members into alignment with respect to their perspectives on marketing. Existing literature justifies this goal. In societal settings, it is normal for individual staff members to describe their perceptions of the world, ideas on vital aspects that affect them, or even utilize resources in a similar manner to each other (Ahmed, Kok, & Loh, 2002, Ricky & Tsui, 2016). Common perspectives between individuals within an organisation results in the creation of efficient communication systems, establishing trust and enhancing mutual understanding (Ricketta, 2008). This, in turn, makes future knowledge sharing more efficient (Shin, Lusch, & O'Brien, 2002). The facilitation of knowledge and information sharing benefits organisations by promoting positive feedback, identity support, and a common outlook among organisational members (Schultz, 2010).

Knowledge sharing also helps employees find important information easily and quickly (Rode, 2004). In many organisations, environments of uncertainty, dynamism, and independence, as well as a strong need for better utilization of information and knowledge systems, hinder performance (Bowling, 2007). This establishes a need for development of better knowledge cultures within organisations (Roberson, Birch and Cooper, 2012).

Organisational culture is closely related to the extent of knowledge sharing within the organisation (Fox, 2007). A culture that is not supportive of knowledge sharing leads employees to retain the knowledge they have, so latent knowledge does not become active within the organisation, even if that knowledge would better the organisation (Armstrong, 2012). It is therefore necessary for the organisation to set in place measures that favour the sharing of knowledge, including marketing knowledge, by establishing an appropriate culture.

To confront this situation, organisations may establish cooperation and sharing cultures and programmes designed to reward teams within the organisation (Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006). According to Armstrong (2012), a small minority of persons within an organisation have the capability to share their knowledge in the organisational setting. More employees must engage in the sharing culture for the larger benefit of the entire

organisation (Shin, Lusch, & O'Brien, 2002). Organisations that have an established knowledge sharing culture allow people to share their as a natural process and not a forced process (Riketta, 2008). Within larger organisational settings, however, individuals may perceive knowledge as a source of power instead of viewing it as an organisational resource (Schultzz, 2010). Therefore, the KM intervention strives to impart the value of knowledge sharing to intervention participants.

#### **2.2.1.4 Creating SME culture change**

The integration of the cultural theory remains instrumental in SMEs discussion relating to the adoption of KM interventions as it may influence the development of an organisational culture that encourages individual and group knowledge capacity. Additionally, the development of an organisational culture that embraces knowledge management remains instrumental in influencing employee growth (Shafritz, 2015). The existence of a culture that places emphasis on employee growth influences the development of a motivated and engaged workforce. The process influences the growth of employee skills in varied fields, which remain instrumental in enhancing employee efficiency and effectiveness.

Organisational cultural change is a continuous process of experimentation and adaptation aimed at matching the organisation's capabilities to the needs of an uncertain environment. It should be recalled that the values of a company are not necessarily the same as the values of the individual, which are deeply rooted in his or her personality and perceptions of the world. Organisational values are, rather, values that the company promotes and expects its employees to follow (Dvir & Oreg, 2007). Because organisational culture and value alignment lead to consistent employee behaviours (Berson et al., 2007; Bowling, 2007; Prajogo & McDermott, 2011), this is important for the success of an SME's marketing scheme.

Organisational culture develops a unified manner of operation in the organisation, which is instrumental in enhancing organisational continuity and growth. Therefore, organisations need to develop an in-depth understanding of the influence of individual culture on organisational culture. Such an analysis ensures that an organisation develops a link from existing cultures to the desired culture, which can result in better operations (Awadh & Saad, 2012).

The integration of a cultural understanding in the knowledge management process

influences the identification of the varied cultures integrated in the organisation (Shao *et al.* 2012). The diversity of the workforce necessitates the development of unique understanding of the existent cultural differences integrated by employees. The existence of varied cultures necessitates the development of a common organisational culture that seeks to meet individual and organisational goals (Erkutlu, 2012). Therefore, through the development of an organisational culture that places emphasis on knowledge management, the organisation seeks to develop an understanding of the existent cultural difference and their impact on the operational process.

The development of an organisational culture remains instrumental in the identification of the existent knowledge gaps, which influences the development of an analysis of the possible options and avenues that may be integrated to meet the existent gap (Azanza *et al.*, 2013). The process influences the development of a knowledge strategy that places emphasis on the identification of the required knowledge bases and consequent application of the processes. The integration of a cultural understanding remains instrumental in influencing organisational growth and development (Choo, 2013).

Therefore, researchers distinguish between different organisational cultures through a diagnosis of the content-level of values and behaviours of the employees, and a further diagnosis of their faith in the contents of the organisational culture (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011). Notably, part of the organisational culture is not always on a conscious level, and the employees only become aware of it when a significant change occurs or when they transfer to another organisation where the organisational culture is different or the issue is brought to their awareness (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). This is important to understand in any SME organisation, since the knowledge needs to be managed towards the goals and benefit of the SME organisation. The hidden knowledge of the organisation which exists in the mind of SME managers and staff (Fox, 2007) needs to be coded for structural operations of the SME.

The KM intervention aims to effect change in the organisational culture, but as described in this chapter, the success of this effort is heavily dependent on the motivation of the organisation's manager to cooperate with the intervention and to allow for changing the organisational culture. The managerial figure in the organisation is usually the most influential person affecting the organisational culture or allowing the organisation to effect change (Wiesner *et al.*, 2004). Since there is more than one way of creating an organisational culture to help members of the company deal with the challenges posed by

the business environment, managers must choose between strategic alternatives to ensure that the firm is managed in accordance with cognitive judgments, based on its system of values.

The managers are also responsible for preserving the organisational culture, and for implementing changes if these are necessary for the business environment (Berson et al., 2007). Managers cannot include in the organisational culture all the values that are important for the success of the organisation, because these values are often mutually exclusive. Managers' intervention is crucial, however, because they have the power to highlight each value in the framework of the organisational culture and to choose between different values in the organisation, taking into account their objectives and the constraints of the business environment (Gregory et al., 2009). Thus, in order to overcome resistance to change, the SME manager must create the proper attitude knowledge within the organisation with communications about the change (Wiesner et al., 2004).

Furthermore, as discussed above, although the manager might realize a change is needed within the organisation, a gap between the rational assessment and the procedure itself may occur (Fox, 2007). Thus, initially before deciding upon organisational change the manager must adopt a different paradigm. This is because most SME managers believe in short term planning and that marketing theories are not valid for their purposes (Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle, 2011). This is important information for the purpose of this research and it reflects the paradox of the research worldwide regarding the topic of SME marketing. Researchers can access the knowledge that SME managers perceive that complex management theories are unsuitable for the management of their business, however the solutions offered SME managers are complex marketing theories. This may call for a new paradigm with the researchers on this topic.

At the same time, studies indicate that the organisational culture is not governed solely by the organisation's leaders, directors, and controlling shareholders. Apparently, the organisational culture is a product of negotiations between the management and the employees, and it is influenced by external factors that shape the organisational culture and establish its limits. Such factors include the economy, education, family, law, media, politics, religion, and technology (Bisel et al., 2010).

Culture can be changed by learning; a unique aspect of organisational learning is the

resistance to change on the part of employees. The organisation is a cooperative system that depends on the willingness of its members to support it, although the goals of the people who constitute the organisation often differ from the goals of the organisation itself. The participation of the employees is particularly important during periods of change, when the organisation is attempting to create new types of situations that differ from existing ones, as in the process of acquiring new knowledge and changing organisational conduct as a result of this process. Because of resistance to change, ultimately the majority of changes that the manager tries to effect in the organisation do not occur, although they may be essential for the organisation (Furst & Cable, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, resistance to change can also stem from the manager of the SME business, who is usually the entrepreneur who founded the business, and is caused when managers think that they know everything there is to know about their business and are wary of studying abstract yet academic notions of marketing (Frese et al., 2003; Spangler et al., 2004). The issue of resistance to change is addressed by relating to marketing issues and ideas in a tangible rather than threatening or boring way, thus making the experience of learning fun and empowering. The short duration of the entire intervention programme is aimed at keeping participants interested, not allowing boredom and routine to turn the experience into a chore, and keeping the intervention an attractive experience.

The use of metaphors in the KM intervention, which are used to mask marketing theories learned behind a fun metaphor simulation, is another feature designed to assuage fear of change and of confronting academic knowledge. Managers' fear of change is handled by presenting the intervention to managers as a fun simulation, thus encouraging their cooperation with the programme and relieving their fear of learning theories or use of scientific terms. Furthermore, being an integral part the process, managers and staff are not threatened by the programme and experience changes they themselves make. To conclude, the above means that the SME is limited by the knowledge it possesses, namely that of its managers and employees, and may benefit from expanding this knowledge.

## **2.2.2 Organisational Learning**

### **2.2.2.1 Organisational learning theory**

Organisational learning can be defined in multiple different ways. According to Law and Chuah (2015), there are two main definitions. The first is a knowledge-level definition, which holds that organisational learning occurs when “individuals acquire new

knowledge and incorporate it into the workplace so that the collective set can reach its shared visions” (Law & Chuah, 2015, p. 10). The second is a learning-level definition, which focuses on different levels of the organisation at which learning can occur. Although individuals are the organisation’s learning agents, learning can occur at team and organisational levels. On this view, the knowledge acquired by individuals does not directly influence the organisation, but rather shared knowledge and meanings constitute changes that manifest at higher levels. Although this second definition is slightly more elusive than the first, it allows for a bigger-picture perspective, which may be appropriate in the case of SME marketing. For example, if an organisation, after participating in an intervention like the KM intervention, develops a policy of spending a certain percentage of its budget on marketing, the business may see greater success. Thus, it can be said that the organisation has learned and adapted. However, the specific reasons for this policy may be forgotten if individual employees are replaced. If the policy remains in place, the organisational learning is not lost; therefore, the individual knowledge did not constitute the organisation’s capacity to learn.

After reviewing the various perspective, I therefore chose to adopt the learning-level definition for the purpose of this study. *Organisational learning* can thus be defined as a change in the state of the organisation, stemming from new knowledge and meanings that are shared among an organisation’s members and may be explicit or implicit (Law & Chuah, 2015). This situation is new in recent decades; in the past, there was a less dynamic economy and a relatively slow adjustment was required, so there was no need for a concrete theory of and approach to organisational learning (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010; Dencker et al., 2009; Tyre & Von Hippel, 1997).

Organisational learning involves integration of new learning in the daily conduct of the organisation, with the aim of improving employee performance, outcomes, self-efficacy, and openness to change (Bates & Khasawneh, 2005). This is desirable because there is strong evidence that an organisational culture that promotes learning could be a source of sustained competitive advantage for a firm (Barney, 1986; Xenikou & Simosi, 2006). This is the reason that altering the organisational culture to a learning culture is one of KM intervention’s goals, and it constitutes the second layer of this intervention’s theoretical foundation.

The literature in the field of business management emphasizes the existing knowledge in the company and its use as a significant component of competitive advantage, survival,

and profits (Castro & Neira, 2005). The company's knowledge base has two main components: (a) general skills and knowledge accumulated in the company about how to perform various tasks smoothly and efficiently, and (b) information on the world of content and the business environment in which the business exists (Bresman, Birkinshaw, & Nobel, 1999). According to Ranft (2008), the company's knowledge resources can be linked to its other resources (capital resources, physical resources, etc.) to create profits for the company. The company must be engaged in the production, transfer, and assimilation of its knowledge resources in order to translate these into profit (Ranft & Marsh, 2008). Managing the company's knowledge is a constant process, and it is not identical to the process of acquiring other resources (such as equipment), since it happens often on a one-time basis and many variables are involved (Bresman et al., 1999).

One way for an organisation to acquire knowledge resources is via the organisational learning process. This process is critical for the organisation, since it enables it to adapt to its surroundings and to maintain and even increase its level of its competitiveness. Thus, organisational learning contributes to the survival or development of the organisation (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010; High & Pelling, 2003).

From the perspective of the organisation's management of knowledge, learning is a process whereby the potential behaviour of the individual changes in response to his or her environment (High & Pelling, 2003). Organisational learning can be understood in this context as a change in the organisation's level of knowledge, stemming from the acquisition of knowledge and experience. Organisational learning can have cognitive or behavioural consequences, including changes in explicit and tacit knowledge. Knowledge can be embedded in various places within the organisation: on the level of the individual, in methods and work habits, or on the level of the documented knowledge transmitted within the organisation over time (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010).

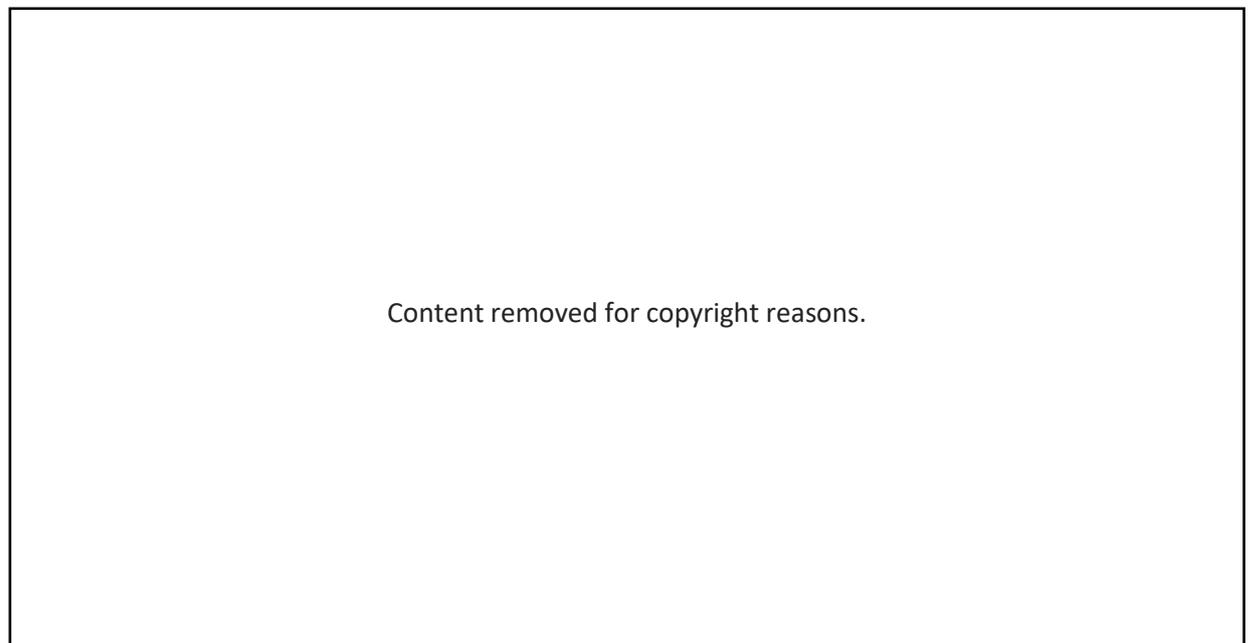
Organisational learning can also be defined as social learning, which is beyond the learning of the individuals in the organisation. Social learning can even be subconscious, but it affects the behaviour of the organisation through changes in the organisation. Thus, social learning relates to the learning organisation as something alive and changing. Wenger (2000) argued that the success of organisations depends on their ability to design themselves as social learning systems and to participate in broader learning systems such as industry, region, or a consortium. Lange et al. (2011) stated that social learning is aligned with personality development on the individual level. Social learning can take

several forms, such as studying the policies of the organisation, group thinking as a result of the production of knowledge in the organisation, and reliance on the environment as a source of organisational knowledge (High & Pelling, 2003).

Figure 5 describes a theoretical structure for the analysis of social learning, which combines three main components of the organisation: the members, tools at their disposal, and tasks that must be implemented. The model also includes two components that together create knowledge: experience and connections. Each piece of knowledge is acquired in a certain context, which can be either active or latent (Argole & Miron-Spektor, 2010).

Active knowledge refers to the tools and methods of operation contributing to an organisation's objective. Latent knowledge is knowledge about the organisation itself, the people in it, how the people in the organisation carry out their tasks, and who does what. Latent knowledge may not be used directly to carry out tasks. The existing knowledge in the organisation is fuelled by two streams: exchange of knowledge within the organisation (as designated by the brown arrows in Figure 5) and reception of knowledge outside the organisation, from the environment (Argole & Miron-Spektor, 2010).

*Figure 5:* Theoretical framework for analysis of social learning according to Argote and Miron-Spektor (2010).



According to the model above, which forms part of the conceptual framework for the current study, latent knowledge has an effect on the active context by means of which the learning takes place. For instance, the psychological environment in which employees

feel comfortable with each other (latent context) affects the learning capacity of new methods in the organisation (active context). Furthermore, the accumulated knowledge is embedded in the organisational context and therefore alters the contexts through which learning takes place (Coen & Maritan, 2011).

Organisational learning in an SME results in increasing the organisation's ability to contend with its business environment, increased productivity and profitability of the business, and the degree of customer satisfaction, which leads to the increased capacity of the business to develop, thrive, and survive over time (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). Further, learning external knowledge is much more effective for the firm than learning internal knowledge. It spares the organisation expensive mistakes and increases the effective functioning of the organisation (Chong et al., 2011). This is because the SME is limited by the knowledge it possesses, namely that of the people it employs, and may benefit from expanding this knowledge. The relationship between organisational learning and SME business growth lies in the development of human resources by building organisational structures, which encourage learning and thereby increase the value of human resources (Macpherson & Holt, 2007). Another approach to the subject was presented by Simsek and Heavey (2011), who claimed that organisational knowledge is the mediating factor between the entrepreneurial level of SME businesses and their success. Entrepreneurship brings the organisation to social learning, which then provides the tools for organisational success.

The KM intervention utilizes the principles of organisational learning to provide the organisation with adaptive tools that will allow it to better interact with the business environment and, thus, better exploit opportunities in the environment, enhancing survival probabilities of the organisation. This is achieved by referring to the elements of Argole and Miron-Spektor's (2010) model. To be precise, the intervention takes the everyday experience of the participants as a resource for discussion of marketing issues; then, the intervention changes the active knowledge of the participants by introducing new knowledge about the experiences discussed, resulting in change in their level of knowledge. In addition, participants are encouraged to try out their new knowledge when confronted with actual encounters with clients in their daily business activities, and these experiences are later discussed in the group to foster more active content learning.

The KM intervention makes use of participants' everyday experiences in dealing with the business environment, making use of task performance experience to induce

organisational learning. In addition, it tries to turn the latent knowledge of the participants on marketing issues into active knowledge. The consultant does this by expressing incidents that participants have experienced in marketing terms and talking about these experiences in the organisation as a social group, stressing the significance of daily conduct as marketing conduct.

#### **2.2.2.2 Organisational learning in practice**

The discussion so far has dealt with the theory behind the concept of organisational learning. This section deals with practices used to facilitate marketing training. The discussion concentrates on the advantages and disadvantages of such practices, as well as their relevance to the KM intervention programme.

In a study conducted among SMEs in Taiwan, it was found that an SME organisation's learning capacity and its ability to obtain new data affected the organisation's degree of innovativeness (Wang et al., 2010). Legge et al. (2007) explored managers' study method preferences. They found that managers tend to expect a quick, practical, and no-embellishments training, such that using techniques that combine lengthy lectures, sentimentality, or breaking the ice could alienate them from the learning process. The researchers also found that managers are frequently rigid and not open to new learning. The authors emphasized the importance of meeting expectations in training this type of audience to succeed in the marketing education programme (Legge et al., 2007).

According to Kuster and Vila (2006), the three most widespread learning programmes in the business and marketing world are practical exercises, analysis of cases, and lectures. They found that the latter two ways of teaching are ineffective, because they lack connection to the real business world. The authors emphasized the great advantage of using practical exercises because they are relevant to the reality of business practice. Solomon (2000) also noted that there is a disadvantage to face-to-face teaching versus more practical methods of teaching.

Kerin et al. (1987) recommended using practical training for managers' and employees' marketing education. Following a study among managers that examined their need for marketing education, they concluded that it is advisable to combine strategic-competitive thinking in such educational programmes and to use teaching methods that give participants a perspective on marketing problems and opportunities. They also recommend learning game theory, a field in which decision analysis is performed through

mathematics.

Raelin (1990) found that training programmes in the field (as opposed to in the educational system) should be tactical, focused, practical, and effective. They should also focus on implementing the material in real life. Finally, Fraser et al. (2007) claimed that, when conducting a CPD programme, collaborative, interactional techniques are better than lectures given to groups of workers.

All these findings suggest that the traditional lecture method of teaching is not effective in the case of adult student groups, especially managers. Nonetheless, Kuster and Vila (2006) indicated that there is a tendency among developers of employee and manager marketing education to rely on traditional methods of teaching. Instead of traditional, instructor-led strategies, organisational learning programmes should focus on active learning. Felder and Brent (2009) defined *active learning* as “anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes” (p. 2).

Active learning uses one or more of the following elements:

- Talking and listening: When students talk about a topic, whether answering a teacher's question or explaining a point to another student, they organize and reinforce what they have learned. When they listen, it should be meaningful listening, relating what they hear to what they already know.
- Writing: Like talking and active listening, writing provides a means for students to process new information in their own words. It is particularly effective in large classrooms where breaking students into pairs or groups may be prohibitive. It also appeals to individuals who prefer to learn independently.
- Reading: Students do a great deal of their learning through reading, but they often receive little instruction on how to read effectively. Active learning exercises, such as summary and note checks, can help students process what they have read and develop the ability to focus on important information.
- Reflecting: Students have no time to reflect, to connect what they have just learned with what they already know, or to use the knowledge they have gained in any way. Allowing students to pause for thought, to use their new knowledge to teach each other or to answer questions on the topic of the day,

is one of the simplest ways to increase student's retention.

Active learning is an important programmatic approach for encouraging and enhancing entrepreneurial learning (Clarke et al., 2006; Devins & Gold 2000; Pittaway et al., 2009; Thorpe et al., 2009).

Research into how entrepreneurs learn has increased over the last decade (Cope, 2010). Jones et al. (2014) researched SME owners who participated in a leadership development programme over a two-year period, drawing on data from 19 focus groups involving 51 participants in Wales. The LEADWales programme and factors affecting it showed that entrepreneurs must engage in action in order to learn, and then they may transfer what they have learned to the organisation.

Action learning has been typically framed as a critical, reflexive process, which focuses on the learning development of the individual (Jones et al., 2014). Action learning might lead to wider organisational impact through a process of learning transfer. However, there is no guarantee that organisational learning transfer follows on action learning (Jones et al., 2014).

The KM intervention programme avoids using traditional methods of teaching. Instead, it is based on play-like interaction, using metaphors, between the moderator of the intervention and the participants, and does not relate to marketing issues and concepts directly in an academic tone, but rather compiles a storyline with the participants that relates to their everyday working experience and imaginary themes, such as mediaeval villages, knights, and kings. This approach should allow the participants to become involved in the process of learning, retain interest in the contents of the meeting, and practice an effective learning process (see Appendix 2).

### **2.2.3 Continued Professional Development**

CPD is defined as a process of lifelong learning for professionals, with the following advantages: personal development; assurance that professionals are up-to-date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement; assurance for employers that their employees are competent and adaptable; and development of skills and knowledge (Fraser et al., 2007). Although this definition is widely accepted among scholars (Martin, 2015), there is less consensus regarding the form CPD takes in practice. When the idea was first created, it referred primarily to individuals working in the traditional professions, such as law and medicine, which require certification and are legally regulated. Today, it can

apply to other fields, including management and marketing (Fraser et al., 2007). Often, the term CPD is used to refer to both structured and informal learning activities. For example, a manager could engage in CPD by devoting a certain amount of time each week to reading business books. More formally, a manager could engage in CPD by hiring an intervention like the KM intervention. Because businesses need to approach developing from a conscious perspective with concrete strategy, I have weighed these options and chosen to refer to CPD, for the purpose of this study, as *structured* lifelong learning activities (as opposed to informal learning and study). Importantly, however, a key precept of CPD is that “the individual learning is responsible for their own learning and development,” (Martin, 2015, p. 2). Still, employers must create environments that remove barriers to CPD and enable individuals to take personal responsibility for their learning (Martin, 2015).

CPD is one path to sustained organisational learning, and this concept forms an important foundation of the KM intervention. This idea originates from the field of medicine, where professionals discovered that the knowledge they had learned in medical school was unstable and constantly changing. Thus, these professionals found that, if they did not learn new subjects on an ongoing basis, they would be constantly behind the level of accumulated knowledge in the world, and their effective level of functioning would gradually diminish (Konkol, 2005).

Turning to the business world, CPD enhances the ability of a firm to adapt to its business environment. This is true because CPD involves learning and knowing more about the market, market forces, competition, and technologies. The result is that a CPD programme increases firm performance and survival rates, as well as its ability to innovate and lead the market (Lenburg, 2005).

According to the CPD concept, adequate professional competence is characterized by correct decision making, which is based on broad knowledge and the ability to implement the knowledge in cases confronted by the specialist (Konkol, 2005). Today, CPD is practiced in many fields of expertise, especially teaching, coaching, and nursing. In addition, international CPD standards have been created. In his research, Van Scheers (2011) stated that SMEs have the following business skill development needs: better knowledge of business and marketing skills, resources to hire professional advisors, more staff training, and a continuous learning philosophy.

There are several ways of implementing CPD. Konkol (2005) described traditional CPD as a process whereby specialists interested in maintaining their professional skills and developing their careers undergo a constructive process of education (as opposed to simple training), with the goal of maintaining and improving their professional capabilities. This might include, for example, taking accredited courses or reading new literature in one's field.

CPD is a process involving four steps, which may be repeated throughout one's career (Konkol, 2005). In the first step, specialists describe the level of their existing knowledge related to their business and define the areas of knowledge in which they need to improve. In the second step, a CPD programme is devised, which aims to improve their knowledge in the areas identified in the first step. In contrast to formal academic learning, CPD includes informal activities by means of which specialists acquire their knowledge, such as workshops and conversations with colleagues. The third step is that of programme implementation, followed by the fourth step of evaluating the accumulated knowledge (Konkol, 2005).

This traditional view of CPD emphasizes the flow of knowledge from instructor to student. More recently, a less one-sided view of CPD has grown in popularity. Fraser et al. (2007) recommended interactive CPD programmes that allow the student to be an active and equal partner in the learning process. Such methods are believed to increase student involvement in the learning process, thus enhancing understanding, memorization, and implementation of new knowledge (Fraser et al., 2007).

The KM intervention adapts this strategy to the SME marketing environment. Research on CPD yielded findings that are relevant for the topic of this study. First, CPD programmes are effective even when short in time and number of sessions (Lydon & King, 2009). Studies have shown that most participants in short CPD programmes changed their professional behaviour after attending the programmes, to a moderate to significant extent. Short CPD programmes are necessary, as professionals are not willing to take part in long programmes (Lydon & King, 2009). KM is therefore designed as a short intervention programme.

Second, Lydon and King (2009) found that successful implementation of CPD programmes is explained by factors related to organisational learning, such as classroom environment, contents of the programme, and teaching method. The relevance and

coherence of the CPD programme and planning of the programme by the instructor were also found to contribute to CPD programme's impact (Penuel et al., 2007). The KM intervention is founded on these principles.

#### **2.2.4 Metaphors and the Storyline Approach**

The most specific level of the KM intervention's theoretical framework is the metaphor and storyline approach; the CPD programme uses this approach to enhance participant learning. This section describes how the metaphoric storyline approach helps participants make sense of marketing by expanding the options for learning and understanding and overcoming resistance to learning. In the context of this study, the metaphorical storyline approach serves as a framework because it grounds the intervention, providing the rationale for testing the KM intervention programme in an experimental manner.

The KM intervention programme uses metaphors to refer to marketing issues. A *metaphor* is figurative language that links one specific object to another by alternating various descriptions of the objects. Figurative language expresses something that, in everyday life, denotes a connection to one area while transferring that denotation to another area, which is analogous to the first (Bremer & Lee, 2007).

A metaphor has two parts: the topic and the information that spurs the metaphor (the vehicle). The topic identifies what the metaphor is about, and the vehicle is an analogy that creates a link between the topic and other global contents. For example, in the advertising sentence "Budweiser, the King of Beers", Budweiser is the topic and the rest of the sentence constitutes the vehicle (Bremer & Lee, 2007).

Metaphors are used as part of marketing and management educational programmes because they expand the options for learning and understanding by encouraging participants to expand their areas of thinking. Metaphors enable participants to consider broad ideas, rather than specific, defined questions. In addition, this way of thinking is suited to how humans commonly think, which makes studying via metaphors more natural to many students (Fillis & Rentschler, 2008).

Another advantage of using metaphors is that they are relevant for the practical world, not just for academic thinking, which makes the educational programme more accessible for participants. This is an especially important condition of success in business training (Kuster & Vila, 2006). Finally, the use of metaphors helps bridge the gap between the concepts and academic theories in the practical world of management, increases the

cooperation and exchange of views between the two worlds, and narrows the cultural gap between them (Fillis & Rentschler, 2008).

Metaphors can be used in CPD programmes in a number of different ways. The metaphor can be used as a means of explaining complex concepts and of breaking up these concepts into simple ideas, which can be related to on a practical level. Additionally, metaphor is particularly appropriate to marketing, since the use of metaphors is extensive in everyday marketing, ranging from the use of metaphors in publishing to promote brands to strategic marketing thinking, which includes concepts that are all metaphorical, such as the term *brand personality* (Cornelissen, 2003; Durgee & Chen, 2006).

Mills (2008) proved that teaching marketing ideas using metaphors can be very effective. Mills found that using jazz metaphors in the marketing world could have a profound impact on the behaviour of participants in educational programmes. Mills (2008) claimed that using such metaphors can teach participants knowledge of marketing issues, giving them the ability to creatively use that knowledge in their everyday professional lives and promoting leadership and confidence (Mills, 2008).

In his definitive study, Mills (2008) attempted to teach students strategic thinking using metaphors from jazz, whereby the instruments, skills, timing, and rhythm were all analogous to marketing situations. The students learned marketing methods when they applied the jazz metaphors to the field of marketing. The study showed that students perceived the lessons as very interesting, and they saw how their skills in strategic marketing thinking improved. The author noted that the jazz metaphor facilitated students' understanding of marketing concepts and marketing problems. In addition, it activated creative thinking with regard to possible solutions to marketing problems. Mills found that using metaphors not only enhanced students' ability to act on their marketing knowledge, but it also promoted creative listening and increased collaboration among organisation members.

Storyline is a strategy of active learning developed in Scotland (Solstad, 2009). Solstad (2009) showed the success of the strategy with teachers and students. The storyline approach was designed and tested for classrooms, not SME settings. To date, no other research addresses the use of storyline approach as a strategy for learning in SMEs. Therefore, the present study will be, to my knowledge, the first to test the storyline approach in a small business setting.

## 2.3 Conclusion

Worldwide, including in Israel, SMEs suffer from a very low survival rate (CBS, 2013). Researchers have attributed this to a number of factors, with some arguing that there is no valid list of factors contributing to SME failure (Lussier & Corman, 2015). However, marketing seems to be a strong contributor to success among SMEs that survive (Ries, 2005). The literature review revealed that incorrect beliefs about marketing processes (Jovanov, 2011; Stojanovski, 2012) and lack of awareness of the need for marketing (Roepga, 2011; Van Scheers, 2011) are among the major reasons for SME failure.

More research is required concerning the factors that promote the survival of SMEs, in particular with regard to marketing. Although the vast majority of businesses are SMEs, and although SMEs have the potential to contribute to the economy in important ways, there are no formal, validated instructional tools that could help SMEs survive by improving their marketing expertise (Reijonen, 2010; Simpson et al., 2006; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009). The literature review emphasizes SME managers' lack of formal marketing knowledge or operational marketing experience, resulting in diminished ability of businesses to adapt to their business environments (Friedman, 2005; Ries, 2005; SBA, 2014; Van Scheers, 2011).

An intervention that is aimed at achieving change in SME businesses will only be successful if it has an impact on the entire organisation as well as on every member of the organisation in order to enhance their marketing capabilities. This is clear from existing research on organisational learning (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010; Dencker et al., 2009; Tyre & Von Hippel, 1997) and organisational culture (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011; Thompson & Phua, 2012). Continued professional development is one way of achieving this goal (Fraser et al., 2007).

The KM intervention programme aims to reduce the discrepancy between SME needs and the management tools currently available creating culture change in SME organisations and promoting marketing awareness and knowledge. Metaphor, such as the KM intervention uses, can be an effective way of teaching marketing concepts (Cornelissen, 2003; Durgee & Chen, 2006; Mills, 2008). The intervention selected for the present study uses metaphor and a storyline approach to teach marketing concepts in a CPD context. Because little is known about the use of metaphor and storyline to teach marketing in SME contexts, and no research on this topic exists in Israel, the present study represents a

significant contribution to existing literature.

This study examines an intervention that might improve the ability of SME businesses market themselves. The KM marketing intervention, which is designed to improve the level of marketing knowledge at Israeli SME organisations, has not been empirically tested, and its outcomes have not been evaluated scientifically. Currently, SME businesses are neglected in the business literature, and there are only a few studies that deal with the special marketing needs of SMEs. This research will add to the current knowledge on this issue; if the KM intervention is effective, it will contribute an effective tool for business consultants to address marketing faults in the SME sector. This study may draw the attention of the academia as well as marketing professionals.

The next chapter contains the methodology for the present study. The study was conducted using a mixed methods paradigm with an embedded experimental design. In Chapter 3, I present the research philosophy and my position as a research, and I describe the details of the research, including the setting and sample, research method and instruments, and data collection and analysis procedures. The variables are also given operational definitions in Chapter 3.

# **Chapter 3:**

# **Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this mixed-methods research is to determine the effectiveness of the KM intervention for improving Israeli SME managers' and employees marketing knowledge, thus helping them strengthen their ability to keep their businesses active and prevent them from experiencing business failure. In addition, the secondary objective of the study is to portray the process of change in organisations participating in the intervention. The research questions were:

**RQ1.** Does the KM intervention programme enhance Israeli SME businesses' marketing knowledge?

**RQ2.** What is the meaning of the KM intervention programme for participants, and how does the KM intervention change SMEs' organisational culture?

This chapter presents the methodology for the study. Johnson and Christen (2011) argued that a clear methodology section is important in a research report. According to Castro et al. (2011), the methodology enables researchers to develop specific hypotheses, which enhances the identification of relationships among variables. Schmidt and Hunter (2014) argued that research can take different forms, including basic and applied research. Basic research is further categorized into empirical, conceptual, qualitative, quantitative, analytic, fundamental, and applied research (Johnson and Christensen, 2011). This study uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches, for a mixed methods design. The remainder of this chapter presents the methodology in detail.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy and Researcher Positionality**

According to Ben-Yehoshua (2001), researchers should develop an explicit research philosophy to ensure that their research can answer the research questions. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also argued that research philosophy is important, because it defines how a researcher approaches the participants and contexts being studied. For the present study, I disclose my personal views on research: I believe that an organisation is not equal to its individual parts, but it rather represents something beyond the individuals who make up the business. My experience has also led me to believe that reality must be examined and explored on many dimensions and with a close and intimate knowledge of the actors and the context in which they act. This research philosophy motivated the choice of a mixed-methods research paradigm with both inductive and deductive elements, because I do not

believe that simple qualitative study is sufficient to describe the intimate knowledge of actors and their context which are central to business research.

I am a business consultant, and I developed the KM intervention programme. In addition, based on the design of this study, I will serve as one of the research collection instruments for this study. As the son of a businessman who was the largest distributor of toys in Israel, one of many SMEs in Israel, I was intimately involved in my father's business.

### **3.3 Research Paradigm: Mixed Method**

The *mixed-methods paradigm* is defined as

research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative research tools in a single study of programme of inquiry. The main philosophical paradigm which lays in the foundation of mixed methods designs is pragmatism. (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009)

The mixed-methods paradigm is widely recognized among social science researchers as the third research approach, along with the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative research is appropriate to the deductive approach, and quantitative research is appropriate to the inductive approach (Creswell, 2002). Mixed-methods research combines the two and is therefore appropriate to a pragmatic approach, which combines inductive and deductive research.

Mixed-methods research allows researchers to better triangulate findings compared with the other paradigms. In fact, this third paradigm evolved in reaction to the limitations of the other two. Mixed-methods research is considered a third approach as it has different assumptions, principles and values than the other two approaches, different ways of data collection and methods of research (Johnson et al., 2007), and a different vocabulary (Demant & Frank, 2011).

Some researchers who use the mixed-methods paradigm see it as more than a combination of qualitative and qualitative research (Demant & Frank, 2011), while others see it as a simple combination (Johnson et al., 2007). Still others believe that quantitative and qualitative paradigms should not be mixed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). However, acceptance of this paradigm is growing in the scientific community, and researchers have used mixed methods to research SME business marketing (Dehkordi et al., 2011).

Unlike researchers of either the qualitative or the quantitative methods, the mixed methods researcher does not find it necessary to take a firm approach on the conduct of the world, preferring a method based on what works best for the research goals (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009). Therefore, the mixed methods is especially appropriate to research with diverse aims, such as the current study.

Mixed methods studies involve collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of a combination of both approaches provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Anghel et al., 2007). On the practical side, the mixed methods paradigm is usually implemented by collecting the data separately in quantitative and qualitative research designs, and then combining the data from these two sources in the stage of elaborating the conclusions of the study and the insights one can learn from it (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009).

Benefits of mixed-methods research include: (a) the ability to integrate varied topics within a study area (Bryant, 2007); (b) enhanced ability to match the purpose of the study with a research method, which leads to more valid results (Glazer & Stein, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; 2010; Ponterotto, Mathew, & Raughley, 2013; Schmidt, 2004); (c) increased clarity and efficiency of research results (Bryant, 2007; Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010); and (d) increased ability to interpret contradictory or unexpected findings (Castro et al., 2011; Creswell, 2007; Ponterotto et al, 2013); increased flexibility on the part of the researcher (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Challenges of mixed-methods research include: (a) increased potential for conflicting results (Schmidt, 2004); (b) potential for decreased quality owing to timing of different data sources (Castro et al., 2011); and (c) increased complexity of the data analysis and management processes, introducing the potential for error (Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010);

The mixed-methods paradigm was chosen for this study because it enables the researcher to address both research aims, one of which is suited to qualitative data collection, and the other to quantitative. This study is evaluative nature. The research goal was to gather information on a phenomenon that has not yet been investigated. In such circumstances, researchers need to gather diverse information on the research subject. Use of the mixed research paradigm makes it possible to probe the effectiveness of the KM tool from different perspectives. Mixed-methods research also allows for practical conclusions of

research that are well rooted in the business world (Greene, 2007). The paradigm choice informed the research design, which is described in the following section.

### **3.4 Research Design**

High quality studies are the consequence of well-designed research procedures. A good design provides a guideline for researchers to conduct their study, and makes the research implementation and interpretation of the results simpler (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2011). After selecting the mixed methods as this study's paradigm, the next step is to select a research design from those available within the paradigm. There are four major designs for mixed methods research (Terrell, 2012), which were considered for this study. These models differ according to (a) the priority of the qualitative and quantitative elements in the study, (b) the sequence in which data sets are collected, and (c) the point in the study at which data are combined.

The first mixed methods design is the triangulation design (Jick, 1979), in which the researcher combines data from various sources to overcome the methodological weaknesses of each source and to utilize their strengths. The triangulation design uses quantitative research for its power of generalization and uses triangulation with qualitative data to obtain more detailed and in-depth information about the research question. This design is single phased; all the information is gathered at one point in time. It gives equal weight to the various information sources (Jick, 1979).

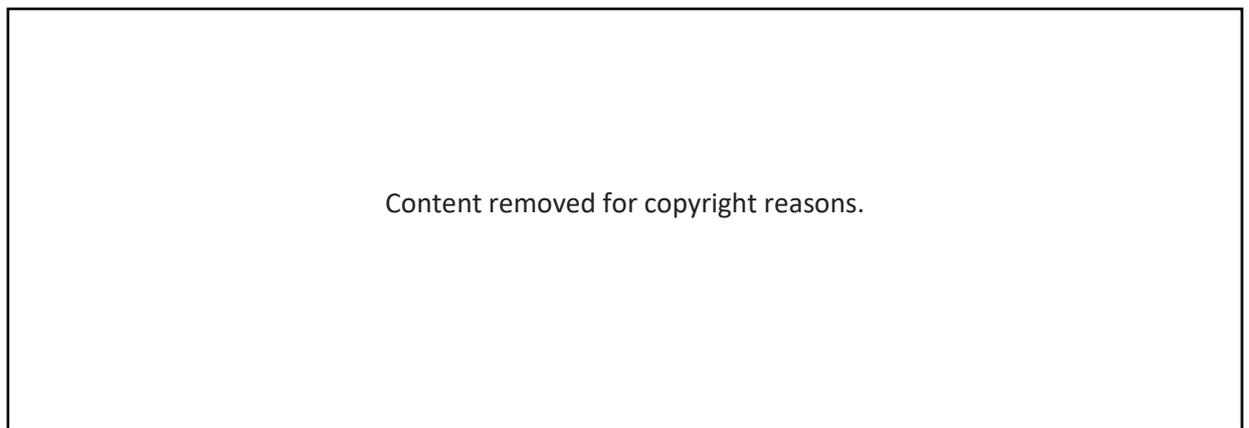
The second design is the sequential embedded or nested design, in which one of the data sources occupies a supportive but secondary role in the research. This is useful when one dataset is not sufficient for acquiring the information needed but when one method is still believed by the researcher to be the most suitable for the study. This design can be multi-phased, such that data are gathered different times (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2011). The third design is the explanatory design, which is two phased by nature, in which qualitative data from the second phase help explain quantitative data gathered in the first phase. The final design is exploratory, and involves two research phases. First, a qualitative phase takes place, and the data gathered from it help develop the second qualitative phase (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2011).

The mixed-methods design selected for this study is the embedded design, specifically the embedded experimental model (Hanson et al., 2005). Figure 6 illustrates this design. In this research, the quantitative research is the main data collection method, while

qualitative research has a secondary, supportive role, as Jick (1979) suggested. An embedded design can use either a one-phase or a two-phase approach (see Figure 7), and the quantitative and qualitative data are used to answer different research questions within the study (Hanson et al., 2005).

This design was selected because it is suitable for before and after research, which compares the same variables before and after an intervention. The current study aims to do such a comparison regarding marketing knowledge and attitudes before and after participating KM intervention, and the chosen design makes it possible to track changes in these variables, if any (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b).

*Figure 6:* The mixed methods embedded experimental model (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2011).



As seen in Figure 6, this research approach features a double (qualitative and quantitative) pre/post evaluation of the KM intervention. Evaluating the same issues at two points in time and attributing change to the intervention provides a way for the researcher to answer both research questions. The quantitative research allows for evaluation of the interventional impact by collecting hard data that answer the first research question, while the qualitative research is useful for collecting data on the processes that occurred in the organisation following the intervention, thus answering the second research question on the organisational culture changes caused by the intervention. Further, five procedures were elected for analysis discussion and are presented in Chapter 5: (a) perception changes of the SMEs individuals, with regards to marketing and marketing processes; (b) SME team work and collaborative efforts towards marketing; (c) development and creation of new tactics, marketing ideas, marketing verbal and graphical communications, and internal marketing codes (language); (d) SME organizational structural change, such as hierarchy, creation of new positions, position expansion; and (d) personal

empowerment, new energies towards marketing, and renewed belief in the SME's abilities to improve and do better. The following is a description of the setting and sample in which this study took place.

### **3.5 Setting and Sample**

The setting for this study consisted of SME businesses in Israel. Businesses were recruited by the researcher using his acquaintance with them in a business context or their response to a Google Ad-Words ad (see Appendix 5) and constituted a convenience sample. A set of entry rules was established to select participants for the research:

1. The SME was active in Israel.
2. A minimum of four employees worked directly for the SME.
3. A minimum monthly turnover was NIS 30,000, VAT included.
4. The SME was not a non-profit organisation.
5. The SME had been in operation for less than 10 years.

After placing the ad and contacting acquaintances, 10 SMEs approached the researcher in a period of one month. Three did not qualify; two stated that they were too busy. Five qualified and were interested in participating in the study.

If potential participants expressed interest and qualified, I conducted interviews with the managers to further describe the study and to establish their willingness to cooperate. The agreement with the SME owner included the understanding of the necessary resources and timeline for the KM intervention. I informed them that, as part of their participation in the study, they would be administered the KM intervention free of charge.

Additionally, I explained the KM intervention and expected outcomes. I also expressed the need for full access to the organisation's staff and resources with the owner's consent.

If, after this interview, the SME owners were still interested in participating, I received consent in writing. Participants gave their consent after hearing about the various requirements of the research, and after being promised full confidentiality and anonymity, as well as transparency, throughout and following the study. SME owners and staff expressed willingness to be involved in the research process and maintained this level of willingness throughout the entire intervention. The SME owners were able to withdraw

from the study at any time. All businesses participated in the study of their own free will and received no compensation for their participation other than participating in the intervention course. Table 1 details the characteristics of the five SMEs eventually included in the study.

Table 1: *Characteristics of Research Participants*

Field	No. of Employees	No. of participants	Pseudonym	SME Age	Notes
Print	10	5	ABC printing	4	Highly competitive market
Communication	7	6	Telepele	2	Expensive service for business
Food services	5	4	Food for Thought	2	Home based operation
Internet	4	3	Interneto	2	Highly competitive market
Hi-tech	6	4	Future Chair	1	Product development. dependent on investors' funding.

Not all employees from all organisations were included. Some were excluded, as follows. At ABC Printing, five employees were excluded because they did not have tenure and did machinery-related work only. At Telepele, one of the two investors was not involved in the daily operations of the business and was thus excluded. The same was true of two investors at Future Chair. Interneto had one technical employee who just supported the data with no involvement in the daily operations and worked from home; this employee was thus excluded. Food for Thought had one employee who was only 15 years old and was thus excluded. This yielded a final sample size of 22 participants. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2004) recommended a minimum sample size of 21 for most experimental designs and one-tailed hypotheses. Therefore, the final sample was adequate to address the research questions. Table 2 describes participants' characteristics using pseudonyms.

Table 2: *Participant Aliases and Job Capacities by SME*

SME	No. of	Job capacity for participants and aliases names
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Pseudonym	participants	
ABC printing	5	CEO / Owner 1/ F / <b>Suzan</b> General operations manager /Owner 2 / M / <b>Mark</b> Sales / M / <b>Joe</b> Graphic designer / M / <b>Bob</b> machine Operations / M / <b>Jock</b>
Telepele	6	CEO / Owner 1 / M / <b>Dean</b> CMO / F / <b>Dina</b> Sales Manager / F / <b>Anne</b> Sales / M / <b>David</b> Sales / F / <b>Riki</b> Staff/ M / <b>Michael</b>
Food for Thought	4	CEO / Owner / F / <b>Sara</b> Staff 1/ M / <b>Dan</b> Staff 2 / M/ <b>Avner</b> Staff 3 / M / <b>Dudu</b>
Interneto	3	CEO / Owner / M / <b>Dor</b> CMO / M / <b>Doron</b> Staff 1 / M/ <b>Gal</b>
Future Chair	4	CEO / F / <b>Dura</b> CMO / F / <b>Avivit</b> Sales / M / <b>Don</b> Tech 1 / M / <b>Kol</b>

\* M = Male / F =Female

The following paragraphs briefly introduce the participating businesses.

### 3.5.1 Participant 1: ABC Printing

ABC Printing had a staff of 10 employees in a highly competitive market. The owners and staff had no prior knowledge in marketing and believed that only the price will attract clients. The hierarchy was unclear, the graphic language of the business was random, meaning that many different graphical languages were used, creating a confusing marketing message (Ries, 2005). Relations with suppliers were positive, but there was little ongoing contact with a client core. Clients were for the most part walk-ins, because of the location of the business.

Workers appeared to be in low spirits and expressed concern that the situation in the organisation might result in closure. Participation in the KM programme was prompted by the fear that they were about to go under. Communication between the two owners,

Suzan and Mark, was far from ideal. They did not share common core values or goals and aspirations for the organisation, nor any articulated marketing strategy.

### **3.5.2 Participant 2: Telepele**

Telepele was a highly organized company. The hierarchy and the distribution of tasks were clear, regular meetings were held with the staff and management, and advertising and other marketing operations were performed. However, the unique voice of the SME was not manifested in its marketing efforts, nor was there a clear understanding of the competitive advantages of the company. The organisation's main competitor was a large major leader in the market, and the company tended to copy aspects of the competitor's advertising campaigns. Telemarketing operations were at the core of sales generation. Management was disappointed with the telemarketing department and complained about results.

### **3.5.3 Participant 3: Food for Thought**

The owner of this organisation had no formal education in marketing or business and operated based on intuition. Allocation of resources was sporadic; no clear marketing scheme was employed; there was no website, no strategic marketing look of the business, and client development was poor. Core values were vague, as was the corresponding marketing and graphic language. Internal communication at Food For Thought was good; all those involved wanted the business to succeed. Competition by similar and larger companies was strong.

### **3.5.4 Participant 4: Interneto**

Interneto's financial state was very poor, and the CEO had a hard time envisioning a brighter future for the company in the very competitive Israeli market. There was disagreement between the two managers (who are a father and son) about running the business. The son had an education in business and marketing, but found it difficult to influence his father's views regarding management of the company. Disagreements between the two resulted in the absence of a clearly articulated strategy for the company, a common vision, or core values.

Employees worked from home. There was no organisational identity, the website was not updated regularly, and there was no means of developing a strong client base. The main stream of clients was generated by ads, occasional mass e-mail distributions, and word of

mouth. The general feeling of the staff was negative.

#### **3.5.4 Participant 5: Future Chair**

The organisation was in the final stages of developing its product. A sample was available online and sales had begun. However, money was fast running out. Communication between the owner and staff and between the CEO and investors was good; all wanted the business to work better. Nonetheless, the business strategy was not clear and this often resulted in disagreements

The CEO had a formal education in marketing; however, she found it hard to influence investors' views on how to manage the SME and move towards better marketing operations. During the first year of this business, no real business connections were made; prospective clients showed little interest in the product, and the existing investors were losing interest in the company. The investors took on a private business consultant prior to the intervention. The CEO was confused and unsure of the future of the SME, mainly in terms of growth, allocation of funds, and investments. The website was not updated regularly, and the sales person had no training, no clear sales goals and methods, nor a defined budget.

### **3.6 Research Method**

After agreeing to participate, the participant SME businesses underwent a full KM intervention, as described in Appendix 1. Before and after the intervention, the researcher administered a questionnaire to test the quantitative variables and conducted semistructured interviews with participants to assess their view on marketing and their organisational cultures. Additionally, the researcher kept a log of observations and notes after each intervention session to assist in answering the qualitative research question. Figure 7 illustrates the research method.

Figure 7: Research method

Phase	Method	Purpose	Data collection
0: Study development	Qualitative + quantitative	Develop valid and reliable research instruments	Focus group review of research instruments
1: Preintervention	Qualitative + quantitative	Evaluate organisational culture and marketing knowledge	Preintervention closed-ended evaluation Semi-structured interviews
2: After each intervention session	Qualitative	Evaluate intervention's influence on participants' subjective attitudes	Open-ended feedback form Researcher diary
3: Post-intervention (complete intervention)	Qualitative + quantitative	Evaluate influence of intervention on organisational culture and marketing knowledge	Post-intervention closed-ended evaluation Semi-structured interview

Each of the research phases is described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

### 3.7 Definition and Operationalization of Variables

Before the intervention began, I developed and tested the research instruments, which included a closed-ended questionnaire designed to measure the variables for the quantitative part of the study. The variables were: awareness of marketing processes, mistaken marketing attitudes, incorrect marketing process beliefs, organisational marketing skills, and marketing need awareness. The following paragraphs provide operational definitions of each of these variables.

*Awareness of marketing processes* was defined as the extent to which participants report understanding the purpose of marketing and their company's marketing strategies. It was operationalized in the closed-ended questionnaire by Questions 1, 2, 11, 12, 18, and 20 (see Appendix 4). For example, Question 11 asked, "The organisation's marketing goals are clear to me." These items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

*Mistaken marketing attitudes* was defined as the extent to which participants were unable to distinguish between marketing and sales (Grant, 2015) and agreed with incorrect statements about organisational responsibility for marketing. This variable was operationalized by questionnaire questions 3, 4, 16, and 19 (see Appendix 4). For example, Question 3 asked, "Marketing is actually advertising." These items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

*Incorrect marketing process beliefs* was defined as the extent to which participants agreed with incorrect statements about how marketing relates to customers and capitalization (Stojanovski, 2012). This variable was operationalized by questionnaire Questions 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, and 21 (see Appendix 4). For example, Question 8 asked, “In order to attract customers, prices must be reduced.” These items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

*Organisational marketing skills* was defined as the extent to which participants reported participating in marketing and marketing-led activities. This variable was operationalized by questionnaire Questions 9, 10, and 13 (see Appendix 4). For example, Question 9 asked, “In my job, I am only minimally involved in marketing.” These items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

*Marketing need awareness* was defined as the extent to which participants reported being aware of the importance of marketing in generating market share and cash flow (Ropega, 2011). This variable was operationalized by questionnaire questions 5 and 15 (see Appendix 4). For example, question 5 asked, “The marketing department is no more important than other departments in the organisation.” These items were scored on a five-point Likert scale.

## **3.8 Research Instruments**

### **3.8.1 Quantitative Instrument**

#### **3.8.1.1 Questionnaire development**

The purpose of the research instrument was to answer the question: Does the KM intervention programme enhance Israeli SME businesses’ marketing knowledge? Marketing knowledge was measured in terms of five variables, defined in the preceding section. The following research questions and hypotheses resulted:

RQ1a: Does the KM intervention programme increase awareness of marketing processes among SME employees in Israel?

H1<sub>a</sub>: SME members’ postintervention marketing awareness scores are significantly higher than their preintervention marketing awareness scores.

H1<sub>0</sub>: SME members’ postintervention marketing awareness scores are not significantly different from their preintervention scores.

RQ1b: Does the KM intervention programme decrease mistaken marketing attitudes among SME employees in Israel?

H2<sub>a</sub>: SME members' postintervention mistaken marketing attitudes scores are significantly lower than their preintervention mistaken marketing attitudes scores.

H2<sub>0</sub>: SME members' postintervention mistaken marketing attitudes scores are not significantly different from their preintervention scores.

RQ1c: Does the KM intervention programme decrease incorrect marketing process beliefs among SME employees in Israel?

H3<sub>a</sub>: SME members' postintervention incorrect marketing process beliefs scores are significantly lower than their preintervention incorrect marketing process beliefs scores.

H3<sub>0</sub>: SME members' postintervention incorrect marketing process beliefs scores are not significantly different from their preintervention scores.

RQ1d: Does the KM intervention improve organisational marketing skills among SME members in Israel?

H4<sub>a</sub>: SME members' postintervention organisational marketing skills scores are significantly higher than their preintervention organisational marketing skills scores.

H4<sub>0</sub>: SME members' postintervention organisational marketing skills scores are not significantly different from their preintervention scores.

RQ1e: Does the KM intervention increase marketing need awareness among SME members in Israel?

H4<sub>a</sub>: SME members' postintervention marketing need awareness scores are significantly higher than their preintervention marketing need awareness skills scores.

H4<sub>0</sub>: SME members' postintervention marketing need awareness scores are not significantly different from their preintervention scores.

To measure the quantitative variables and test these hypotheses, I developed a closed-ended questionnaire, which is reproduced in Appendix 5. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items measuring the five quantitative variables of interest. All items were scored on a five-point Likert scale. Because there were no existing quantitative research instruments capable of measuring all five variables of interest, I developed the research instrument,

drawing on concepts from existing literature.

Closed-end questions were appropriate for this study because they allow participants to select from limited number of answers. Advantages include greater precision, uniformity, easier recall for the respondent, easier coding, and easier analysis (Ferligoj et al., 2003). Disadvantages include that survey respondents may not complete the survey, resulting in low response rates; the nature of the tool does not allow the researcher to probe for more information; and some questions may have different meaning to different participants (Finn & Jacobson, 2008; Jacobson et al., 2009). I overcame these disadvantages by conducting a focus group to ensure face validity (described below) and by administering the questionnaire in person.

I used the Likert (1932) scale to score questionnaire items; this scale measures attitudes by asking people to respond to a series of statements about a topic, in terms of the extent to which they agree with them. A Likert scale assumes that the strength or intensity of experience is linear (i.e., exists on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and that attitudes can be measured.

### **3.8.1.2 Focus group**

Prior to the research, I conducted a test to verify the face validity of the quantitative research instrument. The test consisted of reviewing the instrument with a focus group of academic and business colleagues acquainted with SMEs and marketing concepts. The purpose of this focus group was to determine whether the questionnaire items, in experts' opinion, adequately captured the variables of interest. Based on experts' commentary, I made minor changes to the wording of the research instrument.

## **3.8.2 Qualitative Instruments**

### **3.8.2.1 Semistructured interview guide**

To answer the qualitative research question, I conducted semistructured interviews with participants before and after administering the KM intervention. An interview is a well-managed verbal exchange whose effectiveness is dependent upon the interviewer's communication skills. These include the ability develop clearly structured questions, an attentive ear, and the ability to effectively probe and encourage the interviewee to talk freely (Haverkamp & Young, 2007). This renders interpersonal skills vital to develop trust with participants.

Interviews may be either structured or unstructured (Ponterotto et al., 2013). Structured interviews incorporate closed-ended questions that seek definite yes or no answers. The results can be easily tabulated for the purposes of conducting both qualitative and quantitative research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). However, this was inappropriate to the current study, because I did not intend to quantitatively analyse interview questions. Semi-structured incorporate open-ended questions (Glazer & Stein, 2010). This provides interviewees with an opportunity to provide opinionated answers. As a best fit for the methodological structure of this research, I decided to use used semistructured interviews to address the second, qualitative research question. The drawbacks involve issues pertaining to the validity and reliability of the research, which may result from the personal biases of the investigating interviewer (Booth et al., 2003). The interviewer is a well-tuned research tool, equipped with significant skills; but he/she is also a person, with values and beliefs that must be taken in consideration (Shkedi, 2003). I attempted to mitigate personal bias through the use of an interview guide.

The interviewer must develop an interview guide. This ensures that the interview follows the projected course and that all the questions are answered (Hverkamp & Young, 2007). Interview guides also ensure that responses are comparable, facilitating qualitative analysis (Castro et al., 2011; Creswell & Clark, 2007).

I developed a semi-structured interview guide with prepared questions (see Appendix 4) followed by probes, allowing participants to express themselves at length while avoiding lengthy rambling (Ardley, 2005). Questions for the interview guide were informed by the literature review and by the aims of this research. The interview guide was also designed to create a relaxed, trusting atmosphere (Shkedi, 2003).

### **3.8.2.2 Researcher log**

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, which were the main vehicle for qualitative data collection, I also kept a researcher log to shed additional light on the effects of the KM intervention. This tool is a reflective journal, which contains a diagnosis of the research work and reflects the researcher's thoughts and feelings throughout the research process. The journal is an expression of the researcher's status as an investigating tool in the process. For each research log entry, I recorded the day and time, the content of the entry (my observations of the training session), an associative reflection, and an inductive conclusion. This structure helped me create a well-organized, repeatable log (Sabar,

2001) that will help readers get a detailed and better understanding of the research process (see Appendix 6) (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and will lead to greater reliability (Shkedi, 2003).

The significance of the researcher log as a research tool is discussed in detail by Mulhall (2003), who claimed that writing field notes is part of a long anthropological and sociological tradition and is crucial for ethnographic studies. She asserted that, through writing field notes, the researcher brings himself as a person to the study, and this constitutes a way of combining the researcher's disciplinary interests, professional worldview, and experience.

Use of a research log acknowledges that the researcher is not an outsider, but rather is part of the happenings, taking part in as well as interpreting the phenomena for the reader, so he can make sense of what took place in the field (Sabar, 2001). This was especially important in the present study, since the researcher was also the consultant delivering the KM intervention to participants.

Drawbacks of researcher logs include that the log may be biased and not reliable (Fan et al., 2006), the researcher may lack introspection abilities, the researcher's understanding may not reflect the situation, and participants may perform better with they know they are being observed (McCarney et al., 2007). I overcame these obstacles by recording the log discreetly and taking into account differences in my observations and participants' feedback to identify potential bias. In the current study, this research tool was used to express the researcher's thoughts and reflections on the intervention process.

### **3.8.2.3 Other tools**

The researcher used graphic materials provided to him by the SMEs in the form of business cards, pictures, advertisements, web sites, logos, and slogans, to better understand participant SMEs' marketing abilities. In addition, an open-ended feedback questionnaire was given to each participant at the end of each session (see Appendix 4). The collection of the mentioned materials occurred before and after the KM intervention and interpretations are included in the findings chapter.

## **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

After obtaining participants' consent to participate, I began data collection. The beginning of the research was in the year 2009. Preintervention interviews were carried out first.

Each interview was carried out at the SME's business place, face-to-face, in a closed room with just the participant and the researcher. I asked for the participants' permission to record the interviews and transcribed them later, allowing for accuracy, transparency, and flexibility during the interview process (Forrest et al., 2005). Participants were made to feel comfortable and able to respond honestly and fully with guaranteed confidentiality in comfortable, private settings.

The preintervention qualitative interview took place first, and the structured quantitative interview was conducted just before the start of the first session of the KM intervention. This was a long process, engaging 22 participants at five different locations in Israel. However, this allowed me to get to know all the SMEs; the in-depth, qualitative interview contained 21 open-ended questions (see Appendix 4) and took on average 15 minutes per interview. The quantitative questionnaire interview was conducted at a different time and included 21 closed-ended questions (see Appendix 4). I chose to administer questionnaires in person, which allowed me to explain issues that might arise and ensure complete response rates.

After conducting the preinterventions interviews, four KM intervention sessions were held with the SME owner and staff and documented in the research journal and open-ended feedback questionnaires (see Appendix 4) at the end of each session. In this research phase, the researcher log was completed. I used this tool to preserve and capture the experiences, insights, and understandings gained while administering the intervention.

The format of the KM intervention sessions was predetermined by the structure of the intervention (see Appendix 2) and took place once a week for up to 90 minutes. The number of sessions was also predefined. Sessions included both owners and staff at the SME's business place; setting and schedule were flexible, based on participants' preferences. During the session, the owner and staff were asked to stop working and detach themselves from any interferences, such as the telephone, clients, or other business issues.

Three months after the end of the sessions, postintervention interviews were conducted. This period gave time for the SMEs to work and assimilate the KM intervention's teachings. The communication with the SME at this point was informal, via face-to-face or digital means. In the three months between the end of the intervention and the postintervention interviews, the owner and the staff were allowed to contact the researcher with all questions as to the meaning and implementation of the KM

intervention. The interviews were conducted in the same way, using the same research instruments, as the preintervention interviews. The rationale for this procedure was to compare participants' responses to both qualitative and quantitative questionnaires before and after the KM intervention.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Processing of the qualitative and quantitative data was performed separately, and the two data sets were subsequently combined, thus integrating the knowledge of both sources to comprise the final conclusions of the study. This follows Creswell and Clark (2011), who stated, "Data analysis in mixed methods research consists of analysing separately the quantitative data using quantitative methods and the qualitative data using qualitative methods" (p. 22).

Then, I compared results of both data types to integrate them when answering research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009); this integration is found in Chapter 5. Hence, a double triangulation was achieved: triangulation within each method and between the methods. The next paragraphs describe the quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures separately; a description of the integration procedures follow.

#### **3.10.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative validity describes the extent to which a researcher has measured what the researcher intended to measure (Beyth-Marom, 1986). Before analysing quantitative data, I tested for validity and performed factor analysis to determine whether the data conformed to the theoretical model and foundation of the questionnaire. I also tested for normality to check whether the answers were distributed normally, which enabled the use of parametric statistics in processing this data (Beyth-Marom, 1986). The procedures and results for these validity assessments are presented in the following paragraphs. Construct validity refers to the degree to which constructs align with the tools that measure them (Yin, 2002). As described above, the researcher established construct validity by reviewing the quantitative measurement instrument in a focus group of experts.

#### **3.10.1 Factor Analysis**

I conducted factor analysis using participants' preintervention responses to the closed-ended questionnaire to negate the possibility of prior familiarity with the questionnaire affecting the response patterns. I conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the

principal components method, varimax rotation, and 25 iterations. First, the number of factors was unconstrained by limited by Eigenvalues greater than 1. This resulted in a factor structure that was not consistent with the theoretical model. Therefore, I next performed a factor analysis constrained to five factors (corresponding to the five variables of interest), and this analysis yielded five distinct factors. These five factors explained 76% of the variance in the responses of the interviewees. This indicates that the response data corresponded to the theoretical design of the questionnaire, indicating good validity. I calculated Cronbach's alpha values for each of the five factors. Cronbach's alpha is a reliability measure that reflects the extent to which all items in a questionnaire or scale measure the same global content. Index values range from zero to one, with values above 0.7 indicating satisfactory reliability (Rubio, 2009). The reliability analysis indicated that the level of reliability of the factors, excluding the third factor, was higher than 0.7. With regard to the third factor, there was low reliability (alpha = 0.51). Question 16 was part of this factor but significantly reduced the reliability score; therefore, I chose to omit this question. After removing question 16, all five factors had good reliability. These reliability results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: *Factor Analysis Results*

Factor	Questions	% of variance explained by factor	Cronbach's alpha
Awareness of marketing processes	1,2,11,12,18,20	22%	0.86
Mistaken marketing attitudes	3,4,16,19	15%	0.72
Incorrect marketing process beliefs	6,7,8,14,17,21	14%	0.67
Organisational marketing skills	9,10,13	13%	0.71
Marketing need awareness	5,15	12%	0.68

### 3.10.2 Normality Test

Parametric tests of significance, which were part of the data analysis for this study, assume that the distribution of the variables included in the analysis is normal. To test for normality, I computed the kurtosis statistic, which indicates normality as the kurtosis value approaches 0. The statistical value divided by its standard error should also be larger than 2 in absolute value (SPSS, 1996). Table 4 shows the kurtosis values and their standard errors for the pre- and post-intervention results.

Table 4: *Normality Test Results*

Factor	Preintervention		Post-intervention	
	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
Awareness of marketing process	0.29	0.95	0.81	0.97
Mistaken marketing attitudes	0.09	0.95	0.56	0.97
Incorrect attitudes to marketing processes	0.88	0.95	0.61	0.97
Organisational marketing skills	0.37	0.95	0.36	0.97
Awareness of need for marketing	0.10	0.95	0.71	0.97

The findings presented in Table 4 show that all the factors were normally distributed, so parametric statistics could be used to analyse the results.

### 3.10.3 Hypothesis Testing

Quantitative data analysis was performed using independent sample *t* test analyses. These tests allowed me to test all research hypotheses by determining whether the means of answers to the questions varied before and after the intervention. All quantitative data analysis was conducted in SPSS version 20 software.

### 3.10.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

#### 3.10.2.1 Validity

To ensure validity of qualitative data, I analysed all qualitative data as they came in, rather than waiting until the end of the study, to ensure that the right data were being collected and that the research question could be answered. In addition, early analysis of data is very helpful in identifying patterns, or major themes, in the data (Ben Yehoshua, 2001). In addition, I validated qualitative data by performing member checking, by which I showed the researcher's log and interview transcripts to participants to check whether or not they agreed with the interpretations of their observed behaviours (Miles & Huberman, 2000).

External validation, which is a separate phase of the validation process in qualitative research, occurs when the data matches the theoretical sources or other research data (Ben Yehoshua, 2001). This type of triangulation indicates the robustness of the findings and

allows for generalization of findings. Lack of generalization is one of the weaknesses of qualitative research. Strong external validity helps overcome this weakness. To create naturalistic generalizability, I went back and forth between deduction, induction, reflection on experience, perspectives of the research data, and conclusions during the research process. This was well documented in the researcher log. The research findings were later compared and approved by the theoretical anchors, where appropriate, and the phenomenon under investigation was explained by later stages of the study (Paton, 1980). Chapter 5 details how the qualitative findings conformed with previous research and the theoretical foundations of the study.

### **3.10.2.2 Thematic content analysis**

Qualitative data were divided into primary and secondary datasets for analysis. Primary data were directly derived from informants and secondary data came from other sources, including the researcher's log (see Appendix 7) and the SMEs' marketing materials. For both primary and secondary data, content analysis was used to create themes that described the main issues discussed by research participants in the various data collection sessions. Content analysis is a process of arranging and structuring the data gathered for interpretation and grasping its meaning. The content analysis process involves separating the data into segments and rearranging the parts according to meaning. At the heart of the operation is the need to reduce the amount of data collected and to create unique categories capable of characterizing the processes under investigation. I used a code system to create categories, by which a number represented each meaning category. Further, I highlighted categories using a colour-coding scheme for easier analysis and mistake avoidance. See Appendix 8 for a sample content analysis of an open-ended feedback questionnaire and Appendix 10 for a sample semi-structured interview content analysis.

There are two categories of content analysis: structural analysis and subject analysis (Shkedi, 2003). Structural analysis highlights the relationships between processes in the field, while subject analysis emphasizes the descriptors of the processes being studied, including the participant's feelings, beliefs, and thoughts. In the current research, the content analysis process combines both methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). It is worth mentioning that this analysis is culturally dependent (Shkedi, 2003), and therefore some of the meaning of the content might be lost in the translation of the qualitative data from Hebrew (the language in which the original data was collected) into

English (the language of this report).

There are five stages of content analysis. The first stage sets the scene. The researcher considers the research questions and his research goals, in order to guide him through the first steps of building the data categories using themes from the data. In stage two, the process of encoding the data collected generates a set of data-based categories. The first preliminary set of categories is compared to stage two, and encoding is reconsidered. The third stage is the structuring of categories. Relationships between processes are represented, and the structure of the field emphasized by considering the categories collected. After a few rounds of the encoding process, the researcher examines the frequency in which some categories appear and the frequency in which each participant contributed to each category. This stage provides information about the direction and power of the relationships identified between the processes. The fourth stage is the data cross-checking stage; here, inductive processes are used to construct a theory to fit the stage four results (Neuendorf, 2016). The structures built in stage three are examined, as are cross references to different sources. Some categories used in stages two and three are consolidated at the end of this stage. In the fifth stage, the researcher constructs a structure and sets the final categories of the analysis for a better understanding of the phenomenon (Neuendorf, 2016).

In Chapter 4, I demonstrate the themes by quoting participants directly. Quotations were chosen for their ability to clarify the theme in the participants' words. When choosing a quote, I followed the guidelines that the quotes support the main idea of the paragraph, be punchy and direct, and come from a participant source.

### **3.10.3 Data Integration**

After analysing quantitative and qualitative data separately, I integrated the findings using the suggestions of Combs and Onwuegbuzie (2003), which outline stages for mixed content analysis: (a) data reduction for both qualitative and quantitative data; (b) data display in the form of charts and rubrics; (c) data comparison with different sources; (d) data integration into a coherent whole. Following standard research procedures, I ensured that the following conditions were met:

- quantitative and qualitative data are collected separately at approximately the same point in time;
- quantitative and qualitative data do not influence one another during the data

analysis stage;

- the results of each type of analysis are not consolidated until both sets of data have been collected and analysed separately; and
- after data analysis, a meta-inference integrates the inferences made from the separate quantitative and qualitative data and findings (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2005; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006).

### **3.11 Assumptions**

This study was subject to certain assumptions. I assumed that the participants were honest in their responses to quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. Additionally, I assumed that the meaning of the KM intervention for the participants was a socially constructed reality that could only be understood through the mutual understandings of researcher and participants. This assumption was justified through the use of member checking, through which participants had the opportunity to dispute any of the researcher's interpretations that they felt were incorrect.

### **3.12 Reliability, Validity, and Limitations**

#### **3.12.1 Qualitative and quantitative reliability and validity**

Quantitative research requires prediction validation, whilst qualitative research requires internal and external validation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Mixed-methods research involves issues of validation and reliability on two levels, qualitative and quantitative (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011). Thus, as part of the validation process, the researcher used many research tools for the triangulation effect. Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates the validation of data through cross-verification from more than two sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies during the study of a phenomenon. Validity and reliability of the qualitative and quantitative data were discussed earlier in this chapter, in the Data Analysis section.

#### **3.12.2 Overall reliability and validity**

External validity relates to questions of generalization beyond the immediate research. Nunan (1999, p. 17) questioned the research design: "Is the research design such that we can generalize beyond the subjects under investigation to a wider population?" As

mentioned, the generalizability of these findings are limited by the small sample size and self-selected nature of the participant group. Nevertheless, I hope that the findings of this study will shed light on the research topic and enable future researchers and practitioners to understand and use the KM intervention. The results will also be of interest to those studying organisational culture change in SMEs.

Credibility of the data refers to accuracy of information. The object of credibility is to minimize research errors and biases. In order to increase the credibility of the case study, researchers should organize all data in a database (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2011). In the current study, a database was constructed and it contains all the information about each case, leading to good credibility. Each SME subject has a data file that contains all the information about that SME and its owner and staff: logs, pictures, and documents from various periods of time; as well as interviews with the staff and owners. The data are stored on a computer and kept as physical data (printed).

Nonetheless, it could be argued that it is the congruence between the quantitative and qualitative research findings with regard to the research questions that indicates the total validity of the findings or at least the *seeming validity* (Morris & Burkett, 2011). The current study meets the criteria of seeming validity since I reported extensively on the research findings, after a process of analysis conducted with generally accepted standards and research tools (Shkedi, 2005). These observations and associated themes and subthemes were used to reach generalizations in answer to predefined research questions.

### **3.12.3 Limitations**

The research discussed here has a number of limitations. First, as an exploratory study, it was based on a convenience sampling method. Participating organisations were chosen from those who responded to an advertisement on Google and, following a personal interview, consented to the terms of participation concerning attendance. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the sample is biased in the sense that it included organisations that a priori were seeking change. This sampling method reduces the generalizability of the findings.

The small number of individual participants was another factor that affects the ability to generalize from both the quantitative and the qualitative data. It is worth noting, however, that such a sampling method is very common in exploratory studies and in qualitative research, and the validity of qualitative data is judged by its comprehensiveness and the

depth of the findings, rather than by its manner of sampling.

A further limitation of the research stems from the fact that the design of the KM intervention programme and its evaluation were both carried out by the same individual. Therefore, once again, there is the possibility of evaluating bias in the data and in reported findings, caused by the emotional and professional involvement of the researcher with the research topic. Relatedly, the small sample of participants working directly researcher during the intervention may have led to social desirability bias in participants' responses (Weisberg, 2005).

### **3.13 Ethical Issues**

During the design stage of the research and when collecting data in the field, I had to handle several ethical issues and establish an ethical relationship with the research participants. The first issue was obtaining permission to conduct research in the SMEs chosen for this purpose (see Appendix 1). Secondly, informed consent had to be obtained from each of the participants. The third and most important ethical issue was that no harm should come to the participants and that significant positive contribution should be made for the benefit and continued development of the participants.

A number of ethical principles guided the researcher throughout the research. The protected the anonymity of the research participants and provided each of them with a copy of the findings for their respective businesses. The researcher ensured the full anonymity of the participants, not only by concealing their real names, but also by refraining from publishing any detail that could reveal the participants' identity (Shkedi, 2003). In the current study, the identity of the SME companies had to be concealed due to ethical considerations, and I had to ensure that details regarding the identity of the SME companies were kept confidential.

The research is for the participants. It is intended to empower them and not to harm them in any way. The conclusions of the research will be available to everyone and will protect the research participants, even if this results in a less clear presentation of the findings. The rights and well-being of the research participants were protected throughout the research, and the research had a review process. None of the participants were forced to participate, and anyone could withdraw if they so desired at any time during the research (Ben Yehoshua, 2001).

One of the issues raised in this study was receiving the informed consent of SME

employees. The researchers had to ensure that all the participants understood the process they were entering and why their participation was necessary, how it could be used, and how and to whom it could be reported. Consent had to be given freely and without any outside pressure, based on full information on the purpose of the research and its process, and with the knowledge that the researcher would act within the framework of this consent and not exceed its boundaries. Furthermore, participants had to be informed of their right to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and the researcher had to accept the participants' decision to withdraw.

In the current research study, participants of all five SMEs were fully informed of the study's aims and design. A meeting was held before the intervention with all SME staff to address the research purpose, discuss timetables, aims, and answer all questions. At this meeting, the consent form (see Appendix 3) was read aloud by the researcher and hand delivered to each participant. It was also important to clarify to the participants the timeframe of the intervention and to make sure that there were no misconceptions as to the duration of the process. This was important since the process was limited in time. In this context, a commitment to share data was made: all study materials had to be shown to the participants, with a request to respond. Future publication was also considered, and the researcher explained the promise of anonymity.

The researcher was not emotionally involved with any of the SMEs participating in the research (see Appendix 2; Cohen et al., 2007). The Institute of Business Ethics (2007) created a briefing that explores what business ethics means for small to medium-sized business enterprises, and how they can introduce and support high standards of business practice (IBE, 2007). I considered these recommendations in conducting the present study. This shaped a collaborative researcher-participant interaction. Moreover, the individuals investigated in the study were neither subjects nor participants; rather the researcher views them as partners and they are all cherished. During the research process, a continuous dialogue was created between the researcher and the participants (owners/managers and their employees), and these relationships were based on mutual trust and reciprocity. After initial consent was achieved, participants fully cooperated with the researcher and welcomed each session with warmth and dedication.

Due to ethical consideration all photos, pictures, and marketing communication gathered in this research have been concealed and are not included in the appendices to avoid disclosure of the participants' identities.

As to research guidelines, the British Educational Research Association (BERA) published in 2011 the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011). These guidelines specify and emphasise the researcher's responsibilities to three parties: the participants, the research sponsors, and the educational research community. I have diligently followed these guidelines in the preparation and conduction of this study.

### **3.14 Summary**

The main aim for this study is to evaluate the outcome of the KM intervention, which is a continued professional development training programme. To do this, I conducted a mixed methods study with an embedded research design to compare the state of the organisation, both in qualitative and quantitative ways, before and after the intervention. The qualitative research is the main data collecting method in this design, while quantitative research has a secondary supportive role.

Various research tools were used in this study to capture the researcher's experiences while conducting the KM intervention. Research materials were validated both before the study and as part of the processing of the data gathered in the study and proved valid.

Participants of the study were employees and managers of five SME firms in Israel, which are called herein in pseudonym to keep their identities undisclosed. Data processing was conducted separately for the quantitative and qualitative data, and then combined for discussion purposes. The quantitative and qualitative results compared the state of the organisation before and after the intervention, with accordance to research questions and design.

The following chapter contains a presentation of the findings of the study.

# **Chapter 4:**

## **Findings**

## **4.1 Introduction**

The aims of this mixed-methods research were (a) to determine the effectiveness of the KM intervention for improving Israeli SME managers' and employees marketing knowledge, and (b) to portray the process of change in organisations participating in the intervention. To address these aims, I sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. Does the KM intervention programme enhance Israeli SME businesses' marketing knowledge?

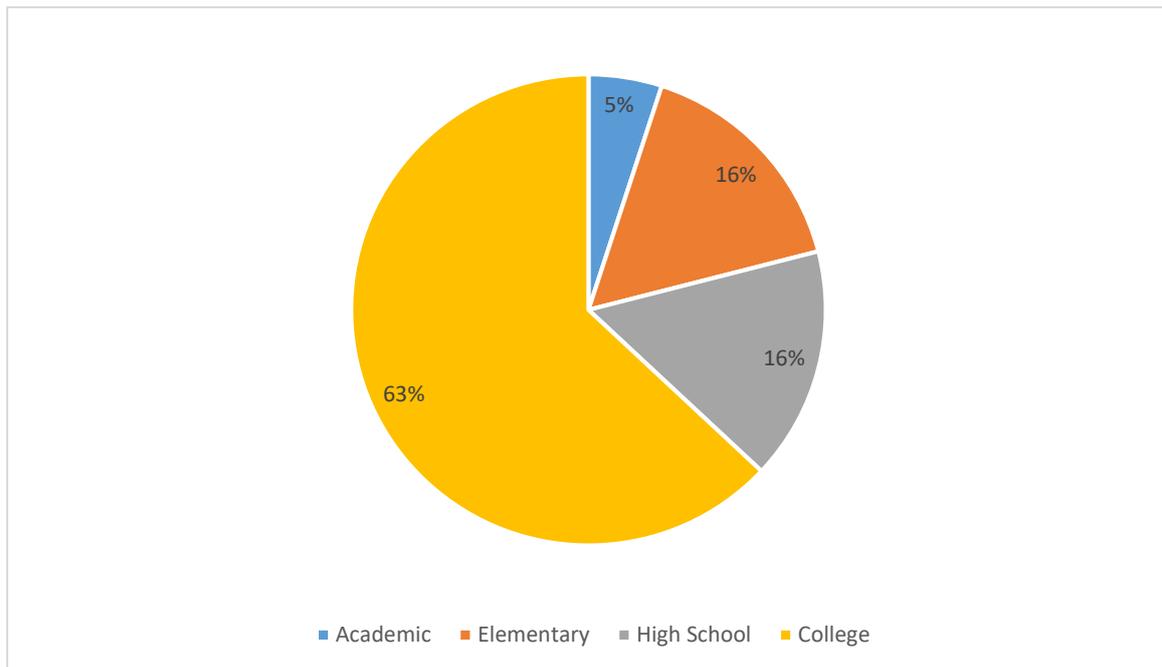
RQ2. What is the meaning of the KM intervention programme for participants, and how does the KM intervention change SMEs' organisational culture?

The first research question was addressed quantitatively, the second qualitatively. Therefore, this Findings chapter is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the quantitative research findings, and the second part addresses the qualitative findings. Together, these form the mixed-method research paradigm. A summary of findings concludes the chapter.

## **4.2 Quantitative Research Findings**

Twenty-two participants completed the questionnaire before and after the intervention. The mean age of the participants was 40.6 ( $SD = 14.3$ ), and the median age was 39. Ages ranged between 15.5 and 71 years. The gender distribution showed that 50% were males and 45.5% were females. One participant did not answer the question about gender. The majority (63%) of participants had a college education; a minority (16%) had only elementary-level education. The distribution of educational attainment is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Distribution of level of education in the participant group.



Distribution of answers by variable is depicted in Figure 9. The marked effect of the KM intervention on answers can be seen, especially Questions 11, 12, 18 and 20 (awareness of marketing processes), as well as questions 4 and 14 (incorrect marketing attitudes). See Appendix 6 for the full distribution of questionnaire responses by participant.

Figure 9: Distribution of answers by variable.

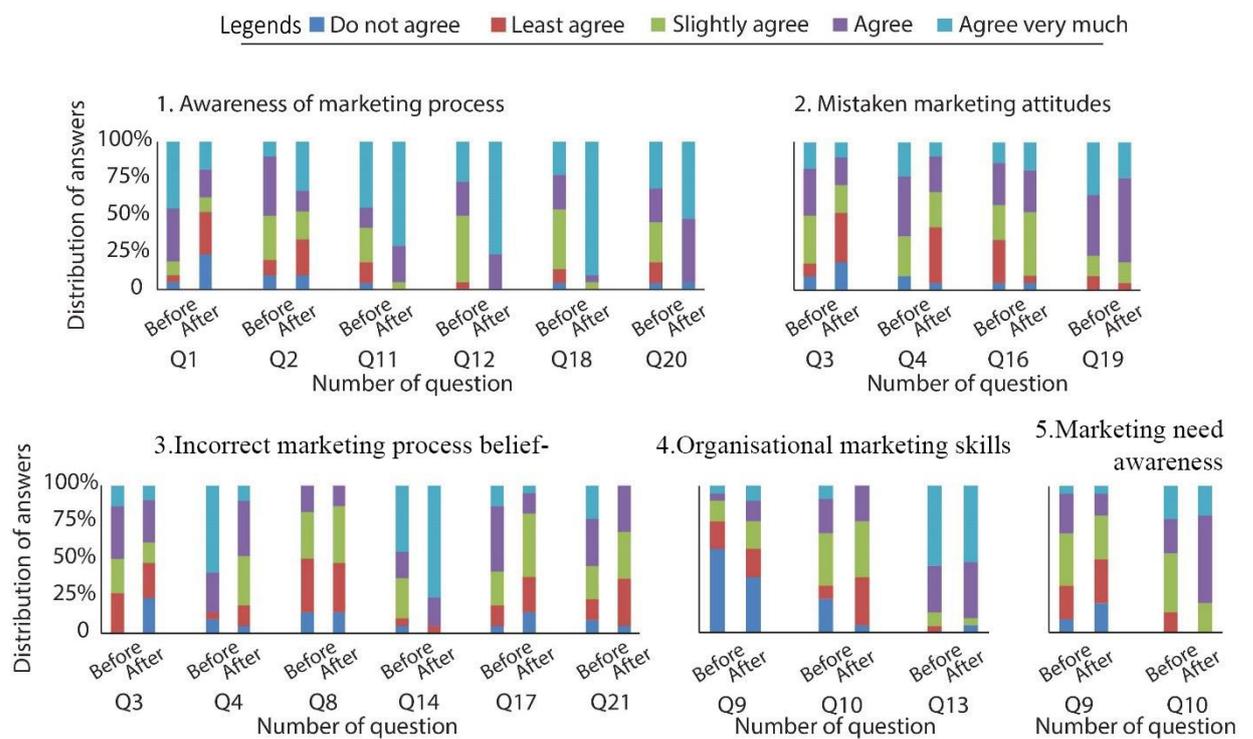


Table 5 lists the values of the five variables included in the study, before and after participation in the KM programme, as well as the statistical significance of *t* tests conducted for difference.

Table 5: *Pre/Post Comparison of Survey Variable Means*

	Pre-KM		Post-KM		<i>t</i> test findings	
	Mean	SD*	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Awareness of marketing processes	3.60	0.86	4.13	0.46	-1.98	0.06**
Mistaken marketing attitudes	3.01	0.86	2.53	0.83	1.75	0.09**
Incorrect marketing process beliefs	2.98	0.59	2.59	0.50	2.13	0.05**
Organisational marketing skills	2.11	0.88	2.28	0.65	-0.48	0.63
Marketing need awareness	3.29	0.89	3.69	0.58	-2.05	0.05**

\* SD = standard deviation

\*\* Difference in means is significant at the  $p < 0.1$  level

The findings point to the fact that participation in the programme accelerated awareness of the marketing process and effectively handled misconceptions of the participants concerning marketing issues. These changes were consistent with the goals of the KM intervention tool. However, the findings did not show that the programme had an impact on the organisational marketing skills of the organisation as a whole; its effects were mainly on a personal level in terms of the employees.

In order to examine whether the KM intervention enhances Israeli SME businesses' marketing knowledge (RQ1), a comparison was made of factor means before and after participation in the KM programme. The factors corresponded to the five variables measured by the questionnaire: awareness of marketing processes, mistaken marketing attitudes, incorrect marketing process beliefs, organisational marketing skills, and marketing need awareness. The comparison was made using a *t* test for independent samples. The researcher developed five hypotheses related to how participants would score on this questionnaire before and after the KM intervention. The research hypotheses and the relevant results are presented in the following subsections.

#### **4.2.1 Hypothesis 1**

It was hypothesised that the KM intervention programme would help increase awareness

of marketing processes. After the KM intervention, the mean awareness score increased from 3.60 to 4.13 ( $p = .06$ ), indicating a significant, increase in awareness of marketing processes. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is **accepted**. As a result of participation in the KM programme, there was a significant rise in the level of awareness of the marketing process.

#### **4.2.2 Hypothesis 2**

It was hypothesised that the KM intervention programme would help reduce mistaken marketing attitudes. After the KM intervention, the mean mistaken marketing score decreased from 3.01 to 2.53 ( $p = .09$ ), indicating a moderate decrease in mistaken marketing attitudes. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is **accepted**. As a result of participation in the KM programme, there was a significant decrease in the level of mistaken marketing attitudes.

#### **4.2.3 Hypothesis 3**

It was hypothesised that the KM intervention programme would help reduce incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes. After the KM intervention, the mean score for this variable decreased from 2.98 to 2.59 ( $p = .05$ ), indicating a slight, yet significant decrease in incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is **accepted**. As a result of participation in the KM programme, there was a significant decrease in the level of incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes.

#### **4.2.4 Hypothesis 4**

It was hypothesised that the KM intervention programme would help improve organisational marketing skills. Although there was a very slight increase in organisational marketing scores (from 2.11 to 2.28), the results of the  $t$  test indicated that this result was nonsignificant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is **rejected**. There was no change in the organisation's perceived marketing skills before and after the intervention.

#### **4.2.5 Hypothesis 5**

It was hypothesised that the KM intervention programme would help increase awareness of the need for marketing. After the KM intervention, the mean need awareness score increased from 3.29 to 3.69 ( $p = .05$ ), indicating a slight, but significant increase in awareness of the need for marketing. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is **accepted**. As a result of participation in the KM programme, there was a significant increase in the level of

awareness of the need for marketing among participants.

#### **4.2.6 Additional Observations**

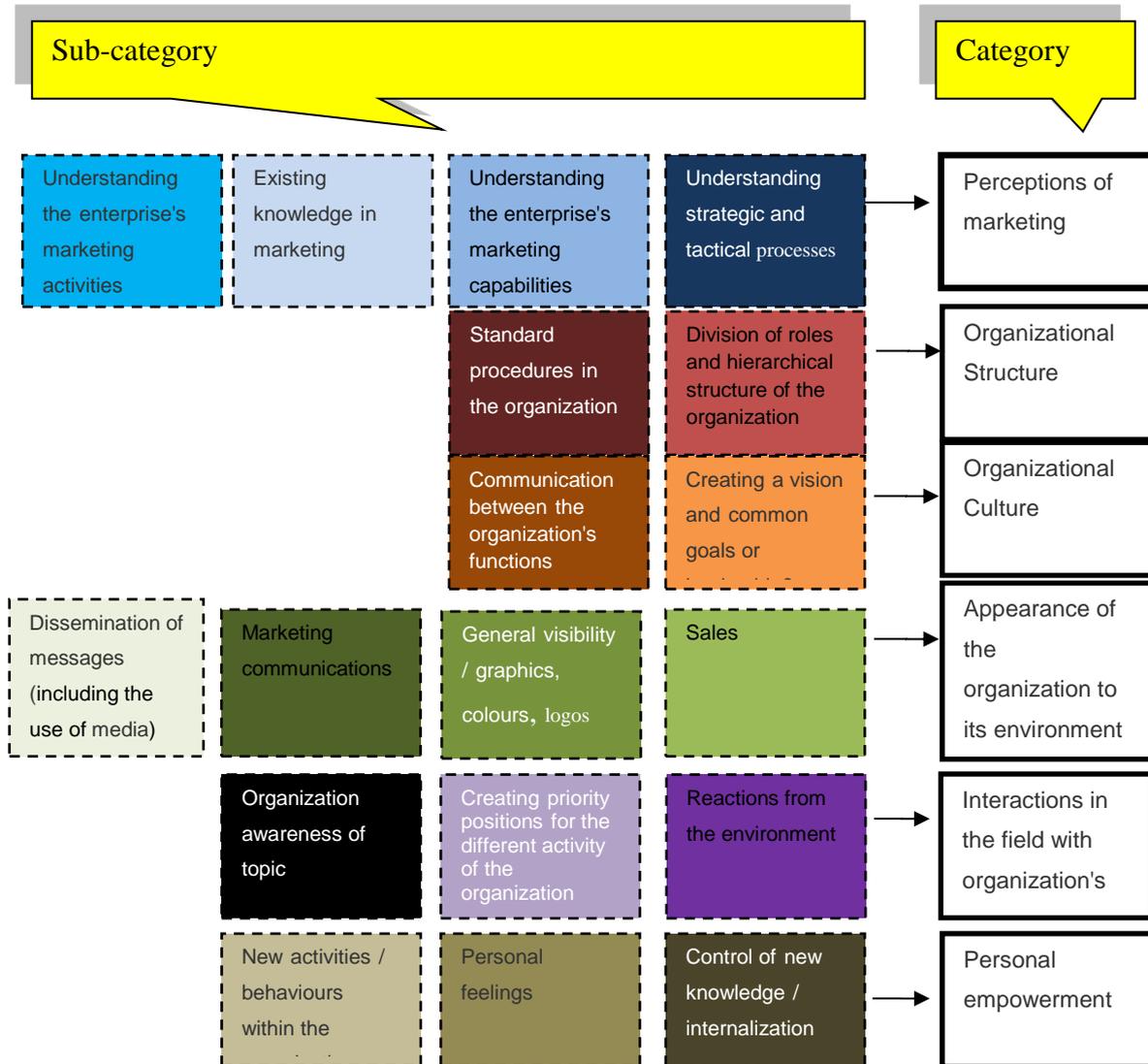
It was demonstrated that, before the intervention process, there was an above medium awareness of the need for marketing, but a number of factors caused employees' inferior ability to implement effective marketing processes. First, it was discovered that, although the employees had a high level of awareness about the marketing process, they displayed moderately incorrect attitudes about marketing and marketing procedures. Furthermore, their awareness of the need for marketing was mediocre, and the level of their organisational marketing skills for creating a marketing process was low.

An interesting finding was that the results of the intervention-measured standard deviations were lower after participation in the KM intervention, as compared to before, in all factors other than incorrect attitudes about marketing. This finding could be interpreted as an indicator that gaps in knowledge about marketing issues and practices diminished after the KM intervention, thus causing the organisation to be more homogenous in its marketing ability, and contributing to the uniformity of marketing knowledge in the company. These findings are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Findings**

Figure 10 shows the categories and sub-categories derived from thematic content analysis of qualitative data gathered in this study (in-depth interviews, researcher log, daily feedback questionnaires). In the following subsections, each category is described in detail, with illustrative excerpts from the interviews. Participant names have been changed for anonymity.

Figure 10: Qualitative data categories and sub-categories.



#### 4.3.1 Category 1: Perceptions of Marketing

Before the intervention, participant organisations lacked an understanding of the essence of marketing, the difference between sales and marketing, the need for a marketing plan for the business. Therefore, they made use of tactical solutions for immediate problems instead of constructing a strategic business plan to guide their way in managing the business' survival and growth. The following quotations illustrate this tendency:

- Reliability and quality. What we produce in this company, many companies do. Besides reliability and quality, I do not have anything to offer them. And that is the problem here, that all printing presses do the

same thing... (Suzan, Interview 5)

- “Service, reliability, professionalism. Image – no, we do not have values like that...” (Mark, Interview 6).
- “Marketing is really trying to sell the product to others, to understand what is positive about your product, and to advertise it” (Sara, Interview 9).
- “The market revolves about the price” (Suzan, Interview 5).
- “Marketing is all about advertising” (Dan, interview 8).

Because success was attributed to advertising campaigns rather than a marketing approach, the majority of participants demonstrated little knowledge of the factors contributing to success in the companies they operated.

The following responses illustrate participants’ responses to the interview question, “In your opinion, are your marketing activities in the organisation run in a professional way?”

Not yet...but I think that our marketing is still on a reasonable level. We advertise in the weekly ‘Kehilla’, but it is still not anything big. In our town we have a monthly newsletter, and we do advertise, and even now my mother put it in the magazine ‘Mitchatnim’. There is also word of mouth. (Sara, Interview 9)

In my opinion, [activities] are not conducted in a professional manner, because we do not have any knowledge about it. We do everything only according to the knowledge we have. Like me, for example, I market in an aggressive way; I simply go to companies and offer them what I have to sell. (Joe, Interview 7)

In my opinion, no, because there is no marketing system. I do not know if this is common in SMEs. We have a marketing person, but he does not only do marketing. He also works on a commission basis. He is not enough, that’s for sure. (Avivit, Interview 18)

After participating in the KM intervention, organisation members knew more marketing terms than before, were more aware of marketing and its role in conducting a business and of marketing issues in managing a business, as well as of how this new knowledge can help them do better work in the everyday conduct of the business. With respect to marketing awareness, participants were much more focused and were able to give concrete and relevant examples from their companies, contrary to their preintervention

responses. A change in personal and operative marketing approaches towards a more professional way of using marketing tools was observed.

Before Kingdom Marketing we had no direction whatsoever. There was no coordination, as if we were just shooting in all directions, with no rules or order. After the process, we were much more focused and we chose customers who were more suitable. That helped us create markets for our product. (Don, Interview 48)

Marketing is an integral part of the organisation, a way of life, in your head all the time. It dictates the way you work, it determines the marketing language you use, and it is a dominant factor in the life of the business. You can definitely say that we are always talking about knights. (Dan, Interview 30)

I would say that after the process, the whole issue of marketing is taken a lot more seriously and there is a whole new start on this matter. You can see it in practical activities, the customizing of colours, the marketing language we have chosen, or the setting up of a website. (Suzan, Interview 37)

I think that the revolution we went through was awesome. I know exactly which cycles I want to connect to (advertising), first, the inner cycle, my personal one, and then the second cycle, which in our business is a bit more expansive in the Sharon region. Even from an advertising perspective, my work looks a lot more professional today. (Sara, Interview 32)

### **4.3.2 Category 2: Organisational Structure**

Theme 2 consists of two subthemes: Division of roles and hierarchical structure of organisation, and standard procedures in the organisation.

#### **4.3.2.1 Division of roles and hierarchical structure of the organisation**

Although there appeared to be a general understanding of the division of roles in the organisation, it was also the case that, as relatively new SMEs, workers tended to have more than one role in the organisation. As one respondent put it, “My role in the organisation is *‘pach zevel’* (trash can—or catch all)” (Sara, Interview 9). In young organisations, the hierarchy is often unclear and communication about activities vague.

The same holds for definitions of functions and operating procedures. Accurate information on standard procedures prior to the KM intervention was scarce. In response to the interview question, “Could you specify criteria according to which the organisation

operates?” two referred to being on time as most important (Interviews 8 and 13, Dan and Dean). A few participants had further remarks:

As I told you in the beginning, I do not really understand my connection to it, because what do I do, after all? I don't talk to the customers; I am more of a presenter. I serve, build, and help my mother with the design. (Sara, Interview 9)

Everyone more or less knows what his work entails. If a person does not have work right now, he has to know how to take responsibility and do other things. It is important to know that there is no 'sitting around' here. The employees here do good work. (Joe, Interview 7)

Actually, since the business is mine and I am the CEO, all the marketing falls to me. I am the one who decides how to route, where to advertise, and how much to invest in marketing, and then it's repeated all over again. (Joe, Interview 7)

You do it in the best way you can, there's no such thing as roles, you work when you need to, and do everything you can. I think that the division of roles that we have built up is still not clear. (Dor, Interview 24)

During the KM intervention, the researcher log indicated a change in thinking, in which the division of roles in the organisation is connected to the marketing dimension of the organisational roles. It seemed that all members of the group were involved in marketing, came up with ideas, and seemed to be more marketing oriented, even if their job was not directly linked to marketing (Researcher, log entry 12:00 01/03/2010). Additionally, participants' comments, as noted in the researcher log, demonstrated a process of increased understanding:

*Sara: I see better marketing oriented organisation change (Researcher, log entry, 04/03/2010)*

*Dura: I can understand better how to organize the marketing function of the organisation (Researcher, log entry, 04/03/2010)*

After the intervention, interviews revealed a sharpening of the functional definition of the employees in the organisation, particularly those responsible for marketing:

The organisational structure is more organized, and my staff and I have each been allotted our roles. This means that everyone has his role defined, which was not the case before. Before this I felt that I had to do everything and carry everything

on my shoulders. Today I spread it around a bit more. (Sara, Interview 32)

The division of roles among us, all of us who work in the business, is a lot more defined and a lot clearer. We decided to think more, and to bring in people who would help us better control the work, such as salespeople and telemarketing.

(Doron, Doron, Interview 35)

Yet, most of the organisations did not implement significant structural changes:

- “Change in the structure of the organisation has still not been implemented. There is no change in the structure” (Bob, Interview 40).
- “I sensed no significant changes in the level of the organisational structure. Not something that I could put my finger on. But I hope that it will come” (Dean, Interview 41).

#### **4.3.2.2 Standard procedures in the organisation**

Before the intervention, it seemed that there was no accurate information on standard procedures in the organisation among those investigated. For example:

The criteria for work are not to be late, to try as hard as possible for the customer, as much as you can, not to be lazy. The work is punctual; we are very exact with times. I think that is important. (Dan, Interview 8)

I feel that there are standard regulations, although there are reports that are handed in every day, and those that are handed in once a week, to me in the department.

The salespeople hand them in to me. (Dean, Interview 13)

During the intervention, some changes in regulations were documented in several dimensions of the organisation, such as the advertising regulations and those for employee recruitment (Researcher, log entry, 25.01.10, 27/01/2010).

After the intervention, although there were no direct references to the new regulations in the organisation, there is evidence that the intervention had an impact on the organisation and on the physical organisational structure:

Today, more than in the past, the thinking in the organisation, and its vision of the future, are more substantially expressed as a result of the process. Things are more professional, and are investigated more carefully. Today, we are more organized and more conclusive. (Dina, Interview 43)

You can see how people have integrated the marketing messages. Every process, the minute it becomes more organized and more measurable, has an effect.

(David, Interview 45)

Looking at the researcher log after the intervention, it appears that the intervention results did not move the organisation to make any significant longitudinal and/or transverse moves. At the same time, the conceptual internalization helped the organisations reformulate their goals and marketing objectives, and consequently redefine the responsibilities and authority of the various functions.

These reformulations and redefinitions helped increase employees' sense of security and reduce the role ambiguity that many of them felt. These changes also facilitated the delegation of responsibilities from the managerial level down to the most junior workers, thus reducing the pressure on the managers, leaving them free to promote the goals, strategic objectives and long range plans of the organisation.

### **4.3.3 Category 3: Organisational Culture**

Organisational culture consists of two subthemes: shared vision and goals and interfunction communication

#### **4.3.3.1 Shared vision**

Prior to the training programme, there was reportedly little notion of the organisational vision or goals, no common language, and minimal communication between different levels or functions within the organisation. Meetings were held sporadically and with no clear agenda or procedure.

There is no common marketing strategy...we are all shooting small arrows in all directions. (Dura, Interview 17)

It is not important for us to attend marketing meetings, so we do not have them...we talk to each other when necessary. (Suzan, Interview 5)

During the intervention, although on the surface there appeared to be an understanding of the vision and shared goals, there was evidence that the situation was far from ideal and needed improvement. Organisation members stated, for example:

People don't speak a uniform language; the messages slightly differ from each other. (Daily feedback questionnaire, 12.1.10)

The seminar stressed the need to work on keeping the messages uniform and strengthening the marketing messages, but not everyone sees the marketing points in the same way. (Daily feedback questionnaire, 12.1.10)

A uniform language is important—we all need to convey the same thing. (Daily feedback questionnaire, 12.1.10)

After the intervention, respondents reported a real change in the situation, towards a common language among organisation members, based on the *knights* metaphor used in the intervention. For example:

The concept of the *knights* is a very strong thing for us, and constantly arises when thinking about advertising. We highlight it constantly. (Dan, Interview 30)

In the past, marketing ideas were not at all clear. They were very vague. It was the process that caused us to consolidate opinions. (Dor, Interview 34)

Before the process, the marketing idea was not as clear to the staff as it is today. In meetings that we had, everyone saw things differently, and we had no consensus, nor a clear knowledge of our main goals. Today we are more geared towards speaking a common language than we were before. (Dean, Interview 41)

#### **4.3.3.2 Communication between functions in the organisation**

Before the intervention, in all companies but one, there were reports that regular staff meetings were not taking place. Furthermore, those interviewed complained that even when there were meetings, these were not thorough or effective.

- “There are not enough staff meetings, they should be held once a week” (Doron, Interview 25).
- The meetings are not organized, and there is no procedure for them. We try to have a meeting every two weeks, but it usually does not work out. I am not sure that this is the best conduct for this firm. (Dean, Interview 13)

Postintervention, there was evidence that all organisation members improved their capacity for communicating with each other. Many more informal conversations were recorded, based on the language designated in the KM intervention. Interpersonal interfaces between the employees improved. As the researcher log states:

*The entire organisation seems to be able to communicate much easier: people use*

*the same terminology, are willing to discuss difficult issues, and are much more open with each other. (Researcher log, 16.03.10)*

Participants in the intervention also testified that they felt communication was better after the intervention:

- “We talk a lot about marketing, in informal conversations. We use terms learned in Kingdom Marketing” (Suzan, Interview 37).
- In the past, we would sit together, and each person would give his opinion. Kingdom Marketing changed the staff meetings. We started to hold extended meetings, at which we do brainstorming. (Dura, Interview 28)
- The intervention created a dialogue here, a conversation, a discussion...about where we've come from and where we're going, what is important to us and what isn't, what we have to do, and how we see things. Discussion was created here that wasn't there before. The words were translated into actions, so actions came into being. (Riki, Interview 46)
- The only thing is, that there is more connection and collaboration between the marketing and sales departments of the organisation, which was not there before. (David, Interview 45)

The researcher log concludes that the intervention seems to have created a real cultural change among the organisations in this study. The conceptual internalization helped the organisations communicate more effectively, focus more on objectives, and understand the unique operational track of the organisation.

These reformulations and redefinitions helped raise the quality of internal communication in the organisation, on dimensions such as availability, tuning in to results .and creating a common marketing and business language. These changes improved the general and moral sense of security and interpersonal relations between the employees, as well as reducing the pressure on the managers, leaving them free to promote the goals, strategic objectives, and long-range vision for the organisations.

#### **4.3.4 Category 4: Appearance**

This theme consists of four subthemes: volume of sales efforts, changes in visual presentations and general appearance, marketing communications, and distribution of messages through the media.

#### **4.3.4.1 Change in the volume of sales in the organisation**

The preintervention researcher log states that organisations were not satisfied with the success of their marketing efforts, and were struggling to achieve sales volumes that would satisfy the organisation's need for income, thereby improving its chances of survival in the market. Most of the organisations in the study took the intervention in order to enhance their marketing ability.

After the intervention, there was evidence of increased marketing activities, in both frontal and non-frontal (online) sales activities:

I feel that there is a lot more activity going on because of the proper marketing procedures we learned. There is movement, deals are being closed, and I definitely think that when I am facing a customer I know what to talk about and how to talk. (Sara, Interview 32)

What I learned (in the intervention) was not to begin by talking just about money, but to talk beyond that. Now, when they hear me, they accept me in a different way, and in my opinion, that gives a very different impression of the company itself. And because of this different impression of the company itself, things are better with regard to sales. (Avner, Interview 10)

Our statistics on the website (which was enhanced due to the process) show that we have more entries, more people staying on the site for longer, and I think there was also an improvement in the sales due to this process, and, of course, the innovations. (Dor, Interview 34)

Managers of the firms participating in the intervention summed up their experience in the following words:

Now, looking back, when I see how I worked before the process of sales and how I have been working since, I see a huge change. (Dean, Interview 41)

There has been an effect on my sales results following the intervention. (Doron, Doron, Interview 35)

I see that we sell more, the sales graph has risen, there was a 30% growth in the first month after the intervention, and in the next month it could go up another 30%. (Dor, Interview 34)

We are now in the midst of our marketing planning, which is meant for the private

sector as well as for the public sector. We are in the process of rebranding. For starters, we are refreshing our logo and our colours and with it the letterhead and presentation, and perhaps the brochure and the website. It actually turns out that we are doing a facelift, and that is significant. I believe that it will improve sales in the next two months, because we haven't finished the process. (Dean, Interview 41)

Correspondingly, the researcher log states after the intervention that:

*The participating organisations have much more sales leads than they used to have and they are acting on them. Sales are slowly increasing.*

#### **4.3.4.2 General visibility/graphics, colours, logos**

The preintervention researcher log reveals that, from a visual standpoint, participants appeared to have a strong understanding of the benefit of graphic presence differentiation, conspicuousness and uniqueness for the business. However, a closer examination revealed that most of the companies had adopted the usual standards of the industry in their graphic presence, so that, in practice, instead of differentiation and innovativeness, they demonstrated conformism and colourlessness.

The following are examples of this in a company that offers catering services, which chose a black uniform typical of many organisations involved in waitressing, and their slogan was 'XXX Catering and Event Production'. The representatives of the company were not aware of the fact that this kind of graphic appearance does not allow the firm to create a competitive advantage in the market, as this message does not indicate the uniqueness of the organisation versus competition in the industry. Other firms participating in the intervention experienced similar problems. One company lacked characteristic colours in its logo and marketing messages, while another had no slogan or characteristic colours at all, and their marketing messages were not consistent; some sales representatives were not aware of the company's slogan.

During the intervention, there was evidence of operative changes in various organisations, towards better branding of the firms:

I have already implemented some ideas from the intervention sessions— new shirts with the business logo. Also, the logo is displayed on the website page. (Daily feedback questionnaire 10.2.10)

The researcher log outlines the changes:

*The owners are happy to make big changes in the company's marketing scheme. The logo will be changed, and the website will be changed. (Researcher log 31.12.09).*

*The CMO has started a process to change the graphic design of the company. This will include the website, brochures, business cards etc. (Researcher log 01.03.10).*

The postintervention researcher log states that, as part of the process that the employees underwent in the intervention, much importance was placed on changes in the physical trappings of the organisations. These changes included redesigning the logo, in cases where this design did not exist at all or not to the right extent, setting up a website or renewing the website, redesigning advertising materials and letterheads, and reformulating the slogan and the marketing messages.

Due to ethical considerations, it was not possible to present full documentation of the physical changes carried out. However, Table 6 illustrates that changes occurred in the companies' presentation, in a way that protects the identity of research participants.

Table 6: Physical Changes Following KM Intervention.

SME	Change
Future Chair	Changes made to matching of appearance in the company's various marketing materials, including the leading colour identifier, marketing text, its slogan, business cards, website and promotional signposting, general office appearance, a new advertising campaign was launched.
Telepele	Changes made in the leading colour of the SME, new logo design, new website design, new slogan, renewed textual content and pictures. The change was implemented on the website, various advertisements with new media and business cards.
Interneto	Changes made in the leading colours, the changes were implemented in the company's marketing communications, which included advertisements, website, general office appearance, business cards, letterhead.
Food for Thought	Changes made in the leading colors, a new logo and a new slogan were created, a new website was built. A new advertising campaign was launched, as well as new business cards, t-shirts which matched the new look, workbags, a new slogan, new pictures, and different text descriptions for the SME's products.
ABC printing	Changes were made in the leading colors, a new logo and a new slogan, and a new website built. New advertising was implemented, as well as new business cards, t-shirts that matched the new look, workbags, a new slogan, new pictures, and different text descriptions for the firm's products.

See Appendix 9 for a sample of a branding change resulting from the KM intervention.

Clear evidence of the success of the process can be seen from the similar responses of the interviewees after they had completed the intervention. The vast majority of the respondents expressed great satisfaction with the physical changes, even though the economic contribution of the changes to the organisations' success was not yet evident when the interviews were conducted.

#### 4.3.4.3 Marketing communications

Before the intervention, there was no use of the marketing concept supporting the companies' marketing capabilities. There was often a sense of near-begging on the part of the company's representatives:

- Our marketing says that we know the catering business from the inside; I'm sure that you'll like our products; you won't be disappointed with what you get. Our product is very high quality. (Dan, Interview 8)
- "We say to the customer: 'Here you get the best work, the highest quality work, with excellent service'" (Mark, Interview 6).
- "First, I explain about the product, *an adjustable computer stand*. Then I focus on its functions, and that leads to arranging a meeting with the sales person" (Avivit, Interview 18).

The daily feedback questionnaires during the intervention suggested a conceptual and operative change in marketing communications:

Our goal right now is to send a clear message through our marketing mix that Company name = COOL (Daily feedback questionnaire 11.1.10)

There is room to sharpen the distinction between the different target audiences (private/business, etc.). We need to improve our ability to market, both during frontal meetings and with regard to our materials. (Daily feedback questionnaire 19.1.10)

Postintervention, there is evidence that the conveying of the marketing message was much more focused in all the organisations that participated in the study:

- "I have already seen that the intervention shaped our thinking and the message we convey. A few customers have already joined us because of the change. The marketing mode is a lot more professional, whereas before it consisted mainly of just giving the price and that was it" (Bob, Interview 40).
- "Certainly, we have improved the type of marketing statements we make." (Dean, Interview 41).

#### 4.3.4.4 Spreading of messages, including use of media

Before the intervention, concerning the subject of media usage, there was a widespread

sense of frustration over the inability to utilize or activate the proper distribution channels, and various accusations were made between organisation members about the reasons for this lack of functioning:

- “Communication with our customers is not good enough. Advertising and public relations are not good enough” (Gal, Interview 26).
- “I am a little stuck, as I do not know how to advertise our good products” (Doron, Interview 25).
- “Advertising is not sufficient as I do not know where to advertise” (Dudu, Interview 11).

Following the KM intervention, there was evidence of change in the use of distribution channels:

- “I opened up extra marketing channels we have never before used” (Sara, Interview 32).
- “We now advertise what we do in the newspaper ‘Yediot Hasharon’ that reaches the entire area of the Sharon. But there is still room for improvement in finding new channels for spreading our message” (Avner, Interview 10).
- “Now (after the KM intervention), there is a clear circle we work by” (Avivit, Interview 29).

The researcher log concluded that the physical change was clear, noticeable, and was been implemented in all the organisations without exception. The conceptual internalization helped the decision makers in the various organisations agree to far-reaching and significant changes. These reformulations and redefinitions helped increase the quality of internal communications in the organisation, in areas such as sales functions, direct effect, and the creation of a common language. The use of various distribution channels was examined and, for the most part, changed. Even in cases where the use was not changed, more extended and focused use was made of the channels. In addition, the order and organisation that resulted from the intervention allowed the SMEs to understand the meaning, visibility, and marketing concept of the organisation on an applied level.

### 4.3.5 Category 5: Interactions with the Field

This theme observes internal organisational awareness or perceptions of relationships of firm members with the external environment (suppliers, customers, competitors). It refers to how outsiders view the company.

Before the KM intervention, the majority of respondents believed that their company and they themselves were viewed in a positive light by trade partners. However, there was also a consensus about the fact that no positive efforts were being made to present the company in a way that would improve their reputations (Interviews 7, 14, 18, 26).

- “I think that, on the whole, most of them appreciate us, and we have a relatively good reputation” (Gal, Interview 26).
- “I think that, all in all, the reviews are good, professional, but there’s still a lot more to be done” (Avivit, Interview 18).

Most of the company representatives said that there was no awareness of the need to create a positive perception of the company in the market; others stated that there was insufficient implementation of this issue. Activity in this domain had only been performed by a small number of representatives of the organisations.

Postintervention, participants made comments that were less generic and personal, and more practical and related to changes having to do with the KM intervention:

- I think the firm is a lot more noticeable in terms of the customers. There is a lot more interaction with them. We improved communication with the suppliers too, but it is more in our interest to have better communication with potential customers, less with the suppliers. Our new way of communication is mostly demonstrated in the language we use, in what we offer, in how we focus our core capabilities, and how we want to bring it to the fore, to the customer. (Suzan, Interview 37)
- I think that the intervention gave me more professional marketing tools. Customers like to feel that you are professional and that you know what you're talking about, and I used ideas from the intervention to give them that feeling. As a result, our customers did get excited, and they were affected. (Dina, Interview 43)
- “Competitors, suppliers and customers now think that we are a lot bigger than

we really are, and that we have a reputation of being experts on the subject”  
(Dor, Interview 34).

However, the researcher log stated that there appeared to be a discrepancy between the improved awareness of the subject and how little it was implemented.

#### **4.3.6 Category 6: Personal Empowerment**

This theme refers to personal feelings of empowerment, control over and internalization of new information and new activities or conduct within and outside the organisation.

##### **4.3.6.1 Control of new information/internalization**

Due to the nature of this subcategory, the accumulation of data only began after the beginning of the process of intervention. During the intervention, most of the participants expressed a lack of confidence in their own ability to effect change and an insecurity regarding the organisational marketing scheme. One staff member said: “My overall confidence in marketing operations is only partial” (Avner, Interview 10).

However, there was ample evidence of the internalization of new knowledge, utilization of new knowledge, different thinking, and relevant deliberations on subjects related to marketing of the organisation:

- The intervention gave me a stronger feeling that there are people who act based on emotion when it comes to purchasing our services. (Daily feedback questionnaire 21.1.10)
- I am starting to see a positive direction in thinking together as a team – the route is long and difficult but it seems to be the right direction. (Daily feedback questionnaire 11.1.10)
- The tools that we received in the intervention were easy to implement, practical, and generated an organized mind-set for each employee, both in his field and in the marketing field, which facilitated the creation of a common language between us and joint cooperation. (Daily feedback questionnaire 11.1.10)
- I have the feeling that the business is more serious now, and that the marketing is organized. We all understand and speak the same language; it is a common denominator that creates a strong connection between all of us. (Daily feedback questionnaire 10.2.10)

In the researcher log, there is much evidence attesting to the influence and internalization of the intervention in the various organisations, reflecting the impetus that made the organisation change its appearance, with its new thinking, new questions, and personal statements:

*I get reports on the extensive use of KM on a daily basis. I am getting the same optimistic, almost exuberant response from XXX group as I received from XXX at the end of the fourth seminar – similar to that proud moment of graduation. (Researcher log 11.2.10)*

*The group discussed differences in operations, and mentioned their new knowledge in marketing as being very helpful in daily operations. Many examples were given indicating a perceptual and physical change, expressed by a new sales pitch, new personal confidence, a new website, new sales offer, and the self-assurance and desire to be proactive and advertise. (Researcher log 4.3.10)*

Post-intervention, there seemed to be an understanding of the importance of new information, a process that indicates internalization. The participants achieved new insights into marketing, so that they could take a self-critical look at their former activities.

- I would like to say that I am truly in a different place today, my advertising looks different, my ads are more dignified, more professional, more appealing. Now when I look back on my old ads, they were really amateurish and unprofessional. I really enjoyed all the meetings, I personally had a lot of fun there, and I really wanted to keep on going, keep on being supported... (Sara, Interview 32)
- ...beforehand, we never looked at those things. We never looked at our 'knights', our core abilities, and how to actually convey them outside. Once, the customer would navigate us to something, but today, we know what to focus on, and how to steer him in our direction. We know how to strive for our goals, in terms of prices and in terms of starting to work with a new customer. (Suzan, Interview 37)
- I always thought about marketing, but not like now, the way you brought it to us, where we have advanced much more in our thinking, and we now know that marketing has more importance than we thought. (Joe, Interview 38)

One start-up company, whose main investor decided to stop investing in the company for personal financial reasons, provided an excellent example of the power of the internalization that took place during the intervention. The CEO of the company and other members of the organisation stated that they now understood the mistake that they had made in the development of their new product, a process that cost more than \$100,000. They claimed that, if they had they not made those wrong marketing decisions, their company would be in a better place. As the CEO stated:

There was an idea of creating a new product, and certain work began, although on a personal level I thought that more work was needed before its production. Today, in retrospect, though we were at the beginning of the road, I think that we should have given it more thought. This insight came to me through the process, though it came to me a bit too late, when we had already started production. Through Kingdom Marketing I understood that we needed to invest a lot more resources in the product that we had rather than creating another product. (Avivit, Interview 29)

#### **4.3.6.2 Personal feelings**

When the various research participants were asked, before the intervention, about their feelings concerning the present marketing system in the organisation, some expressed disappointment; some said that they had a feeling of confidence, but did not sound convincing; and still others said that they had confidence but then promptly contradicted themselves.

During the intervention, evidence of a change and of newfound hope was recorded in the daily feedback questionnaires:

I now feel positive energy thoughts. (Daily feedback questionnaire 24.1.10)

The discussions during the seminar were thought-provoking. (Daily feedback questionnaire 11.1.10)

We're starting to think like a business in all respects. (Daily feedback questionnaire 6.2.10)

After the intervention, there was a greater feeling of confidence in the marketing capabilities than before the intervention:

- I definitely do have confidence. For the first time I believe in the system, even

if it takes time. The way I see it we are still at the beginning of our way, and we do not see all the possible outcomes. But I really believe that, with time, it will create confidence and confidence gives direction. The moment you have clear direction, there is better confidence and progress. We look forward to further progress, but there is progress. (Dan, Interview 30)

- ...yes, definitely, the marketing system works well because it is also part of the job, and it's not just marketing per se. For example, when our CEO talks to customers, she also markets. The marketing is 'slipped in' to the job. (Mark, Interview 36)
- About the process, I am very pleased that I went through it, because my whole line of thinking has changed in terms of marketing. If they would have given me another 3 months in such a process, I think I learn even more about that subject. In actuality, we are not just selling a price, we're selling more than that, the three 'knights,' but I don't think that's enough. I think that there is a lot more to learn about the subject. Consequently, I personally thought of studying marketing. I have no idea if it will give me more tools about how to advertise myself so that I can get more customers. (Bob, Interview 40)
- I was very suspicious at the beginning of the process, the kind that asked herself whether she should be wasting a significant part of everyone's resources. Today I think that it was a gift that this organisation got. I think that by continuing to operate with Kingdom Marketing the company has received a very significant tool. (Avivit, Interview 29)

As extensively reviewed above, the KM intervention brought about a fundamental change in the personal perceptions of the workers and the companies in relation to the nature of the business and the place of marketing within it.

#### **4.3.6.3 New activities/conduct within and outside the organisation**

Due to the nature of the above subcategory, the findings were evident only after the beginning of the first intervention. During the intervention, it seems that the leaders of the organisation are ready to make a change in their conduct in order to implement the process.

*The willingness of the owners to make a change is clear. On every subject that*

*comes up in the second seminar they agree on change, in accordance with the seminar results. (Researcher log 1.2.10)*

The following e-mail was sent to members of the organisation by their marketing manager. The e-mail illustrates the new activities in the organisation for implementation of the new marketing system:

*Hi to you all. Further to the meeting that was held today, and given the deadline, it was decided to continue to further implement the Kingdom Marketing tool. This means that in the next 5 weeks, we will try to meet at least once a week, aiming for twice. The next meeting will be devoted to a discussion on the subject of communication between the various entities in the organisation, to develop the tools for feedback and definition of the continuing process vis-à-vis the goals. Everyone is asked to think about the correct organisational structure, as well as other suggestions for improvement. (Researcher log 26.4.10)*

Postintervention, there is evidence of a conceptual change in the marketing operations dimension in the various companies.

Q: Do you think deliberate efforts are being made to create positive rumours among different audiences that come in contact with the organisation? A: I think that the way to implement it is through the telemarketing I do. That is my goal, to tell them 'Go and tell your friends as well'. (Doron, Interview 35)

Q: Are you doing a follow up on the various trends, legal changes? A: I was doing it all the time, but the process sharpened my thinking about it. I really do work according to the table that we completed. On the subject of competitors.

The results of the conceptual change are obvious in many aspects of the details. Perhaps the most tangible expression of the change is in the increased confidence and motivation to act and bring about a fundamental change in the work process. The conclusion that emerged on this issue was that the intervention contributed substantially to individuals' sense of empowerment. However, it was precisely that point that opened up the discussion of another issue, concerning relying on the support of the intervention. It seems that some of the positive reactions reported by the respondents were a result of their proximity to the date of the intervention.

In effect, a more accurate study of the reactions of respondents revealed that they had a certain insecurity about their ability to adopt the results of the intervention over time.

Moreover, to a large extent, many expressed their fears that, without the continued support of the researcher, their organisations would promptly return to their old ways. There is no doubt that the intervention opened up doors for the managers to topics and areas which they would probably not have reached themselves in such a short time (for example, Interview 29). At the same time, the centralization of the training generated the sense of a lack specifically in the area of the call to action, which the participants had not internalized.

Many of the participants were overwhelmed by worries and difficulties over their ability to continue on their own. Some suggested including the contents of the intervention in their meetings (for example, Interview 29), while others insisted that the author of the research stay in touch, even after the intervention was over, to give support and further guidance (Interview 36). Hence, it could be that the intervention's effects are short-term, and derive from the change itself, and less from the contents of the training. Furthermore, it seems that the frequent superficial knowledge of many about the marketing field does not generally affect their functioning at key points in many organisations.

Therefore, a change as fundamental as that generated by the KM intervention could have a related effect in the form of euphoria deriving from the change and proper understanding of the concept. However, these feelings could soon turn to pessimism and frustration due to the difficulties in implementing such a broad, complex concept in the routine life of the organisation. This limitation is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4 Summary of Findings**

The quantitative part of the research showed that, after completing the KM intervention programme, participants improved their awareness of the marketing processes and acquired specific marketing tools, while decreasing misconceptions of marketing and marketing procedures. The qualitative research supported these results and expanded them. The qualitative results demonstrate that, prior to the KM intervention, SME staff were characterized by a lack of knowledge and understanding of marketing theory, which resulted in lack of strategic thinking. The KM intervention led to enhancing their understanding of marketing concepts, and to realistic assessments of the marketing processes and executions.

According to the research results, the intervention also triggered a heightened awareness of organisational marketing, both in terms of understanding the organisation's core

abilities and their involvement in marketing and in implementing marketing plans. Following the KM intervention, marketing was no longer perceived as a tactical operation in which each component is separate from other components, but as an overall process encompassing and affecting the entire organisation's strategic operation. The employees attested to the fact that the intervention revolutionized their way of thinking about marketing and of understanding the market itself.

The KM intervention programme not only contributed to the cognitive level of knowledge and awareness of participants about marketing, but also appeared to have enhanced personal empowerment. The findings show that the participants sensed an improvement in their professional capacity, their ability to carry out their professional roles, and their ability to control the professional environment. In addition, the improvement in the overall skills achieved by participants contributed to their market value as professionals, thus enhancing self-esteem.

Finally, participants enjoyed the workshop and perceived it as a positive and beneficial experience. All these findings suggest that, in response to the first research question, the KM Intervention programme had significant effect in terms of influencing employees' and managers' marketing knowledge.

The second research question dealt with effects of the KM intervention on the organisational level, with an emphasis on the organisational culture. Findings on this subject show that changes in attitudes and behaviour did not necessarily result in far-reaching changes in structure or culture, over the period of the study. The newly acquired understanding of the marketing process was not necessarily translated into concrete actions and behaviours throughout the organisation.

The data suggests that some changes did occur. The findings show that a common new marketing language was created, expressed in a marketing vision and goals for the future. This allowed for concise activity within and outside the organisation. In addition, new mechanisms were created with the goal of better incorporating marketing tools in the daily organisational working procedures, such as conversations between organisational members regarding the marketing process. Findings also suggest that the intervention encouraged the organisation and its members to experiment with new ways of doing things, such as using new advertising methods, media or advertising language.

An important finding of the study was that changes in the participating organisations were

not confined to theoretical knowledge and understanding of marketing issues. The staff of these organisations implemented the knowledge by using new ways of presenting the organisation and advertising, and new ways of communicating and negotiating with customers. This may have resulted in overall improvement of the firms' performance after the intervention compared with the situation before the intervention, although this change was not fully developed within the period of the field study.

In conclusion, it seems that changes in organisational culture did occur following the KM intervention, but they had yet to be translated into practical rules of organisational conduct within the period of the research project. Therefore, findings are less conclusive and more limited than on the personal level, but they support change.

# **Chapter 5:**

# **Discussion**

## 5.1 Introduction

Based on marketing theory, empirical marketing and organisational research as well as the author's many years of experience as a business consultant to SMEs in Israel, the author studied the KM intervention programme as a metaphoric CPD programme in order to enhance SME's need of improved marketing skill and knowledge. The purpose of the KM intervention programme is to improve marketing knowledge among managers and employees of SMEs, thus increasing SMEs' survival rates. This is important because a lack of marketing knowledge has been found to be a primary factor leading to SME failure (BDI-coface, 2006; Moutray 2007; Van Scheers, 2011). If it proves valid and useful, the KM intervention programme could enable SME owners and employees to avoid business failure.

The intervention programme, described in detail in Chapter 1 and presented in the Appendix 1, simplifies marketing concepts, making them approachable by using a narrative storyline approach. Metaphors are also used in the KM intervention in order to overcome barriers such as fear of learning (Argole & Miron-Spektor, 2010; Fillis & Rentschler, 2008; Mills, 2009) or alienation from academia and its way of teaching (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003).

Before conducting the current study, the researcher used the KM intervention programme in business settings for a period of two years, but empirical research was not conducted to examine the utility and outcome of the KM intervention. This study was aimed to address this gap by examining qualitative and quantitative evidence for the validity, reliability and utility of the KM intervention programme in order to improve marketing knowledge and business outcomes. For this purpose, the author conducted a mixed methods study pairing a quantitative pre- and post-assessment of knowledge related to marketing with in-depth interviews both before and after the intervention. Qualitative data also included the researcher's observations during the KM intervention.

The results of this study were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter contains a discussion of the research findings, beginning with answering the research hypothesis and questions followed by a comparison of the findings with previous theoretical and research literature for a comparison and external validation of the research findings.

The chapter introduces a critical discussion of elected procedures, a critical evaluation of the intervention outcome and a critical analysis of the key characteristics of the

intervention, and summary and conclusions.

## 5.2 Research Questions

### 5.2.1 Quantitative Research

The quantitative portion of the research was conducted using a 20-item questionnaire measuring five variables: awareness of marketing processes, mistaken marketing attitudes, incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes, organisational skills in marketing, and awareness of the need for marketing (see Table 3; 3.6.2 Factor Analysis, p. 68).

This questionnaire was designed to answer the research question: Does the KM intervention programme enhance Israeli SME businesses' marketing knowledge?

The researcher developed five hypotheses related to how participants would score on this questionnaire before and after the KM intervention. The research hypotheses (5) were tested using *t* tests. In the following paragraphs, the hypotheses are presented and accepted or rejected based on the research findings.

**Hypothesis 1** - "The KM intervention programme will help increase awareness of marketing processes." After the KM intervention, the mean awareness score increased from 3.60 to 4.13 ( $p = .06$ ), indicating a significant, increase in awareness of marketing processes. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is **accepted**. This finding is in accordance with existing literature, wherein scholars have suggested that metaphoric language can be useful in teaching new concepts to adults (Bremer & Lee, 2007; Cornelissen, 2003; Durgee & Chen, 2006; Fillis & Rentschler, 2008; Mills, 2008).

**Hypothesis 2** - "The KM intervention programme will help reduce mistaken marketing attitudes." After the KM intervention, the mean mistaken marketing score decreased from 3.01 to 2.53 ( $p = .09$ ), indicating a moderate decrease in mistaken marketing attitudes. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is **accepted**. This finding confirms existing literature suggesting that organisational learning can take place in a group setting and that social learning can reduce mistaken marketing attitudes since members of the group can assist each other in learning (Fraser et al., 2007; Lange et al., 2011; Wenger, 2000).

**Hypothesis 3** - "The KM intervention programme will help reduce incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes." After the KM intervention, the mean score for this variable decreased from 2.98 to 2.59 ( $p = .05$ ), indicating a slight, yet significant decrease in

incorrect attitudes toward marketing processes. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is **accepted**. This finding also confirms existing literature (e.g., Lange et al., 2011; Mills, 2008; Wenger, 2000).

**Hypothesis 4** - “The KM intervention programme will help improve organisational marketing skills.” Although there was a very slight increase in organisational marketing scores (from 2.11 to 2.28), the results of the *t* test indicated that this result was nonsignificant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is **rejected**. In some ways, this finding accords with existing literature suggesting that organisational culture is very difficult to change and that change usually takes place on a surface level, without penetrating to the level of values and assumptions (Schein, 1990). However, scholars have suggested that it is possible to change organisational behaviour through training over time (Dvir & Oreg, 2007), a finding which this study perhaps contradicts.

**Hypothesis 5** - “The KM intervention programme will help increase awareness of the need for marketing.” After the KM intervention, the mean need awareness score increased from 3.29 to 3.69 ( $p = .05$ ), indicating a slight, but significant increase in awareness of the need for marketing. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is **accepted**. As with Hypothesis 1, this finding supports the idea from existing literature that metaphoric language and group approaches to adult education can be successful in teaching new concepts (Bremer & Lee, 2007; Cornelissen, 2003; Durgee & Chen, 2006; Fillis & Rentschler, 2008; Mills, 2008).

Therefore, the research question can be answered by stating that the KM intervention programme can enhance SMEs’ marketing abilities by increasing their awareness of marketing and of the need for marketing, as well as by decreasing their mistaken attitudes toward marketing and marketing processes. However, the KM intervention cannot necessarily improve organisational marketing skills. A detailed discussion of this issue, including KM intervention’s inability to modify organisational culture, concludes this chapter. The quantitative portion of the research consisted of in-depth interviews with participants before and after the KM intervention, as well as the researcher’s observations during the KM intervention and after the sessions open ended questionnaires. The following section addresses the research question regarding SME organisational culture.

### **5.2.2 Qualitative Research**

This portion of the study was designed to answer the research question: What is the meaning of the KM intervention programme for participants, and how does the KM

intervention change SMEs' organisational culture?

The results indicated that KM intervention programme had six effects (Figure 10), as evidenced in the six qualitative main categories that arose from the coding process. Specifically, the KM intervention affected participants' (a) perceptions of marketing, (b) organisational structure, (c) organisational culture, (d) external appearance (e) interactions with the field, and (f) Personal feelings of empowerment. Based on comments provided by the participants, the strongest effects were those on perceptions of marketing, external appearance, interactions with the field and personal empowerment. This suggests that the KM intervention had a strong impact on business performance, since participants reported being better at marketing, appearing more professional, and being perceived as experts. The researcher's log also indicated an increase in the amount of sales leads available to participant SMEs after the KM intervention compared with before. This strongly supports existing research showing that organisational learning can lead to performance improvements and competitive advantage (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010; Castro & Neira, 2005; Fiyzpatrick et al., 2010; Xenikou & Simosi, 2006). Moreover, there is a strong correlation between Categories 1, 3, and 4, as theory suggests that marketing and unique position for the organisation in the field will enable increase in sales in the long term (Ries, 2005).

Despite these positive results, the effects of the KM intervention on organisational structure and organisational culture were less pronounced. Several participants stated that they did not perceive any changes in these areas. Therefore, it can be concluded that the KM intervention may not have a significant effect on SMEs' organisational culture. Theories developed by Schein (1990) and Cameron and Quinn (1999) support this finding. This study revealed a major weakness of the KM intervention, which is the inability to initiate a change of organisational culture. This topic requires further examination of the KM intervention programme structure and design, as well as part of future research. This weakness is discussed in great detail in the sections that follow.

## **5.3 Consistency of the Research Findings with Previous Literature**

### **5.3.1 SMEs' Marketing Awareness**

The literature indicates that SMEs have unique characteristics, distinguishing them from larger businesses. On the one hand, these characteristics contribute to their existence and

growth (e.g., through their agility in business conduct), but, on the other hand, the same characteristics threaten SMEs' survival. Indeed, the literature suggests this as a factor causing a large proportion of SMEs to close within a relatively short time (BDI-coface, 2006; Boyle & Desai, 1991; Buchanan & Evesson 2004). The results of this study coincide with existing research, particularly with respect to the notion that, in SMEs, the line between sales and marketing is often blurred, leading to an overemphasis on sales and a detrimental de-emphasis of marketing (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003) and tactical approach.

Participants in this study conformed to the portrait of SME marketing that existing literature developed. Prior to participating in the KM intervention programme, participants' marketing knowledge was limited (see Appendix 5), and they demonstrated little awareness and knowledge as to the difference between sales and marketing. They often believed that marketing activities were limited to advertising, which they viewed as an extra or unnecessary activity, focusing instead on sales and product development as suggested in Category 1, Subcategory 2 (Figure 10, p. 83). This demonstrates that, even in the years since McCartan-Quinn and Carson (2003) published their important work, SMEs have not addressed this important issue. The need for programmes like the KM intervention and other interventions targeting marketing at SMEs is underscored by this finding.

Scholars (e.g., Barney, 1986; Xenikou, & Simosi, 2006) have continually suggested that a lack of ability to use marketing tools in daily business can harm SMEs' ability to adapt to the business environment. This study confirms these findings. In particular, qualitative category 4 (Figure 10, p. 83) related to the appearance of the organisation as perceived by its environment (marketing language, use of media, graphic symbols and design and sales) indicated that, before participating in the KM intervention programme, businesses were struggling to achieve adequate sales volumes and were sometimes threatened by these low business outcomes. The results of this study cannot provide evidence that the KM intervention improved business outcomes other than reported in the qualitative findings Category 4 ubcategory (Figure 10, p. 83) sales, as stated by Bob:

What I learned (in the intervention) was not to begin by talking just about money, but to talk beyond that. Now, when they hear me, they accept me in a different way, and in my opinion, that gives a very different impression of the company itself. And because of this different impression of the company itself, things are

better with regard to sales. (Bob, Interview 40)

However, a long-term follow up was outside the scope of the present research. Quantitative findings indicated that participants' marketing knowledge improved (Figure 10, p.83.). This finding was also in the qualitative findings which elaborated on the quantitative findings, Theme 6, subtheme (Figure 10, p. 83). In particular, the participants' scores for marketing knowledge improved, and their incorrect knowledge about marketing decreased. Following Xenikou and Simosi (2006), it can be expected that this improved marketing knowledge could translate to improved chances of business success. Longitudinal research would be required to confirm this expectation; this issue is discussed further in the section on Implications for Future Research, below.

### **5.3.2 Concrete Marketing Strategies**

Unfortunately, no clear understandings of the ways SME businesses should conduct their marketing abilities is available. Moreover, there is paucity of knowledge about effective methods of SME marketing and a lack of **practical guidelines** for SMEs effective marketing activity. This means that SME businesses must adopt marketing strategies (Simpson et al., 2006; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009; Reijonen, 2010). In the present study, it was clear that different SMEs have different attitudes and approaches toward marketing. Furthermore, the results suggest that these individualized marketing approaches could be beneficial because they allow SMEs to take advantage of their own unique strengths thus creating a unique position in the market (Ries, 2005). For example, in the qualitative Category 5 (figure 10, p. 83), interactions with the field, two of the participants, Suzan and Dor, made contrasting comments about the effects of the KM intervention programme. Suzan mentioned communicating the business' core strengths to customers, whereas Dor was pleased to be perceived as an expert in his field. This outcome shows that broad marketing knowledge can help SMEs develop their own marketing strategies, which may, in contrast to what researchers like Reijonen (2010) have indicated, be positive, rather than negative.

According to Simpson et al. (2006) and Carson and Gimore (2000), organisations need to make structural changes in order to adapt to the business environment in which they operate, and practical implementation of marketing knowledge is an important part of this process. The results of the current study strongly support these ideas by showing that, with increased knowledge of marketing concepts and stronger focus **on marketing as a**

**business strategy**, participants were able to realize improvements in diverse business areas. For example, one of the participants, David, stressed that the marketing-based ideas of organizing and measuring were successfully applied to other processes throughout his business, with positive effect. Other participants commented on improvements in communication with customers, with co-workers, and with suppliers. After the intervention, marketing thinking dominated decision making in these organisations. This shows that, in accordance with existing literature, marketing-focused organisations may perform better than marketing-weak organisations (Simpson et al., 2006).

### 5.3.3 Organisational Culture and Learning

Although results showed a noticeable change in participant organisations soon after the KM intervention, literature suggests that no lasting change can be made if the organisational culture is not altered, and that only organisational culture can make short-term achievements, such as those gained from interventions, into permanent changes (Dvir & Oreg, 2007; Zhang, 2008). Schein (1990) proposed that an organisational culture is composed of three layers, and the results of this study provide support for the three-layer model. Schein's first layer, the external layer, consists of language, organisational elements, and other visible aspects of the organisation. The KM intervention appeared to initiate change in this first layer, as indicated by participants like Dan, who stated that the KM concept of *knights* was used frequently in his organisation after the intervention and enabled change to visible aspects of the SME. Additionally, results showed that participant organisations held meetings more frequently and discussed marketing issues more regularly. However, it was less clear that these changes penetrated to the second and third layers of organisational culture, as detailed below.

Schein's (1990) second layer of organisational culture consists of values. In this study, some participants indicated that the KM intervention helped the organisation create new vision and goals (Category 3, creating a vision and common goals, p.88), but other participants were more equivocal, **admitting that they had not noticed changes in organisational structure** (Figure 10, p. 83, Category 2). In addition, results of the *t* test indicated that this result was nonsignificant (scores increased from 2.11 to 2.28). The third layer consists of basic assumptions, and again this study indicated only minimal changes at this level. For example, participant SMEs learned to be more open to their environments, to accept outside help, and to be more open towards their clients and trade partners. However, other basic assumptions were unchanged. Therefore, although

participants' organisational values might have modified in the timeframe of the study, they were not translated to fundamental changes, and changes were confined to the external layer

Together, these results support Schein's (1990) three-layer model of organisational culture, since the divisions between external, surface-level changes and deeper changes to values and assumptions were clearly visible. This interesting finding suggests a need for interventions that include long-term components designed to take a systematic approach to embedding external changes at deeper levels, in accordance with the recommendations of Dvir and Oreg (2007). This topic is further discussed in the section on Implications for Future Research (p. 142).

This study also provides support for the Competing Values Framework (CVF), suggested by Cameron and Quinn (1999). Cameron and Quinn argued that the organisational culture can be described as a continuum with opposite poles on two axes: flexibility versus control over employees, and internal versus external perspectives. The results of this study show that, after participating in the KM intervention, organisations moved from control-internal cultures to more **flexible and externally facing cultures**. This could be seen in increased autonomy given to employees to perform their duties, Category 6, subcategory, control of new knowledge/internalization, as this correlates with the Category 6 subcategory new activities/behaviours within the organisation (Figure 10, p. 83). According to existing literature, this may be triggered by a sense of empowerment (Fuchs, 2007), evident in the finding, as stated by the participant, Avivit:

I was very suspicious at the beginning of the process, the kind that asked herself whether she should be wasting a significant part of everyone's resources. Today I think that it was a gift that this organisation got. I think that by continuing to operate with Kingdom Marketing the company has received a very significant tool. (*Avivit, Interview 29*)

Additionally, more emphasis was given by participants to the business environment of the organisation compared with before the intervention (Figure 10, p. 83), Category 5, reaction from the environment). In the terms used by Cameron and Quinn (1999), this shift has transformed the participating organisation from a bureaucratic culture to a development culture, thus enhancing the ability of such organisations to improve their performance and survive. The issue of organisational culture at the participant SMEs is

further dealt with in the section on Utility of the KM Intervention, below.

The theory of organisational learning is a key foundation for this study and was a focus of the literature review in Chapter 2. Organisational learning is important since organisations need to adapt to their business environments, and research has shown that organisational learning can lead to performance improvements and competitive advantage (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2010; Castro & Neira, 2005; Pizpatrick et al., 2010; Xenikou & Simosi, 2006). Thus, one of the main goals of this project was to determine whether the KM intervention could lead to organisational learning, thereby enhancing survival rates of SMEs.

Argote and Miron-Spektor (2010), have suggested that organisational learning is based on a merger between task performance experience and new knowledge, to creating an active context in which organisation members can change the relationship between the organisation and its business environment. The results of this study support this theory. After completing the KM intervention, participant organisations interacted with clients and suppliers (the business environment) in new ways (Figure 10, p. 83, Category 5). The KM intervention uses participants' everyday experience as a basis for discussion, combining this experience with existing knowledge of marketing issues. Based on the results of this study, therefore, the Argote and Miron-Spektor model of organisational learning is empirically upheld.

Zwan et al. (2009), asserted that organisations need continuing professional development (CPD) in order to survive. Results of this study support that conclusion. Prior to participating in the KM intervention, participants indicated in interviews that their survival was threatened by low earnings. Quantitative results showed that learning took place during the KM intervention, indicated by improved scores on the assessment. As part of category 4 of the qualitative findings, (Figure 10, p. 83), participants like Dor and Doron noted an increase in sales and more positive response from customers. The researcher's log confirmed this, observing that participant organisations had more sales leads than prior to the intervention. This supports the notion that CPD can lead to better business results and that organisational learning that improves SMEs' organisational performance is feasible (Zwan et al., 2009).

The literature also indicates that CPD contributes to the personal growth of learners (Furst & Cable, 2008). The results of this study support this notion, as shown in Theme 3

(Figure 10, p. 83). Participants indicated that after completing the KM intervention programme, the staff felt professionally empowered, and they expressed more self-efficacy and a desire improve their professional abilities, for example:

I would like to say that I am truly in a different place today, my advertising looks different, my ads are more dignified, more professional, more appealing. Now when I look back on my old ads, they were really amateurish and unprofessional.  
(Sara, Interview 32)

#### **5.3.4 SME Organisation Barriers to Learning**

Barriers to organisational learning may include: (a) the inclination of SME managers to reject formal marketing learning because they think they have nothing to learn (Copley, 2008; Devins & Johnson, 2002; Fox, 2007; Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010); (b) impatience of learners and inability or unwillingness to take part in traditional learning, expecting the learning process to be short in time and fun; or (c) expectations for immediate results (Lydon & King, 2009; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). This issue occurs not just with SME managers and staff but also with professional managers as well, as described in existing literature (Ries & Ries, 2009). **The KM intervention appears to overcome this barrier and not receive resistance from the participants.** The intervention was short and limited in time, and did not use the traditional mode of lecture teaching. Participants, like Sara for example, indicated that they felt the intervention was fun, which is another key to organisational learning success (Mills, 2008). Additionally, the intervention bridges the gap between marketing theories and the real world, and generates solutions more suited to the real world, as recommended by Fillis and Rentschler (2008). **These findings suggest that the characteristics of the KM intervention may have overcome barriers to organisational learning,** and other interventions using these characteristics could be similarly effective. This is discussed in more detail in the section discussing professional implications, below (p.141, 6.7)

### **5.4 Critical Evaluation of the Intervention Outcome – Integration of Data**

Quantitative results showed that the KM intervention programme enabled for positive change in the following areas: increased awareness of marketing processes, reduced mistaken marketing attitudes, and increased awareness of the need for marketing. Results of the in-depth interviews also indicated that the KM intervention had a positive impact

on marketing strategies, abilities, knowledge, and operations. In particular, participants expressed willingness to implement changes in their communication strategies, changes in their reception by customers, and in their thinking about the importance of marketing. Therefore, in response to the first research question (*In what way can the KM intervention enhance SMEs marketing strategies, abilities, knowledge, and operations?*) it can be concluded the KM intervention programme enhanced SMEs' marketing operations by imparting an awareness and knowledge of marketing concepts that were previously lacking at participant organisations.

The current study shows that KM intervention is an effective CPD programme, as proved by both qualitative and quantitative results showing better marketing knowledge after the KM intervention among employees at participant organisations. Additionally, the KM intervention could be a solution to the reported paucity of practical marketing information for SMEs (Reijonen, 2010; Simpson et al., 2006; Walsh & Lipinski, 2009), because the intervention presents a way of making marketing methods accessible while accommodating the specific marketing needs of participant organisations. The results reveal that organisation members participating in the KM intervention not only acquired new knowledge but also used it in practice, suggesting that new working tools were created for the organisations by the KM intervention.

Given these findings, the KM intervention appears to have strong utility and could be used beneficially in other SME settings. However, the study also revealed some areas which warrant further development of the KM intervention. In particular, with respect to the second research question (*How does the KM intervention tool transform the organisational culture?*). It was not clear that the KM intervention led to lasting results in organisational culture beyond the external level. Additionally, very few changes in organisational structure were reported as resulting from the KM intervention. Therefore, there is room for improvement of the intervention tool in order to better enable the demonstrated improvements in marketing knowledge to translate into lasting, fundamental changes in the organisational culture.

The above section discussed the evidence for the utility of the KM intervention tool based on the research findings. First, the characteristic benefits of the KM intervention, as they emerged from this research, are presented. Next, the summary of the intervention outcome.

### **5.4.1 Outcomes of the KM Intervention Summary**

Took and Baharub (2010) stressed the need for an intervention that effectively educates SME businesses to use marketing concepts, methods, and strategies that will enable them to compete in their field. Evidence indicated that the KM intervention programme led to significant benefits for participant organisations. In accordance with Fuchs' (2007) remarks on cognitive learning, participants developed a common language of discourse and conceptual thinking that made it easier to discuss strategy and tactics and design a marketing scheme. This is clear from the quantitative results as well as from Category 2 of the qualitative results (figure 10, p. 83). Furthermore, participants learned to identify core capabilities and work with them, as interview comments in Category 4 (Figure 10, p. 83) show. The entire team, not only those directly involved in marketing, developed an orientation to and an awareness of marketing, not only on a cognitive level, but on an emotional level as well. This outcome is indicated in Category 1 as well as Category 6 (Figure 10, p. 83).

Despite the positive cognitive changes and successful organisational learning, the findings revealed a gap between cognitive changes on the individual level and behavioural changes on the organisational level. Category 2 (figure 10, p. 83) demonstrates this most clearly. Many of the participants indicated that they did not observe structural changes after completing the KM intervention programme. This was evident in the quantitative findings as the data implied that no change occurred in the perceived organisation's marketing skills before and after participating in the KM intervention.

Although there was clear evidence of internalization and utilization of new knowledge in team discussions, implementation and application of knowledge was perceived as more difficult.

Next the discussion will address the elected procedures.

## **5.5. Procedures Critical Analysis**

Five procedures were elected for a close observation as part of this research. The chosen procedures are essential part of this this research as they are crucial for improvements of SMEs marketing. The research allowed observation of five SMEs prior, during and at the end of the KM intervention programme. The observation was performed by employing different research tools elected for the purpose of this research, as discussed in Chapter 3,

enabling to follow the elected procedures and report them.

### **5.5.1 Perception changes of the SMEs individuals, with regards to marketing, and marketing processes.**

In Israel and worldwide there are frequent reports regarding the great difficulty experienced by SMEs, (BDI-coface, 2006; Moutray 2007; Van Scheers, 2011). Thus, it is of great importance to induce perception change within SMEs in order to initiate change achieve better results, as SMEs generally embark on tactical thinking and operations and are lacking the willingness to embrace new strategic methods (Moutray, 2007, O'Dwyer, 2009). This emphasizes the importance of perception change, which proved to be difficult to achieve (Fox, 2007, Ries & Ries, 2009). Perception change may lead to new operations, new marketing information for the SME, and eventually increase in sales (Ries, 2007). This study indicates that those who participated in KM intervention programme experienced change in perception, as indicated by the quantitative data, as well as increased awareness of marketing processes – scores increased from 3.60 to 4.13 ( $p = .06$ ), mistaken marketing attitudes were reduced from 3.01 to 2.53 ( $p = .09$ ), and there was an increase in the awareness of the need for marketing as scores increased from 3.29 to 3.69 ( $p = .05$ ). Qualitative data elaborated on the issue and allowed for a personal perspective of the issue, as category one indicates, as Don stated:

Before Kingdom Marketing we had no direction whatsoever. There was no coordination, as if we were just shooting in all directions, with no rules or order.

After the process, we were much more focused and we chose customers who were more suitable. That helped us create markets for our product. (Don, Interview 48).

Although the KM intervention programme was short in time (see Appendix 2), the findings show change in perceptions of the participants during the sessions, demonstrated in the questions asked by the members of the SME to the moderator, the statement made with regards to marketing and critique showed by members of current SME marketing operations, all of which was evident in the observations performed by the researcher.

### **5.5.2 SME teamwork and collaborative efforts towards marketing.**

Prior to participating in the KM intervention, the researcher met with the participants, as reported in Chapter 3 (p. 130, 3.7.1). The common factor relevant here is that the managers kept marketing activities to themselves and did not share it with the staff. Moreover, findings indicate that staff members did not have knowledge of specific

marketing processes, SME marketing identity, core competence and other topics with relation to marketing of the SME. The scope of the researched intervention will enable managers and staff members to meet and work as an efficient group. The quantitative data of this study clearly show that there was evident improvement. The development of an organisational culture, as occurred during the intervention, remains instrumental in the identification of the existent knowledge gaps, which influence the development of an analysis of the possible options and avenues that may be integrated to meet the existent gap (Azanza et al., 2013).

This point is exemplified by Doron's report: "There are not enough staff meetings, they should be held once a week" (Doron, Interview 25).

The described above is reported and relates to the knowledge of marketing processes in the organisation. In other words, the manager is not aware that he can gain from collaborative efforts towards marketing with the SME staff (Castro & Neira, 2005; Simsek & Heavey, 2011). During the research, meetings took place regularly and were productive, as reported here; and this change allowed the SME to benefit from productive meetings, ideas change, appreciate the knowledge, decision making, as confirmed by theory as a method for creating organisational knowledge (Armstrong, 2012). The quantitative findings demonstrate this as well, showing increased awareness of marketing processes, from 3.60 to 4.13 ( $p = .06$ ), and reduced mistaken marketing attitudes, from 3.01 to 2.53 ( $p = .09$ ).

Category 6 of the qualitative findings (Figure 10, p. 83) enabled better understanding of the feelings that the KM intervention created, excitement due to the possibility of a better marketing scheme operation for the SME, as stated by a participant of the intervention "We're starting to think like a business in all respects" (Questionnaire 6.2.10). This behaviour allowed for informal meetings and knowledge sharing in the SMEs as observed in the research log. This also allowed the organisation to make relatively quick marketing decision. The decisions were not easy to reach as they involved resources such as work hours, finance, cognitive decisions, as well as definition of new operations.

Prior to conducting the KM intervention, the researcher met with the participants of this research (as reported in Chapter 3). The common factor relevant here is that the only price tactics considered with no indication of nontangible assets (Grant, 2015), marketing ideas, marketing verbal and graphical communications, internal marketing codes (language) where tactical at best, price-oriented advertisement, general, not focused offers which

were not connected to a single marketing idea (Ries, 2005). Further, no marketing strategic thinking demonstrated, three out of the five SMEs did not have a website, Food for Thought had never advertised, ABC printing used for her business card a nonlicensed picture from the internet. The development and creation of new tactics, marketing ideas, marketing verbal and graphical communications, internal marketing codes (language) is usually associated with large companies due to lack of funds and knowledge SMEs possess. (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003, Wincent, 2005). This development usually translates to the organisations resources and involves among other things financial expenditures.

Table 6 (p. 94) demonstrates the vast changes the participants experienced, as all SMEs built or renewed their websites; adopted a marketing strategy (Chan & Mauborgne, 2006); adopted new media for advertising; or changed their marketing statements, sales pitch, and logo. As stated by a manager of one of the participating SME: “I have already implemented some ideas from the intervention sessions– new shirts with the business logo. Also, the logo is displayed on the website page” (Questionnaire 10.2.10). During the sessions marketing ideas changed from tactical thinking to strategic thinking, uniquely adjusted to the SME advantages and needs in the market (O’Dwyer et al., 2009). Such a change allowed tactic development with alliance to the strategic notion adopted, as Suzan stated:

I would say that after the process, the whole issue of marketing is taken a lot more seriously and there is a whole new start on this matter. You can see it in practical activities, the customizing of colours, the marketing language we have chosen, or the setting up of a website. (Suzan, Interview 37).

The following changes noted in the quantitative findings were arguably enabled by the KM interventions: increased awareness of marketing processes, from 3.60 to 4.13 ( $p = .06$ ) (Bowling 2007; Simpson et al., 2006); reduced mistaken marketing attitudes, from 3.01 to 2.53 ( $p = .09$ ) (Stojanovski, 2012); increase awareness of the need for marketing, from 3.29 to 3.69 ( $p = .05$ ) confirmed by the literature (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003), allowing for a greater internal validation.

4. SME organisational structural change, such as hierarchy, creation of new positions, position expansion.

The KM intervention is designed to be short and limited in time, and it does not use the traditional mode of frontal teaching, with accordance with findings suggesting the

satisfaction of the intervention's participants with the learning process, as well as achievement of the educational targets of the intervention when using unorthodox teaching methods like group learning (Kuster & Vila, 2006; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Quantitative findings indicate that there was a very slight increase in organisational marketing scores (from 2.11 to 2.28), the results of the *t* test indicated that this result was nonsignificant.

As to the structural level, the KM intervention did not prove efficient, namely because as the KM story did not provide an operation relating to hierarchy, and no change was noticed in the qualitative data as well, as stated by Bob: ‘Change in the structure of the organisation has still not been implemented. There is no change in the structure’ (Bob, Interview 40).

No change was made in standard procedures in the organisation to follow change of hierarchy, although some regulation relating to marketing issues did take place during the intervention. (Researcher, log entry, 25.01.10, 27/01/2010)

The KM intervention did prove to be effective in altering organisational culture in SMEs that participated on an appearances and communication (internal, external) level, manifested a combination of customs, symbols and forms (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011). As stated by Dor: “In the past, marketing ideas were not at all clear. They were very vague. It was the process that caused us to consolidate opinions” (Dor, Interview 34).

No new positions were created during the intervention. However, positions did expand as the SME gathered more knowledge (High & Pelling, 2003, Pizpatrick et al., 2010), more depth and responsibilities showed especially regarding the marketing and sales staff in the SME:

...yes, definitely, the marketing system works well because it is also part of the job, and it's not just marketing per se. For example, when our CEO talks to customers, she also markets. The marketing is ‘slipped in’ to the job. (Mark, Interview 36)

5. Personal empowerment, new energies towards marketing, renewed belief in the SME's abilities to improve and do better.

As mentioned above, prior to the intervention the researcher met with the participants of this research, as reported in Chapter 3. The common factor relevant to this topic is that the namely the managers personal feeling was not high, the attitude towards marketing was

suspicious and low energy to perform marketing tasks - unclear (Jones & Rowley, 2011, Litinen & Lukason, 2014). This attitude continued throughout the first session, as indicated by the findings and are expressed by Avner: "My overall confidence in marketing operations is only partial" (Avner, Interview 10).

However, a change in attitude was noticeable as the first session ended, as stated by Sara:

I would like to say that I am truly in a different place today, my advertising looks different, my ads are more dignified, more professional, more appealing. Now when I look back on my old ads, they were really amateurish and unprofessional. I really enjoyed all the meetings, I personally had a lot of fun there, and I really wanted to keep on going, keep on being supported... (Sara, Interview 32).

Throughout the sessions it was noticeable that a new energy towards marketing emerged, as well as renewed belief in the SME's abilities to improve and do better was high and affected the daily operations of the SME as well as the quality of knowledge attributed to the marketing scheme (Castro & Neira, 2005; Simsek & Heavey, 2011), as stated by Bob: "I am very pleased that I went through it, because my whole line of thinking has changed in terms of marketing..." (Bob, Interview 40). Dan has also stated that: "I definitely do have confidence. For the first time I believe in the system..." (Dan, Interview 30).

These new feelings helped the SME staff engage in a more convincing manner towards the market as evident:

I think that the intervention gave me more professional marketing tools. Customers like to feel that you are professional and that you know what you're talking about, and I used ideas from the intervention to give them that feeling. As a result, our customers did get excited, and they were affected. (Dina, Interview 43)

Furthermore, more funds were assigned to marketing expenses than before participating in the KM intervention (Hakimpoor, 2014). In addition, there was a noticeable increase in personal efforts and willingness to do more with the clients of the SME, as stated by Dina:

I think that the intervention gave me more professional marketing tools. Customers like to feel that you are professional and that you know what you're talking about, and I used ideas from the intervention to give them that feeling. As

a result, our customers did get excited, and they were affected. (Dina, Interview 43)

Next, the results of this study allows for drawbacks of the intervention and recommendations for improvement.

## **5.6 Critical Analysis of the Key Characteristics of the KM Intervention**

### **5.6.1 Resource efficiency**

One of the main benefits of the KM is the short duration of the intervention (see Appendix 2). The results were achieved after dedicating only a few hours, which is a key characteristic of the KM intervention programme since it addresses the barrier to learning, indicated by the research and existing literature, that impatience may be a barrier to effective organisational learning (Lydon & King, 2009; Zemke & Zemke, 1984). In addition, the brevity of the KM intervention makes it relatively inexpensive to implement. This could be appealing to SMEs, which have limited time, financial resources, and personnel resources to devote to more intensive and expensive interventions (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003). Furthermore, the managers participating in this study were willing to devote more resources to marketing after completing the KM intervention. The KM intervention programme should remain brief and affordable in order to ensure that SMEs have access to the resources necessary to implement their new knowledge.

### **5.6.2 Holistic Change**

This study showed that the KM is capable of affecting organisational change in a holistic way, leading to improvements in many parts of the organisation, including internal communications Category 2 and 3 (Figure 10, p. 83), externally facing marketing activities, external appearance, Category 4 (Figure 10, p. 83), and personal empowerment Category 6 (Figure 10, p. 83). Changes to these areas of the organisation can have a synergic effect on improving the organisations' performance.

### **5.6.3 Organisation-Specific Change**

The KM intervention programme successfully led to organisational change that was unique to each member firm, and the outcomes were slightly different in each case. Participants changed their marketing and sales communications, and graphic visibility. They also operated new tactics to support their new marketing strategy, as indicated by

the quantitative and qualitative data.

This implies that the KM intervention does not provide one-size-fits-all strategies, but rather it allows SMEs to create new knowledge that reflects their own particular situations and business context. Metaphors helped each organisation connect to a personal subjective level that facilitated unique learning outcomes. This may also be beneficial because participants did not need to fear complicated theories (Copley, 2008; Devins & Johnson, 2002; Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010; Watson, 2010). The use of metaphors also proved efficient for reducing resistance among managers as to receiving new information. This was not discussed in Mills work (2008) and recommendations, which suggested continues development and use of metaphors in the business community, as was done in this research. This point of departure made it possible to introduce relevant and advanced information to the organisations through the KM intervention programme.

#### **5.6.4 Equality**

One of the more interesting finding from this study was the extent to which the KM intervention programme led to self-empowerment among individual employees at all levels of the participant organisations. Category 6 (figure 10, p. 83) shows that employees did not feel that they were being pressured from above to adopt new marketing strategies, but rather felt that their personal and professional development was enabled through the KM intervention. Conveying knowledge within the organisation in an open manner, with no ranked hierarchy enabled self-empowerment and transmission of covert knowledge that is usually not shared. This approach enabled the organisations to create clear joint vision accompanied by applicable techniques for the purpose of prompt implementation. In a representative remark, Dan stated:

I definitely do have confidence. For the first time I believe in the system, even if it takes time. The way I see it we are still at the beginning of our way, and we do not see all the possible outcomes. But I really believe that, with time, it will create confidence and confidence gives direction.

#### **5.6.5 Training Method**

The literature review, presented in Chapter 2, indicated clearly that there is a need for business training that takes a practical and active approach (Felder & Brent, 2009; Kerin et al., 1987; Raelin, 1990). Despite this well-known need, training developers tend to rely heavily on traditional approaches when designing entrepreneurial interventions (Kuster &

Villa, 2006). Therefore, this project tried to test the utility of an intervention designed with *practical, active* learning in mind. Adult learners prefer a goal-oriented learning process that combines the knowledge they have accumulated and their experience (Pittaway et al., 2014).

The KM intervention programme meets these needs fully, and the workshop's success in preserving the participants' cooperation throughout all stages can perhaps be attributed to its focus on collaborative, practical learning. The researcher's observations indicated that, during the intervention, participants were actively interested in the material and participated in lively discussions on topics that came up during the workshop sessions and even after the session ended. Additionally, the success of this training method is clear from the in-depth interviews, where participants reported enjoying the training and indicated increase of their personal level of confidence in dealing with marketing issues.

#### **5.6.6 Group Structure**

The intervention's group structure enabled participants to activate and share knowledge regarding their organisations, in addition to the overt contents of the KM intervention programme. Many researchers have recommended this strategy, as indicated in the literature review (High & Pelling, 2003; Ranft & Marsh, 2008;). In the present study, the researcher observed synergy between the participants' latent and active knowledge, as indicated in Category 3 (Figure 10, p. 83), where participants Dura and Riki stressed an increased sharing of ideas and information after participating in the KM intervention. Also, the use of participants' experience during the sessions provided a context for their knowledge, thereby aiding the learning.

This finding supports the use of the KM intervention. Social learning is important in organisations, and social education settings can contribute to organisational learning (Fraser et al., 2007; Lange et al., 2011; Wenger, 2000). In summary, the effectiveness of the workshop apparently derives from the collaboration of the various elements in the workshop's structure, all of which encouraged the process of effective organisational learning.

The group structure, however, did have some drawbacks. The researcher's observations indicated that some group members tended to be more active in the training sessions than others, and some participants appeared not to take the learning seriously. To address these problems, it is recommended that the KM intervention be led by an assertive session

moderator, who can steer the group towards a state of effective learning. Also, although equality and a nonhierarchical setup are key characteristics of the KM intervention, the moderator should be careful that the manager does not feel that his or her position in the group is compromised.

### **5.6.7 Storyline Approach**

The KM intervention programme uses narrative storyline approach to convey marketing concepts to the participants. This approach is based on theoretical and empirical foundation, indicating that metaphoric language can be useful in teaching new concepts to adults (Bremer & Lee, 1997; Cornelissen, 2003; Durgee & Chen, 2006; Fillis & Rentschler, 2008; Mills, 2008). The results show that this approach was indeed effective, as indicated in the participants' in-depth interviews. Participants referred repeatedly to the metaphors introduced in the sessions, particularly the idea of knights. The kingdom metaphor was retained in postintervention interviews. Dan, for example, stated: "The concept of the 'knights' is a very strong thing for us, and constantly arises when thinking about advertising. We highlight it constantly." Others casually referred to their organisation members as *knights* during the postintervention interviews, indicating that they had integrated this concept into their daily vocabulary.

Despite the demonstrated success of the storyline metaphor approach, the results of the study yielded some potential areas for improvement. Below are successful aspects and suggested improvements to the stories and metaphors included in the KM intervention.

#### **5.6.7.1 Organisation Uniqueness**

As indicated by the quantitative assessment results, the definition of uniqueness using the castle and Knights metaphors was very effective. Additionally, as mentioned above, the idea of the knights was well remembered among participants. Nevertheless, the participants tended to see themselves as knights, rather than adopting the idea that knights are the strengths of the organisation (the intended meaning). Therefore, the research recommends that the idea of knights as individual members of an organisation be retained, and that the story be expanded by adding three treasures inside the castle. This will help learners to differentiate between themselves as members with unique roles in the organisation and the strengths of the organisation as a whole, which cannot be attributed to any single member. This new addition of knights as organisation members holds potential for expansion of the KM intervention, for example by requesting the learners to

record their knights' journeys in a logbook.

#### **5.6.7.2 Organisational Direction**

The elements of the kingdom story related to the future of the organisation, including the internal castle language, the graphical castle language, the castle slogan, castle agents, spreading the word, seasons, knowing the enemies, building a castle, castle future, and castle energies (see Appendix 1 for details), were highly effective, as the results of the post-assessment quantitative intervention showed. Participants' ideas about marketing strategies and activities were more correct, and they had fewer incorrect attitudes about marketing processes, showing that these metaphors achieved the goal of imparting marketing knowledge to participants.

#### **5.6.7.3 Tacit Knowledge**

One weakness in the metaphor approach was observed in the idea of the meeting of the castle (see Appendix 2), which participants may not have clearly understood. Although they reported having more frequent, more productive meetings after the KM intervention, there was no indication from the interviews that participants understood the obligatory, regular nature of castle meetings. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the castle meeting metaphor be expanded to include an obligation for knights (organisation members, as detailed in the above recommendation) to attend, and an increased emphasis on regular (monthly or weekly) occurrence of the meetings. This is important in order to create systematic change in organisational culture (Dvir & Oreg, 2007; Schein, 1990) and it also may help overcome the weakness of the KM intervention programme regarding fundamental culture change.

#### **5.6.8 Cognitive and Emotional Aspects**

Another element that had an impact on the success of the workshop sessions was the combination of cognition and emotion. Although the workshop dealt with the issue of rational fundamental change, which required cognitive processing of the problems, solutions, and consequences, participants reported that the experience they underwent was not only on a cognitive perceptual level but also on an emotional level, particularly given their comments in Category 6 (Figure 10, p. 83). The participants reported an emotional experience that was empowering and significant, which they perceived as very positive. The use of emotion in adult education to activate learning is supported by theoretical literature (Jones et al., 2014).

Despite the emotional engagement afforded by the KM intervention, the researcher observed that some participants were disengaged or did not take the learning seriously. A change to the story used in the intervention could address this issue. As mentioned above, the researcher recommends altering the knight storyline, which is at the centre of the KM intervention, by appointing the participants to be the knights rather than suggesting that they are controlling the knights. This change might help participants identify with their characters, thus making the intervention experience more personal, and thus enhance participants' level of emotional involvement.

### **5.6.9 Moderation**

The moderator is a key element of the KM intervention, and the moderator's role should be thoroughly considered. This study resulted in some important insights about the role of the moderator during the intervention sessions. First, it proved essential for the KM moderator to foster a positive relationship with organisational managers in order to monitor and alter (if necessary) the perceptions of the manager. This is crucial to the KM intervention success because if the manager is not an active participant who believes in the intervention, the success of the intervention could be compromised as participants perceive the manager's disengagement (Copley, 2008; Devins & Johnson, 2002; Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010). Indeed, manager resistance has been shown to be one of the significant barriers to effective organisational learning (Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010). Only the full cooperation of the manager will trigger long-term change in the organisation.

The researcher found, through observations of the training session, that a better relationship with the manager can be achieved by giving the manager the feeling that he or she is in charge and will not lose face with employees in the intervention process. Nurturing a relationship with the manager would ultimately make him or her more open to change brought by the KM intervention and encourage the manager to cooperate throughout the process. Because the KM intervention relies heavily on an assertive moderator, it is uniquely suited to overcome this barrier. As a result, the researcher reemphasizes the recommendation that KM moderators be trained in presentation skills and assertive communication.

The findings also show the need of an overall consensus among employees regarding the workshop process itself, and with the subsequently anticipated process of change. Zwan

et al. (2009) suggested that the more employees are resistant to the process, the less chance there is of obtaining maximum effectiveness. Following Zwan et al. (2009), the KM moderator should present the intervention as being under the employees' control.

The moderator is important to the success of the KM intervention as he or she fosters informal learning. According to the CPD framework, informal activities can be means through which specialists acquire their learning (Konkol, 2005). The researcher's observations and the results from the in-depth interviews indicate that participants were discussing KM concepts the session ended and engaged in informal development after the intervention concluded. In this case, the moderator encouraged participants to do so, which may have contributed to the success of the KM intervention. Therefore, the researcher recommends that all KM moderators follow Konkol's (2005) CPD theory by fostering informal learning opportunities.

Finally, the moderator should begin the KM intervention with a thorough understanding of the company and its vision, goals, ability to meet its goals, and internal management practices. The results of this study show that participants appreciated the ability to relate the concepts introduced during the KM intervention with the real world context of their business. Moderators who prepare for specific business contexts can therefore facilitate a more powerful and beneficial intervention.

#### **5.6.10 Long-Term Organisational Change**

According to the research findings, the KM intervention was not entirely successful in achieving long-term change of organisational culture in the participating firms. The changes that emerged tended to remain on the surface level, corresponding to Schein's (1990) external layer of organisational culture. In order to improve this aspect of the KM intervention, and in an attempt to ensure long lasting change, it is necessary to reinforce and extend the KM intervention to encourage participants to permanently change their organisations.

One way of achieving this could be to implement, as part of an extended KM intervention, follow-up sessions a few months after completing the intervention, with the aim of triggering a continuous process of change in the firms. Changing the design of the KM intervention so it includes more sessions might also contribute to its effectiveness. These changes are indicated by scholars like Wang and Ramiller (2011), who stressed the importance of integrated, long-term training in order to establish lasting changes.

Another possibility is to include, either as a part of the KM intervention or adjacent to it, motivational programmes encouraging and rewarding organisation members for implementing new marketing concepts and strategies. The findings of this research and existing literature indicates that such motivational programmes can be effective in extending new ideas and developing new habits, leading to more permanent change in organisational culture (Mount et al., 2006; Riketta, 2008). By using such a programme, managers could better survey organisational behaviour and monitor changes such as whether regular meetings are being held and whether information is being shared across the organisation (Schultz, 2010).

The abovementioned changes to the KM intervention storyline, namely changing organisation members to knights with documentation tools and implementing a digital database to facilitate information sharing, could also help integrate new knowledge into lasting culture change. Finally, as is discussed at greater detail below, future research should examine scientifically whether these changes are effective for creating long-term change.

## **5.7 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter presented a critical discussion of the findings focused on answers to the research hypothesis and questions.

The author's overall aim while conducting this research was to create, implement and observe the outcome of the KM intervention programme. The results of this evaluation research on experimental CPD metaphoric intervention programme for small and medium sized businesses have generated some important tentative recommendations relating to ways that can support SMEs in a competitive modern economy of hypercompetitive markets (Gottinger, 2009), and it offers an important practical tool for doing so. Given the research findings, the Kingdom Marketing intervention programme appears to be worthy of wider use among public programmes and institutions interested in promoting the well-being of relatively small and medium businesses.

In the following chapter, research objectives will be discussed followed by the conclusions, after which the plan for dissemination of the research findings is presented, followed by the significance of the project, the originality of this research, and the implications for future research. The chapter concludes with comments on professional and personal change and a summary.

# **Chapter 6:**

## **Summary and Conclusions**

## **6.1 Introduction**

This study investigated the processes and outcomes of the KM intervention programme for SMEs. Five Israeli based SMEs participated in this study. The author developed this intervention after combining his practical experience, research from the field and the need to evaluate the proposed intervention (KM) empirically.

Following are the research objectives:

## **6.2 Research Objectives**

The study was designed to meet the following research objectives:

The objectives of the quantitative portion of the study were:

- Use a closed-ended questionnaire to determine participants' pre- and post-intervention scores for the following five variables: (1) awareness of marketing processes, (2) mistaken marketing attitudes, (3) incorrect marketing process beliefs, (4) organisational marketing skills, (5) marketing need awareness.
- Conduct quantitative analysis to determine whether participants' scores were significantly different pre- versus post-intervention.

The objective of the qualitative portion of this study was to understand participants' subjective perceptions of the KM intervention in order to describe the organisational change process resulting from the intervention. I accomplished this as follows:

- Conducted pre- and post-intervention semistructured interviews to explore participants' perceptions of the intervention and generate rich descriptions of the organisational change process
- Collected open-ended feedback and researcher notes during the process of the intervention to understand the process of change on a day-to-day basis

The quantitative research objectives were achieved, using a closed-ended questionnaire. This researcher was able to score the elected variables and further show a quantitative result for the pre, post intervention outcome.

The qualitative research objectives were achieved; this report portrays the process of change in organisations and the participating individuals of the SME. These processes should be studied, as they might have an impact on organisations and organisation members' behaviour, as well as long term stable change of these behaviours.

This objective was met due to considerations allowing the researcher to use the right research tools and analyse. This study offer several recommendation as to future research and continues intervention with SME for a greater realization for long term change within the SME.

The change that is portrayed in this study appeared on different levels and it enabled the participants of this research to experience positive change on a personal and organisational level.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

The innovative approach and methods of the KM intervention programme and its training and development processes appear to have been effective in many ways for those who participated in the study, as indicated by the findings. It empowered participants in important ways and united them around common marketing goals, visions, and operative plans for the organisation. Although changes at the organisational level appear to have been more limited, it is also the case that individual change is a catalyst for organisational change and growth (Prajogo & McDermott, 2011).

As a whole, the KM intervention programme was successful in generating organisational learning related to marketing knowledge and practical marketing tools. Among the individual and personal changes documented in the analysis are the following:

1. No resistance to learning new marketing concepts by SME members;
2. Conceptual and cognitive changes in the intervention participant's priority assigned to marketing functions and operations.
3. Enhanced understanding of the essence of managing marketing on all levels of the organisation;
4. Clearer and more focused definitions of roles and functions with regards to marketing operations;
5. Change relating to feelings of personal empowerment and professional capacity;
6. Change in perceptions of how the organisation is viewed by others in the field, its reputation, and perceived professionalism.

Structural changes or differences in organisational culture were less evident. Nonetheless, we can point to the following changes:

1. Reported improvements of marketing tasks and channels of inter-organisational communication;
2. Dramatic changes in the appearance, the “look” of the organisation and communication inside and outside the SME.

Knowledge management develops into a vital factor necessary in influencing the level of success experienced in an organisation. The integration of KM strategies influences the knowledge capacity of the organisation. Through KM intervention, the organisation ensures continual integration of new operational marketing processes that enhance the efficiency levels experienced in the organisation. Additionally, the process influences the analysis of the existence knowledge processes adopted in the organisation, which enhance the areas lacking such knowledge. The development of a link between knowledge management and culture remains instrumental in the identification of the impact of culture on the development of enhanced levels of knowledge in the organisation. The integration of the KM intervention programme enhanced organisational growth through the provision of an opportunity to expand the existent operational alternatives. Additionally, the process influences efficient organisation of the knowledge and management practices to enhance the effectiveness levels attached to organisational productivity. The process will influence the development of viable organisational strategies and partnerships considered instrumental in the development of the company’s competitive advantage in the market. The integration of KM influences the development of a common language between the management, employees and customers, which enhances the efficiency attached to the organisation’s operational processes. Furthermore, the process influenced the recognition levels experienced in the organisation in relation to the level of teamwork integrated in the different departments (Dalkir, 2013).

Regarding the process of the intervention itself, the results of the research showed significant benefits as a result of the KM intervention programme:

1. KM training sessions enabled the creation of new knowledge. The intervention appeared to have given rise to a common language of discourse and conceptual thinking within the SME team that made it easier to discuss strategy and tactics and design a marketing scheme. The first area of change, as indicated by the literature (Fuchs, 2007), was on the cognitive level: Concepts were learned and

gradually internalized.

2. The SME team learned to identify core capabilities and adopted them as a marketing strategy. The entire team, and not only those directly involved in marketing, developed an orientation to and an awareness of marketing, not only on the cognitive level, but on the emotional level as well.
3. A gap in the process was observed between cognitive changes on the individual level and behavioural changes on the organisational level. While there was clear evidence of internalization and utilization of new knowledge in team discussions, implementation and application of knowledge on an organisational structure was perceived as more difficult.

Based on the results of this study, I have recommended several alterations to the KM intervention programme in order to improve its utility for use with SMEs. First, I recommend that the concept of knights be incorporated as organisational members and the concept of treasures be added. This will help engage participants and clarify key distinctions. Second, I recommend that a guide for trainers be developed to ensure that all KM moderators have the knowledge and assertive communication skills required for success. Third, I recommend that more emphasis be placed on the obligatory nature of regular meetings, and that a digital system be implemented for record keeping and dissemination of information.

In addition, I recommend that the KM intervention be used in conjunction with long-term intervention strategies such as follow-up meetings or motivational programmes designed to help new marketing awareness translate into broad organisational culture change. Its inability to influence organisations at a value and assumptions level was the main weakness of the KM intervention programme identified in this study. Following this recommendation can overcome this weakness and make the KM intervention programme a much more useful intervention programme for SMEs.

## **6.4 Dissemination**

The ultimate impact of a research study like the current study depends on the effectiveness of the researcher's strategy for disseminating the results (Harmsworth & Turpin, 2000). With respect to dissemination of findings of this research, the author's objective was to reach three audiences: the academic community, the community of business executives, and SMEs themselves. In order to achieve this, I intend to carry out a

number of activities simultaneously: publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals; marketing of the model to as many SMEs as possible through my website and other social networks available today; and professional lecturing to diverse audiences.

The author's dissemination strategy is also based on an analysis of interested parties. The parties interested in this WBP are the researcher's colleagues, the staff and educational personnel of the University of Derby, SME researchers around the world, marketing researchers around the world, instructional designers and business trainers, and the SME community, especially in Israel.

On a personal level, my goal is to be well known in the business world as a leading marketing figure. Based on the results of this work-based project (WBP), I therefore intend to publish a book on the KM intervention and to continue developing the proposed model over time. For the author of this thesis, it is important to convey a unique message, and to channel it effectively and in a clear manner. In order to achieve this, the knowledge must be disseminated using the right channels and tools.

The following paragraphs describe specific dissemination plans and their aims.

**Mailing lists** (electronic and regular) are effective for creating a network and receiving feedback. Thus, I will create a few mailing lists with different segmentation (e.g., academic lists, marketing specialists, SME owners and professional news media) for disseminating the results of this WBP. The mailing list messages may be connected to the WBP's dedicated website for interactive communications.

**Lectures** may take longer to arrange but are highly regarded and can attest to the status of the WBP. The lecture circuit is well established, and business lectures differ from academic lectures and address different audiences. Lectures provide face-to-face encounters with target audiences that can improve feedback, in-depth understanding. Furthermore, they add depth to the personal experience of the researcher. Therefore, the author plans to give lectures regarding the findings of this study.

**Articles** are a very common dissemination channel. The researcher has to have a clear grasp of the readers and of the demands of the magazines and/or journals in order to maintain good results. This action will help disseminate the outcome of the WBP to people like SME owners and marketing specialists, and should facilitate transfer from the academic world to the business world.

**The Internet** will also be used to disseminate these findings. The researcher of this WBP

has an established website (<http://www.km-sme.com>), which will present the results of this WBP. Different target audiences will be represented on the website and the researcher will post information about this research on the site.

Table 7 below, summarizes the dissemination tactics to fit the strategy discussed above:

Table 7: *Dissemination Tactics*

Purpose	Target Groups	Vehicle	Method	Timing	Responsibility of
Setting up main WBP website	WBP business	Using contacts from the field	Internet	5/2008	The researcher
SEO process setting up newsletter	Academic researchers	Professionals Building contacts. DB	Open forums Business site		Professionals
Introduce research concept to global SME	WBP business	Publish a short article on the WBP website. Newsletter email: (direct approach) SEO Lectures	SME organisation in Israel and abroad.	12/2008	The researcher
Outcome report	WBP business	Lectures Publish an article on the WBP website and magazines Newsletter email:	Agent WBP website Practice Business site	10/2015	The researcher

## 6.5 Significance of the WBP

SMEs have been defined in this WBP as independent business organisations whose impact on the industry in which they exist is relatively small (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003; Reijonen & Komppula, 2007). They have been shown to constitute the foundation upon which society and its economy are built (Buttle et al., 2006).

However, the nature of SMEs is problematic. On the one hand, they are a major driving force for economic growth in many countries worldwide; they are an impetus for individual entrepreneurship, for the development of new job opportunities and work places, and for the country's GDP. On the other hand, SMEs are significantly more vulnerable than large businesses to market difficulties and fluctuations. Therefore, many fail or are forced to terminate their activities prematurely (Matthews, 2007).

The vulnerability of SMEs is due primarily to managerial failure. The majority of individual entrepreneurs who establish SMEs are not experts in management. These individuals have no formal business training and they often rely on their own intuition (Ahmad & Seet, 2009). Lack of marketing knowledge contributes to SME business failure (McCartan-Quinn & Carson, 2003).

The aim of this study was to examine and evaluate the KM intervention outcome, designed by the researcher as a practical aid for managers and staff in SMEs in order to improve their understanding of marketing concepts and acquisition of marketing skills. This goal is accomplished by using metaphoric intervention, thereby preventing premature failure and allowing for the possibility of growth. CPD creates the means through which SME organisations can maintain, improve and broaden the personal and professional skills of their leading staff (The Chartered Institute of Professional Development, 2000). For the organisations involved in the study, the KM intervention has done just that.

Furthermore, this WBP is significant because it has yielded insights into key factors that are successful in promoting organisational learning. The results showed that the KM intervention has certain key characteristics that contributed to its success, including its resource efficiency, its equality, and its focus on holistic, organisation-specific change. These characteristics, if applied to other interventions and in other organisational development settings, could help practitioners create more lasting, more meaningful change.

## **6.6 Originality**

The literature reviews presented various interventions in the sphere of organisational culture and different methods concerning marketing. As a result, the academic world can clearly identify SME problems on different levels and offer different solutions with

excellent outcomes. The variety of solutions available makes it hard for SME managers to choose which to implement. Furthermore, SME managers have a distrust of academic solutions (Copley, 2008; Devins & Johnson, 2002; Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010). It is also hard for SME managers to clearly see the connection between cultural organisation behaviour and marketing.

The above creates a situation in which there is a solid body of knowledge with regards to SME failures, which should improve the current state of SME's as reported here, on the one hand. On the other hand, SMEs continue to fail. The critical missing part is the "pipeline" connecting this knowledge to SMEs in a practical manner. To achieve this, metaphors were used as part of the KM intervention. As Mills (2008) stressed, the metaphor has not been fully explored as a tool for developing marketing knowledge. The KM intervention tool uniquely utilises a metaphor storyline approach, allowing SMEs to access new information in a way that is barrier free, consented, coherent and unique to the SME. The evidence of this study, indicating the success of this approach, constitutes an original contribution to marketing literature because it empirically demonstrates the utility of metaphor as a marketing learning strategy

Additionally, the literature review yielded few existing articles related to SME marketing tool. This indicates a lack of practical interventions aimed at improving marketing strategies specifically among SMEs. Therefore, the successful implementation of the KM intervention and the positive results obtained in a short period are innovative.

## **6.7 New Knowledge**

My study contributed new knowledge in the area of SME marketing. The KM intervention is effective in realizing significant gains in marketing knowledge within SMEs.

Mills (2008) called for continued research on the use of metaphors in the business environment, especially within SMEs. This study responded to that call and indicated that learners within SME context may benefit from the use of metaphors to deliver new marketing knowledge. Using a storyline approach (Solstad, 2009) as a learning method with SMEs was also successful using the KM intervention. This study is one of the first to provide evidence of the success of the storyline approach.

The KM intervention is practical and required only four meetings for the participants of the research to achieve new marketing knowledge. In the literature, it is documented that

interventions may take longer than four days to achieve results (Lyadon & King, 2009), but this study demonstrates that gains in marketing knowledge are achievable in a short time.

According to McCartan-Quinn & Carson (2003), managers feel that training will be a long and expensive procedure for the organization thus, forgoing it in most cases. Therefore, the results of this study may help managers overcome resistance to training programs.

The KM intervention allowed participants to gain new understandings of complicated theories using a metaphoric storyline approach. Additionally, the KM intervention allowed participants to express their tacit knowledge and share it with their work colleagues, as Fox (2007) recommended. Hence, the intervention allowed new knowledge to be created within the SMEs.

## **6.8 Implications for Future Research**

The current study filled a gap in the knowledge relating to a field of study that has been neglected: marketing at SME businesses. There is a vast body of literature related to marketing in the big business arena, but a paucity of research related to SMEs. This study has shown that a unique approach is needed to address the needs of SMEs, as they have to face some unique circumstances in the market. More studies are needed that focus specifically on practical marketing for SMEs.

Another line of research suggested is the ways change can be made in SMEs as regards to organisational learning. This study has gathered some knowledge on this subject, but more remains to be known. Further research will be necessary to create innovative intervention programmes to assist SMEs in better coping with marketing weaknesses. Business consultants to SMEs often lack scientific knowledge, so more research should be dedicated to this subject.

Finally, this study has only measured the outcome of the KM intervention on the short term. More research is recommended to assist the long-term impact of the intervention, particularly if the recommendations for modifying the KM are implemented. Further study could help improve the KM intervention's effectiveness over the long term.

## **6.9 Professional and Personal Change**

The process of writing this thesis constituted a reflection on the author's personal and professional life. On a professional level, when the author began his studies, he had two

main goals: first, to improve the financial position by means of a future degree, and second, to improve his knowledge of marketing. Writing this WBP required hard work and the acquisition of new knowledge. This new knowledge led the author to several realizations, that affected not only his work but also his life.

It clarified the meaning of multidimensional thinking, philosophical thinking, and reflection. These new tools have already helped the author greatly in working with clients. Instead of looking at clients' issues through a marketing prism, the author can now look at the same issue in a multidimensional way. This change helped to develop greater empathy towards the clients, with the ability to really listen and be more patient.

Additionally, ethical issues are now much more dominant in how the author perceives his clients. He has come to realize that there was a need for better tools, which led him to take part in professional training in psychology and organisational psychology for one year. This proved to be of great significance and helped in developing the knowledge the author currently possesses.

Before beginning the process of this WBP, the author read only professional books at the rate of 3-6 a year. Now he reads more than double that number, in addition to many dissertations. He also attends seminars and webinars to better understand the need for knowledge. He has developed seminars in his field and he performs such seminars on a monthly basis for SMEs, at a very low cost. This has led to better exposure of the author's business, and he is invited to conventions as an expert. He manages his business clients completely differently –each client is related to as a case study in order to create knowledge, and for the benefit of future and current clients.

Thanks to these changes, the author has a measured success rate of 86%, much better than in the past. His views have changed regarding the way he should use the KM intervention: not just sell it to governments for financial gain since now the author believes that it is crucial to use this tool as widely as possible for the sake of SMEs everywhere. Today, the author has more clients than in the past and they experience better results than in the past.

And on a more personal note relating the author's personal life, he has made a big change, namely on two levels: towards his family and when encountering a new personal hobby. As to his family, he feels that these newly developed tools help to better understand them and their needs. It is now easier for to help them with their needs, troubles, and personal

issues, when necessary. The author feels that he can understand incidents that occur in his children's lives thanks to improved research skills and an ability to locate texts that describe childhood development. This helps to communicate better within the family, explain issues, which helps to gain a better understanding as well.

**Following are professional recommendations** derived from this research study as to the survival and continued growth of SMEs. The government may change the outcome of SMEs and induce growth and prosperity by requiring SMEs to hire a marketing manager. For example, government regulations decree that SMEs must submit financial reports and pay taxes every month. This means that the accounting function has an operational position within SME operations on a monthly basis. Government regulations can require a similar position for marketing; for instance, when applying for a business license, SMEs can be asked to participate in a short marketing course. Additionally, the regulations may state a required number of courses in marketing on annual basis.

Another recommendation is that the educational system should consider teaching marketing on two main levels: a theoretical level for marketing professionals who deal with marketing for research purposes; and a pragmatic level for those who deal with marketing for operational uses, namely in the business arena. This will help advance marketing knowledge to a new level.

## **6.10 Summary and Conclusions**

Writing this chapter sharpened the importance of dissemination for the author, realizing that dissemination of a paper is a process which, in order to achieve it, needs to be done by careful steps and answer for myself certain questions before disseminating.

Through the author's work with SME businesses in Israel, he witnessed radical change in the way SMEs deal with business crises is required. The author believes that this change has to come from within. Academic literature has not yet presented a marketing theory and practice which is suitable for SME businesses, as much academic effort is given to larger businesses. The KM intervention was designed in the field, in accordance with knowledge gathered in the field from concrete experience. It also enables SME managers and organisation members to use their tacit knowledge and their unique strengths to build unique marketing strategies that are different in every case.

Thus, every feature of the intervention was designed to effectively educate SME staff of marketing issues, in a manner that is practical and relevant to their everyday challenges in

the office and which will make the learning experience enjoyable. The results of this study show that most of the goals of the KM intervention were achieved, and that it can be a useful tool for broad adoption.

Finally, it must be said that the subjective feelings of satisfaction and gratitude expressed by the participants throughout the study strongly support the conclusion that the KM intervention succeeded to a significant extent in achieving predefined objectives. Based on the tentative results of this research, the author concludes that there is an urgent need for further use and development of the KM intervention programme.

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## **Appendix 1: Intervention Background**

The KM intervention and Development Programme is aimed at enhancing corporate knowledge within the context of the client's business environment thus enhancing SME's marketing capacity. This is accomplished through the use of metaphors and business simulations that provide participants with opportunities to develop skills and strategies necessary for their personal and professional development. Workshop sessions are held whenever possible at the offices or other makeshift location of the SME itself, with CEO, other managers and staff participating as a team. (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2000).

The programme draws on the body of knowledge accumulated in the fields of marketing and Continued Professional Development and adapts this knowledge to SMEs, to characteristics of their managers and to the unique cultural context, as I have come to understand them. It involves a series of meetings with SME executives and employees in which they learn to question their past practices, to work as a team or as individuals with specific tasks, to listen to each other and reach decisions that can be supported, to formulate a vision and identify the milestones that will mark their business objectives. The KM experience leads them to the development of critical marketing decisions and goals for implementation as part of a coherent and sustainable marketing plan, which culminates with the execution and evaluation of the plan.

The intervention offers a background story which when adapted to the training group becomes the basis for the various parts of the KM training and development experience. The training and development simulation is constructed in a manner by which on the one hand there is an input of data and on the other hand there is an output of metaphors.

The input data consists of a metaphor that describes a problem that requires the review of possible solutions and requires the reaching of decisions. The metaphor has within it embedded marketing information that is based on research and documented successes from the marketing field. The participants are asked to consider the information they have accessed and decide whether to use it or not in the given situation. All decisions, whether pro or con, must be justified. Once the method is chosen, it is then adjusted and adapted to fit the metaphoric style of the story's narrative. (Shown here in figure 1)

**Figure 1:**



The use of metaphors is crucial to the KM intervention programme, as they are used to simplify the understanding and analysis of the organizational position in the market, encouraging staff members to find solutions to problems and implement organizational change.

Underlying each KM story or metaphor is a critical aspect of marketing that is put in to practice in the course of responding to a series of tasks/questions, for example defining the unique characteristics of the castle within the kingdom in a way that differentiates it from others, development an internal language for within the castle, graphic illustration that complies with the castle marketing strategy, and on-going operations, etc. The tasks within the kingdom are linked to a series of expected and measurable organizational outcomes such as the core capacity of the SME, the internal language and the on-going management of the organization as perceived by participants.

**Figure 2**– below describes the tasks and associated, anticipated organizational outcomes.

	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>KM task</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>
1	The School Story	Definition of uniqueness and differentiation in the castle	Identification of unique core abilities relative to other companies

	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>KM task</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>
2	Word ownership.	Translation of uniqueness into marketing language	Marketing and communication codes
3	Internal Castle language.	Development of a common internal language	Organizational identity based on core abilities
4	Graphical castle language.	Graphic language development for the castle	Uniform appearance
5	Castle Slogan.	Development of a castle slogan.	Operationalization of Strategic concept
6	Castle agents.	Flow of information through castle agents	Word of mouth marketing.
7	Spread the word.	Circuit advertising- For castle	Effective Advertisement
8	The villagers.	Know your castle customers.	Effective allocation of resources to client development
9	Seasons	Seasonal times In the kingdom	Managerial tool for allocation of resources on basis of external factors
10	Excellent castle	Orange index (benchmark) in the kingdom	Marketing goals and aspirations
11	Meeting of the castle	Law of monthly castle meetings	Enhancing cultural climate

	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>KM task</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>
12	Know the enemies.	Castle Business Intelligence	Organizational knowledge of market place variables. Identification of competition
13	Castle future	Cost of War	Awareness of differences between marketing and business development.
14	Building a castle	Innovation in the castle	Managerial skills for developing innovative products and services for the market.
15	Castle energy	Castle marketing energy	on-going marketing efforts

In the course of this metaphor-based intervention programme, it is expected that, see figure 3.

**figure3:**

Kingdom Marketing desired affects

1. No clear understanding of the organization core competence
2. Using 'me too' strategy
3. No clear definition of a visual and textual identity.
4. No slogan or a laconic one.
5. No clear understanding of advertising operation for their organization
6. Un clear business concept definition
7. Not acting as a 'Learning organization'
8. no tools to manage the marketing side of the organization
9. organization

1. Section 1
2. Section 1
3. Section 3 & 4
4. Section 5
5. Section 9
6. Section 1 ,2 , 3, 4 , 5 ,
7. Section 10
8. Section 6 – 12

KM-Intervention Programmeme:

Date	email	Tel	Position in the organization	Full name

## Kingdom Marketing:



<https://pixabay.com/en/noble-castle-hofburg-imperial-palace-789501/>

### **Background:**

The story of the isolated castle in a large kingdom that includes three knights with special powers represents the organization (seminar participants).

**The goal of the Castle is two-fold—to attract as many inhabitants as possible to by the merchandise and at the same time protect the area from attack by competing castles in the area.**

The activities of the game take place over time, the participants obeys the rules of the game and is assisted by the tools available.

Below are the knights in the process of defence and attack. The Castle operates in an environment defined by clear game rules. The game has four stages during which participants will be asked to engage in various activities.

Activities are made up of four stages that are addressed in the course of four meetings.

1. Critical definitions for the stage defined as Building the Castle.
2. Definitions on the subject of visualization in the stage referred to as “Decorating the Castle.”
3. Definitions on the subject of daily life in the Castle-referred to as the operative stage of administering the Castle.

4. General rules of the game.

Each stage of the seminar will be associated with metaphors in the form of questions and narratives that enable participants to arrive at answers and the full implementation of a market plan that is geared for the core abilities of the organization.

metaphor/narrative	phase
1,2	Building the castle
3,4,5	Decorating the castle
11,6,7,8,9,10	Administration
12,13,14,15	Rules of the game

FIRST MEETING

1. **The School Story**—finding the uniqueness and differentiating elements of the castle- Participants will be asked to define the importance of the organizational ability according to weight in percentages.

The Metaphor:

Do you recall in the school where you studied students who will always be remembered for specific characteristics: the most attractive, the most overweight, the most affluent, the poorest, the most athletic, the strongest, the “coolest”

The strongest kid, for example, will be remembered as such because there were no other students who could compete with him for strength.



<https://pixabay.com/en/knight-armor-the-middle-ages-1571103/>

Ask yourself which of the following characteristics are most significant for you castle in keeping with the metaphor:

Most resilient	Best quality	Best performance	Most trustworthy
----------------	--------------	------------------	------------------

Cheapest/best payment terms	Best value for the money	Fastest	Most secure
Most comfortable	Easiest to use	most stylish	Most prestigious
The most honest	The coolest	location- Proximity to clients	Most technological
Other (explain)	Most thorough	Most hygienic	Most accessible

Participants will be asked to describe their knight.

Comment	weight	characteristic	knight #
			1
			2
			3

Remember: Each knight must meet the test of the characteristic. It is not enough to claim he possesses the characteristic.

Example:

- 1 Fastest %70 –
- 2 location %15 –
- 3 Service %15-

In the exercise itself, each ability/characteristic will be considered as a knight; each kingdom will have three knights; each knight three specific abilities with fixed weights. Later, participants will be asked to make different moves with the help of the knights at their disposal.

## 2. Ownership of words—product, feeling, image

Castle participants are required to define for the participating organization the words over which they will attempt to take ownership of the words in the client's mind.

According to conventional theory, concepts are stored in the memory on a three dimensional grid with each concept connected to many others. When one concept is activated in the memory, others in the semantic network become operative as well at

different intensities. Intensity is a function of proximity to the original concept that is activated.

In the first circle of concepts are organizational characteristics/products/services/

In the second circle are emotional values;

In the third circle are values related to image.

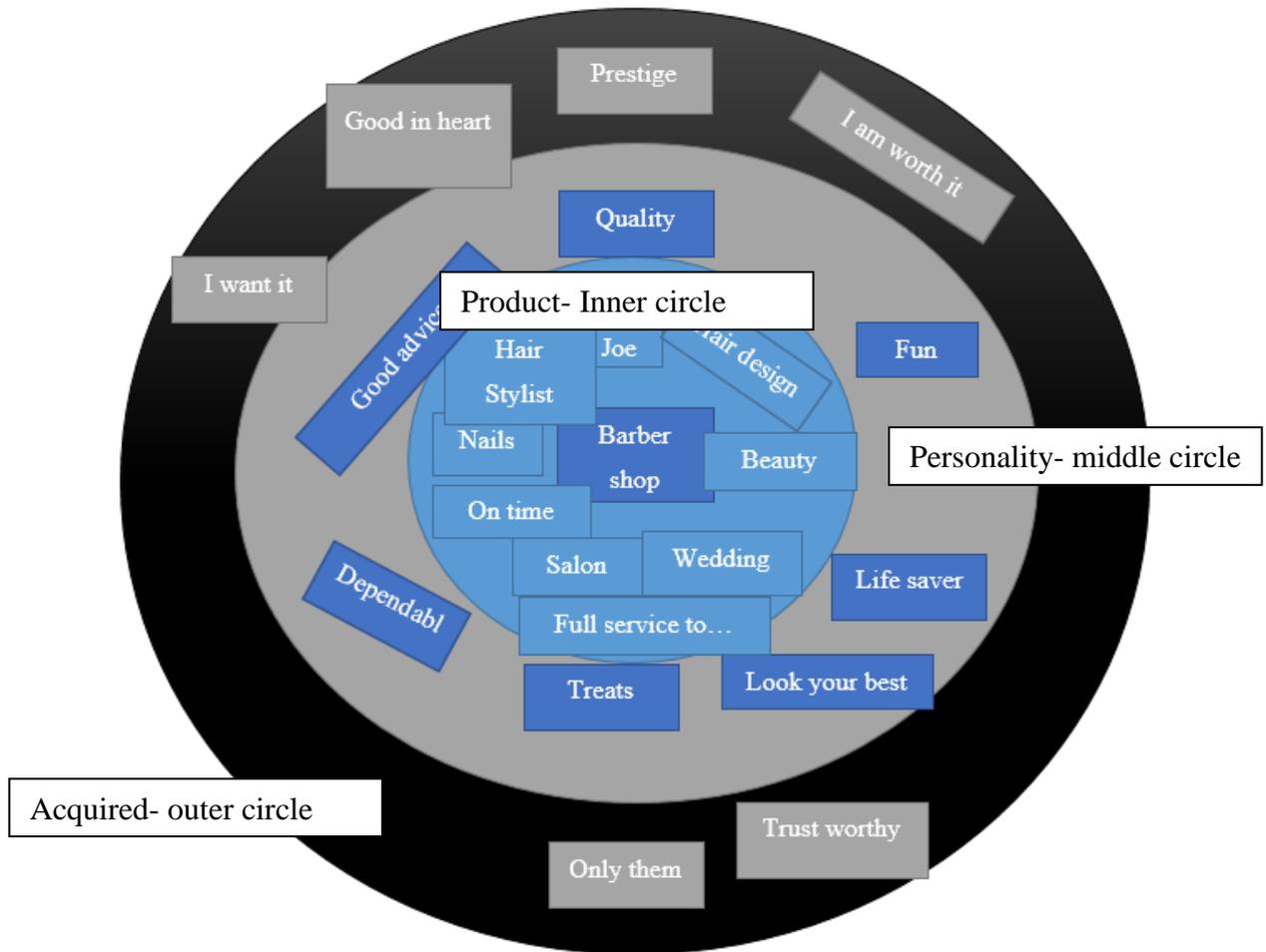


<https://pixabay.com/en/middle-ages-fight-sword-fighting-1792817/>

Example

The model is based on:

Parallel processing theory "of Anderson (Anderson, 1987)



Please complete the map

Third circle Image/reputation	Second circle- feelings	First circle- products

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_

This concludes this seminar.

**Reflective questions**

Reflection= targeted thinking about activities carried out in the past with an aim of improvement for the future.

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the first stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us/ The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours. The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

What thoughts arise following the seminar?

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What personal statements has the seminar engendered for me?

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What breakthroughs have I made in terms of my organization?

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## SECOND MEETING

### 1. Internal language-Castle Uniqueness

The task for the Castle is to define a unique language that will serve the Castle operators vis a vis various clients and other interested parties, such as suppliers, service providers and so on.

The internal language must be uniform, unique and well developed in all Castle marketing communication, names of products, services, sales pitches, etc.

The internal language should be grounded in a number of dimensions:

- The name of the company, for example, Pizza Meter
- A unique idea or content theme such as Greek mythology, sport, cinema
- A current trend
- Creativity

In this exercise, participants should make use of those who are familiar with the organization, its clientele, abilities, etc. There is no limit on the number of participants by seniority or status.

Please describe the new language.

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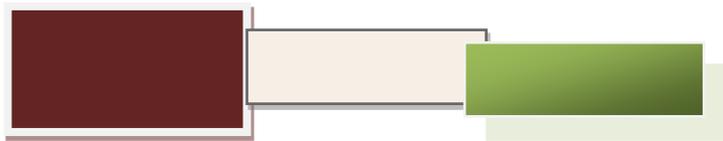


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2. The development of a graphic language for the Castle- the law of the 3 colors.  
 The goal of this exercise is to define a visual language for the Castle that is unique and can serve all power brokers in the company in all related to marketing communication. The visual language must be uniform and well presented in everything related to marketing of the company' products, services and sales pitch, etc.  
 Participants will be asked to assign importance to colors in terms of weight in percentages.  
 For example:  
 Primary color- 50% Dark burgundy #632523  
 Secondary color 1- 25% off white # f7eee5  
 Secondary color 2- Light green #7a9445  
 Supporting colors can be added as background to the primary colors that were chosen using Photoshop.



comments	font	color	weight	Description
				Secondary color #1
				Secondary color #2
				Hebrew font
				English font
				Additional language

Tip: The visual language should be distinguishable from the competitors

**3. Slogan- Strategic and professional advantage**

Castle actors will be asked to define a marketing slogan for the Castle that will be proudly flown in every place and all communications concerning marketing.

The slogan should be grounded in the following dimensions:

1.strategy of the Castle vis a vis client—for example if the main advantage is price, it

should be reflected in the slogan

2. Professional advantage for the clients—e.g. speedy delivery

Novel idea—for example, at Pizza Pizza for every pizza ordered you get one free as reflected in the slogan

3. Vision and originality, as Sony stated when the company started, that they will prove to the world that the Japanese products are better than the American ones.

Tip: a good slogan is a catchy one.

Please write the new slogan

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Explain the significance of the slogan

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<https://pixabay.com/en/black-castle-flags-silhouette-2026124/>

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Participant \_\_\_\_\_

This concludes this seminar.

### Reflective questions

Reflection= targeted thinking about activities carried out in the past with an aim of improvement for the future.

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the second stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us/

The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours.

The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

What thoughts arise following the seminar?

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What personal statements has the seminar engendered for me?

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What breakthroughs have I made in terms of my organization?

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General notes as to the KM?

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### Third Meeting

#### 1. Flow of information

Creation of Castle Agents, identification of clientele, transmitting information and creating positive remorse.

The aim of this exercise is to develop information transmitters within the Castle, word of mouth marketing, and loyal customers who prefer our castle over others.

In order to create a positive flow of information, which will highlight the uniqueness of the Castle among employees, suppliers, service providers and others, participants will be asked to prepare a table that maps significant individuals who can be called upon to spread positive information.

Each participant will be asked to identify significant agents according to the following categories

Example

Frequency of interaction	Vis a vis	category
Daily	customers	employees
weekly	management; workers	supplier A
monthly	management	supplier B
	workers; management	customers

Following the identification of agents for the castle, the next task is to define messages for the agents to transmit. These must be based on relative advantages of the Castle, success stories, event or meetings that are planned for the future, advantages of the product or services supplied by the Castle, stories related to the power of the Castle, etc.

#### Definition of first message

Comme	Record	Transm	Addr	Messag	Date
-------	--------	--------	------	--------	------

nts	ed respons es	itted by	essed to	e	

## 2. The Circle advertising method

The goal of this exercise is to develop within the Castle a culture of advertising and exposure to the marketing media at a level that brings a return on the investment and results. In order to generate effective advertising over time, participants will be asked to build an advertising campaign according to the following rules:

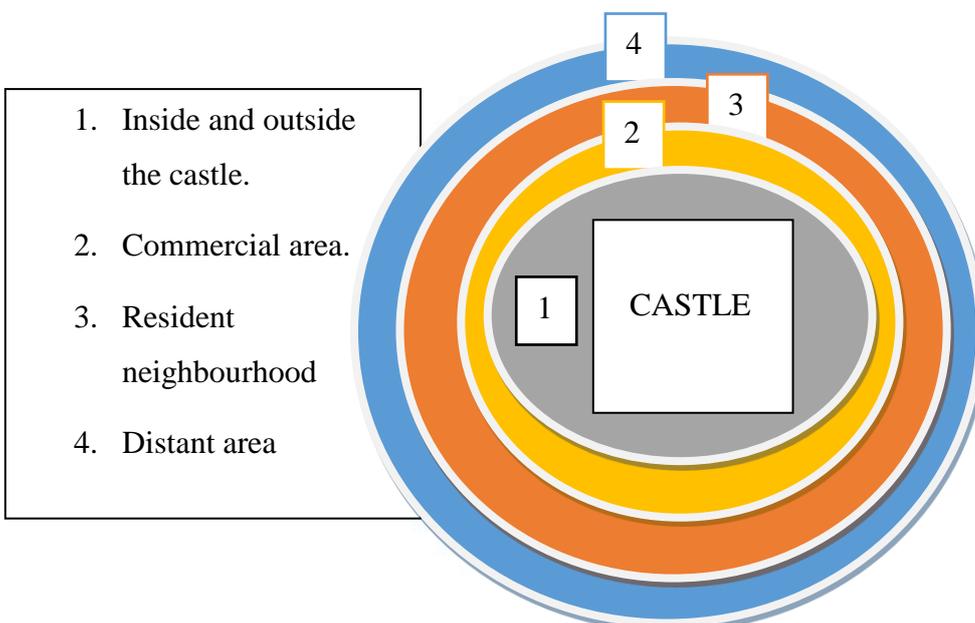
- a. According to sections 1,2,3,4 and5
- b. According to circular advertising:

Rules of the circle advertising:

- **The Circle advertising method** is based on accessibility of resources, which are influenced by geographic proximity to the Castle. Therefore, highest accessibility is within the castle itself
- The further away the lower the effectiveness of marketing
- Frequency of advertisement must be at least 6 times
- Integrated media campaign (IMC) based on several types of media

Example:

Let us assume that the Castle is located within a small commercial centre in a large city. The mapping of advertisement should look as follows:



### Managing the Castle campaign

C o m m e n t s	M e s s a g e		Ex p o s u r e		L o c a t i o n				C a m p a i g n #

### 3. Castle customers

The goal of the exercise is to develop a precise understanding and preference for operative activities vis a vis various castle clientele. This understanding will enable managers to get the best return on their investments and bet results.

Participants will be asked to identify types of customers and variables related to clientele according to the following dimensions:

C o m m e n t s		M e d i a c h a n n e l	Impor tance			Characteristi c#1	G r o u p o f c u s t o m e r s


**4. Seasonal aspects for the Castle**

Every castle has seasons that are more active and those that are less so. Generally, these seasonal differences influence consumer behaviors of those who make use of the Castle at a level of 50% in both positive and negative directions.

Please mark your castle seasons:

													N
													c
													r
													t
													h
													1
													+
													/
													-
													%

=+ .- + positive effect

=- - +effect negative

In percentages

:Example


**5. Orange scale- (Benchmark)**

Participants will be asked to develop a culture of preferred appearance, cleanliness, aesthetics, visualization and daily operation.

Metaphors that will be transmitted to participants:

Participants will be asked to name a company that in their opinion is characterized by highly professional marketing, for example, we can take the Israeli company Orange, and refer to this as the Orange Scale.

The following are examples of how the orange scale is to be used:

Ask yourselves if a handwritten sign on the door of the Castle (or office) would be acceptable at Orange (the communications company). If the answer is no, remove the sign and replace with a printed sign (Use Exercises 4 and 5 for this purpose).

Within the Castle (store or office), the lighting is poor. Would this meet the Orange scale standard, if not, replace the lighting.

Cleanliness and order

Dress code for the knights

Participants are asked to define an internal scale

Significance	Company						

Significance	Company						

Significance	Company						

Significance	Company						

						a n y

**6. The monthly meeting rule at the Castle**

The goal of this exercise is to develop an organizational culture based on cooperation, flow of information, communication and empowerment.

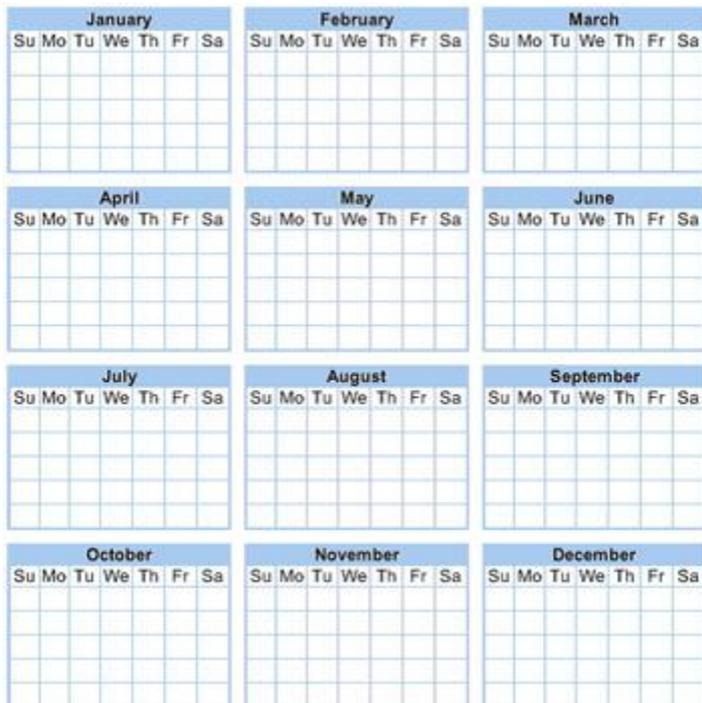
Participants will be requested to commit to one meeting every three weeks in order to manage the affairs of the Castle in an appropriate way.

The following issues will be dealt with at the meeting:

- Castle appearance
- Performance
- Customer responses
- Customer relations problems
- Innovations at the Castle
- New regulations
- Competitors
- Improving the relative position of the Castle
- Staff complaints/requests

\*The calendars below can be used by management and employees for setting up meeting times together

\* Summaries of meetings should be posted in a place that is visible and accessible to all.



**7. Follow-up on competitors, trends, and price fluctuations in the market**

The aim of this exercise is to develop a culture of organizational learning through general knowledge of the marketplace.

Participants will be asked to identify a number of competitors and variables that affect their organization according to the following breakdown:

:Direct competition

Date	Advertising	Level of prices relative to castle	Competitor

Not direct competition:

Date	Successful activities	Branch	Competitor

Market trends:

Date	Branches affected	Influence on customers	Essence	Trend
				Political
				Economic
				Social
				Technological
				Environmental
				Legal

PESTEL model: Analysis of market trends according to PESTEL model

Participants will be asked to complete these tables and to analyse the variables that influence their company positively or negatively.

Participants will be asked to prepare a list of activities according to the variables selected:

Attraction of new customers	Negative influence on customers	Positive influence on customers	Es se n c e	Trend
				Political
				Econom ic
				Social
				Technol ogical
				Environ mental
				Legal

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Company** \_\_\_\_\_ **Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the third stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us.

The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours. The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

:What thoughts did the session give rise to?

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In relation to the part of the seminar that we have completed, what personal statements can I make?

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What personal breakthroughs or insights do I have?

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General notes as to the KM?

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Fourth Meeting

1. Cost of War- development of new products/services

The goals of this exercise is to present to the staff at the Castle the laws of the world of

business, of the development of new products and services. This requires Castle resources in order to claim a piece of property from competitors. We will refer to this as **war**.

**The aim of the war is to distribute new products/services throughout the Castle and in the other castle territories. In order to win the war, the Castle managers must understand the meaning of the war at the cognitive and operational levels.**

The Castle proclaims a state of war among all its workers and customers.

In addition, since Castle resources will be allocated to the war effort, recruitment of new personnel may be required.

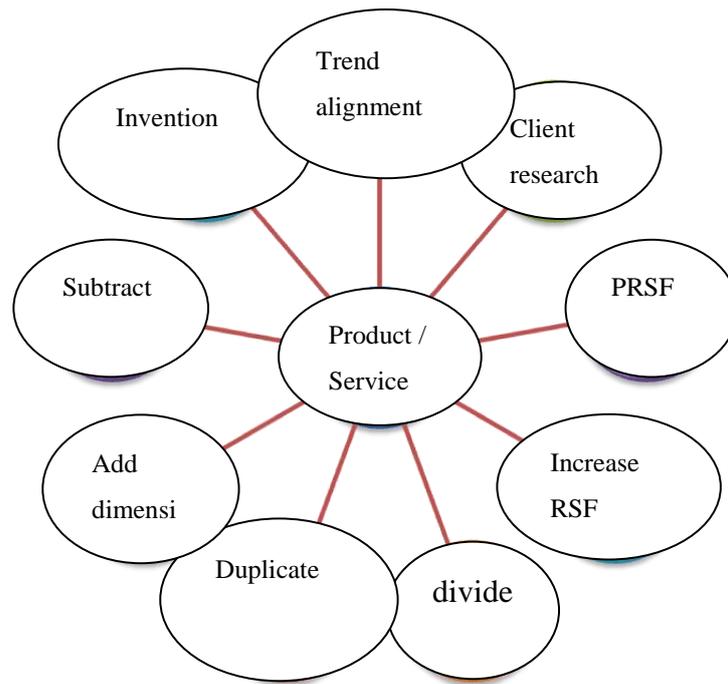
War must be prepared for in advance and must run its course, which often means that things get worse before they get better.

If the managers of the Castle decide to develop a new product, this should be carried out

1. According to sections 1,2,3,4.
2. In keeping with the experiences accrued-sections and 8
3. In accordance with section 10

2. Innovation and development of new products/services.

**The goal is to develop new products in keeping with the existing strategy in an effort to create interest among the target audiences.**



Product/ service	Add dimension	Subtract	duplicate	divide	Increase RSF	PRSF	Trend alignment	Invention	Client research

**3. Marketing Energy / Little steps every day**

The Castle owners and managers will be asked to present the importance of the development for the marketing dimension on a daily level according to the following rules:

Operation and management on a daily basis

- a. Managerial energy spread over time and not at one intensive moment
- b. On-going management does not mean on-going development. There is no need to reinvent the wheel every day.
- c. Involve others in the daily work of the Castle in order to have a broader perspective



<https://pixabay.com/en/battery-energy-supply-means-1930820/>

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the fourth stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us/ The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours. The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

What thoughts did the session give rise to?

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In relation to the part of the seminar that we have completed, what personal statements can I make?

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What personal breakthroughs or insights do I have?

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General notes as to the KM?

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## **Appendix 2:**

### **Learning Process / KM Sessions**

Before beginning the intervention in the organization, a preparation conversation is held in which the moderator meets with the management team in order to receive general background information about the organization in the following areas: (preparation stage)

Background on establishment of the organization, the organizational structure, its managers and workers; receiving information about the business activities and their extent; understanding the organization's positioning within the business world as perceived by the managers; general understanding of theoretical marketing concepts; and charting the difficulties encountered by the business as understood by the managers (such as complaints against workers, interpersonal communications, sales results, disappointment with past marketing activities etc).

At this point the moderator will explain the ethical rules of the study (ensuring anonymity, protecting the participants) as well as the structure of the intervention (settings – place, time, contents), the time, space, and resources required of the organization.

The KM intervention include **4 sessions** that comprise strategic organizational goals and operative goals. Strategic organizational goals are goals that help the organization define itself versus the business environment in which it operates, goals that will be maintained over time and will let the organization work towards a clear goal, such as creating a clear common organizational and marketing vision, understanding resource distribution, human capital activities versus the organization's goals, strengths and weaknesses.

The tools utilized by the KM intervention in order to achieve the goals include the possibility of a focused discussion between people in the different organizations, raising strategic topics and the possibility of sharing overt and covert information on the topic, the possibility of reaching decisions based on overall agreement between the organization's members, managers, and workers. On the operative level the intervention shall define applied activities that will work towards the strategic organizational goals determined.

The process of matching the operative goals to the organizational strategic goals requires thinking flexibility and creativity both on the personal level and on the organizational level, such as a clear course of action, clear statements, clear definitions and resource

distribution.

The KM intervention allows examination of courses of action versus the organization's goals at any given time. The operative goals change from one organization to another since the strategic goals vary according to the organization's abilities, perceptions, and interpretations of the managers and workers, the competitive environment and the organization's activity.

All sessions will be held at the participant's business place; each will take up to two and a half hours. All sessions will be attended by all members, managers and employees of the organization.

The following figure 1 is the order of the sessions, describing the relative part of the KM intervention versus anticipated operative outcomes:

Figure 1:

	Metaphor	KM task	Expected outcome
Session 1	The School Story	Definition of uniqueness and differentiation in the castle	Identification of unique core abilities relative to other companies
	Word ownership	Translation of uniqueness into marketing language	Marketing and communication codes
Session 2	Internal Castle language	Development of a common internal language	Organizational identity based on core abilities
	Castle Visual	Development of graphic language for the castle	Uniform appearance
	Castle Slogan.	Development of a castle slogan	Operationalization of strategic concept
Session 3	Castle agents	Flow of information through castle agents	Word of mouth marketing
	Work in circles for better MROI results for the castle	Circuit advertising - for castle	Effective advertising
	The villagers	Know your castle customers	Effective allocation of resources for client development
	Seasons	Seasons in the kingdom	Managerial tool for

Session  
4

			allocation of resources on the basis of external factors
	Excellent castle	Orange index (benchmark) in the kingdom	Marketing goals and aspirations
	Meeting of the castle	Law of monthly castle meetings	Enhancing cultural climate
	Know the enemies	Castle Business Intelligence	Organizational knowledge of marketplace variables. Identification of competition
	Castle future	Cost of War	Awareness of differences between marketing and business development.
	Building a castle	Innovation in the castle	Managerial skills for developing innovative products and services for the market.
	Castle energy	Castle marketing energy	Ongoing marketing efforts

In the first session, the moderator explains to the group the purpose of the sessions and his ethical commitment to the study. He asks the participants to try and leave behind their past conceptions and to devote themselves to the intervention experience as much as possible.

The first session begins with general background on the intervention story and metaphor, and then the group is asked to reach a conclusion and make a decision according to the story and the pattern it represents.

In the first session the moderator asks for a volunteer to record the group's products throughout all the sessions, including all the decisions and information gathered and received in the intervention. At the end of the intervention this record will be supplied to all the group's participants in hard copy to create a learning sequence. Each session is characterized by a connection to the products (decisions, agreements) of the previous session. This means that since the learning is collective as well each participant was asked to share his/her thoughts with the others. After presenting the opinions of all the participants, the moderator asks the question: In your opinion, is the topic final and

agreed? If the group members agree then the topic is considered closed and the group can proceed. If there is no agreement, then it will be necessary to reconsider the topic until a sweeping decision is made by all or most of the group members.

The KM intervention is characterized by group and individual assignments in each session. The assignments arouse thoughts on the role of each of the organization's members and on both the cooperation and the organizational work. In every assignment the moderator will ask all members of the group to contribute to the topic and thus arouse conversation and discussion. Every assignment will begin with individual work by the worker, i.e. individual attention to the assignment. At the end of the process the organization's members will read to the entire group what they wrote on the topic. After a round of all participants the moderator will ask them to reach a decision comprised of all opinions. At this point the moderator will serve as a mediator between the different opinions, enabling a matter-of-fact and fluent conversation instead of arguing senselessly.

At the end of each session and after reaching a decision on the topic, the moderator creates a connection from the story to the theory, the marketing concepts he wants to impart, and explains the essence of the decision on the applied, marketing and organizational level for the organization. The moderator asks the group whether they understand the meaning of the decision and whether they are satisfied with it.

In the intervention process the moderator will ask the group members not to apply the conclusions and the new information as documented in the process, since the group must remain in a decision making phase, creating new information in accordance with the different parts of the KM.

At the end of the process the moderator will follow the organization when applying the new information in its various sections. He will also explain to the participants the effect of the new information on their role in the organization on the individual level, See Figure 2:

*Figure 2*



The accompaniment is sporadic and following the request of the organization and its operators, by direct communication during the sessions as well as other forms of communication, for example through electronic media.

### **Appendix 3:**

## **Consent form to Participate in Study**

Thank you for your consent to participate in this study, conducted by the Ed.D department of the Derby University in the UK.

The current study in the field of business marketing explores an innovative tool called the KM, utilized by businesses in the SME range.

- A. Questionnaires for completion and personal interviews: Please follow the order of the questionnaires and do not continue to the next question before completing the previous one. The questionnaires are anonymous and do not involve any personal exposure. Your identity as a participant and the identity of your company will remain anonymous.

Please answer as honestly as possible and pay attention to all the questions. In every question, it is necessary to choose or to complete only one answer – please make sure that you do not mark more than one answer.

- B. Participation in the KM workshops.
- C. As a participant in the study, you will be entitled to receive the research results for your use.

Thank you for your cooperation!

My participation in this study constitutes consent to participate in the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

## **Appendix 4: Semi-structured questionnaires**

### **First questionnaire: before the KM intervention first meeting with the entire SME**

1. Please write and explain what marketing means for you.
2. At present, in your opinion, are the organization's marketing activities managed professionally? Please explain.
3. At present, please spell out the main marketing concept that represents or unites the organization. Do you think that the rest of the organization's workers would agree with you?
4. How do you think your competitors, suppliers, customers, colleagues, family, perceive you (think about you)? Please explain.
5. Please state your position in the organization. In your opinion, is your current position connected to the marketing system? Please explain.
6. At present, do you have a sense of confidence in the organization's marketing system? Please explain.
7. Do you feel that you can initiate new elements and add to the organization's marketing system? Please explain with regard to your own position as well.
8. Please elucidate your organization's uniqueness versus the competition in your field of activity.
9. At present do you think that the marketing messages are conveyed sufficiently and efficiently? Please refer to the following dimensions:

Communication at the office / sales point

Communication at the sales points

Communication with suppliers and other stakeholders (service providers, family)

Advertising

Public relations

10. In your opinion, will (new and returning) customers come and buy from the organization?

11. Please detail the following dimensions with regard to most of the services/products sold by the organization:

Details of the functionality of services/products sold by the organization.

Details of the emotional value of the organization's services/products for purchasers.

Details of the image value of the organization's services/products for purchasers.

12. Please state a few sentences that recur among the organization's staff when encountering the organization's customers.

13. Please state your organization's unique colors and their significance (or: why did you choose those colors specifically).

14. Please state the organization's slogan and its meaning (or: why did you choose this slogan)

15. Please list the regular criteria through which your organization is managed from an operative perspective.

16. Do you feel that the staff meetings at the organization are exhaustive and efficient from your perspective? Please state the frequency of the meetings.

17. Do you feel that focused efforts are made to create positive rumors for different audiences that come into contact with the organization?

18. Do you feel that the advertising spread of the organization is guided by strategic thinking? Please explain.
19. In your opinion, is there enough input for following different trends in the target market, competitors, legal changes etc.? Please explain.
20. In the case of developing new services/products, in your opinion is there planning aimed at development guided by dimensions such as perceptions of the organization, image values, overall strategy and trends? Please explain.
21. Please explain whether, in your opinion, there is sufficient activity in the field of marketing for the organization.

**Type: quantitative / Close ended questionnaire: before and after the KM**

**intervention**

**Background information:**

**This information will remain anonymous and will only be used for generalized processing.**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. (Sex) gender: a. male b. female
3. Schooling: a. partial matriculation, b. full matriculation, c. vocational schooling (technician, practical engineer), state which \_\_\_\_\_, d. Bachelor's degree, e. Master's degree or higher.
4. Lives in area: a. northern Israel b. central Israel c. southern Israel

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire

To what degree do you agree with the following statements:	Very strongly	Strongly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
1. Marketing is a process aimed at improving sales.	5	4	3	2	1
2. In my organization, we do marketing several times a year.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Marketing is actually advertising.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Professional marketing is very expensive.	5	4	3	2	1
5. The marketing department is no more important than other departments in the organization.	5	4	3	2	1
6. In my organization, marketing is utilized when there is need to find new customers.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The product/service determines customers' response to the organization.	5	4	3	2	1
8. In order to attract customers, prices must be reduced.	5	4	3	2	1
9. In my job, I am only minimally involved in marketing.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Compared to large organizations, we do not engage in professional marketing.	5	4	3	2	1
11. The organization's marketing goals are clear to me.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The organization's strategic definitions are clear to me.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The organization's organizational hierarchy is clear to me.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I am absolutely familiar with the colors that represent the organization.	5	4	3	2	1
15. The organization's customers understand the organization's marketing concept.	5	4	3	2	1
16. The organizational course of action and agenda are determined by the person in charge of marketing.	5	4	3	2	1
17. As a rule, marketing personnel are dependent on the production and	5	4	3	2	1

service departments, rather than the opposite.					
18. I am able to list the organization's core abilities.	5	4	3	2	1
19. The flow of marketing information from the organization to various interested parties is controlled by the organization.	5	4	3	2	1
20. The organization's workers understand the organization's marketing concept.	5	4	3	2	1
21. As a rule, marketing personnel are dependent on the production and service departments, rather than the opposite.	5	4	3	2	1

**Type: qualitative / Third questionnaire:**

**personal questionnaire after completing each session of the KM**

Date\_\_\_\_\_Company\_\_\_\_\_Name\_\_\_\_\_

This concludes this seminar.

**Reflective questions**

Reflection= targeted thinking about activities carried out in the past with the aim of improvement for the future.

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the first stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us. The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours. The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

What thoughts arise following the seminar?

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What personal statements has the seminar engendered for me?

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What breakthroughs have I made in terms of my organization?

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General notes as to the KM?

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**Type: qualitative / Fourth questionnaire:**

**Three months after completing the KM intervention 4 sessions and the accompaniment process / personal recorded interview**

- 1. Please state and explain what marketing means for you.**
- 2. At present, in your opinion are the organization's marketing activities managed professionally? Please explain.**
- 3. Did you experience changes on the level of the organizational structure?**
- 4. Did you experience changes on the level of responses by customers, suppliers, service providers of the organization? Please explain.**
- 5. At present, please spell out the main marketing concept that represents or unites the organization. Do you think that the rest of the organization's workers would agree with you?**
- 6. How do you think your competitors, suppliers, customers, colleagues, family, perceive you (think about you)? Please explain.**
- 7. Please state your position in the organization. In your opinion, is your current position connected to the marketing system? Please explain.**
- 8. At present, do you have a sense of confidence in the organization's marketing system? Please explain.**

- 9. Do you feel that you can initiate new elements and add to the organization's marketing system? Please explain with regard to your own position as well.**
- 10. At present, do you think that the marketing messages are conveyed sufficiently and efficiently? Please refer to the following dimensions:**
- a. Communication at the office / sales point**
  - b. Communication at the sales points**
  - c. Communication with suppliers and other stakeholders (service providers, family)**
  - d. Advertising**
  - e. Public relations**
- 11. Why, in your opinion, will (new and returning) customers come and buy from the organization?**
- 12. Do you feel that the staff meetings at the organization are exhaustive and efficient from your perspective? Please state the frequency of the meetings.**
- 13. Do you feel that focused efforts are made to create positive rumors for different audiences that come into contact with the organization?**
- 14. Do you feel that the advertising spread of the organization is guided by strategic thinking? Please explain.**
- 15. In your opinion, is there enough input for following different trends in the target market, competitors, legal changes etc.? Please explain.**
- 16. In the case of developing new services/products, in your opinion is there planning aimed at development guiding dimensions such as perceptions of**

**the organization, image values, overall strategy and trends? Please explain.**

**17. Please explain whether, in your opinion, there is sufficient activity in the field of marketing for the organization.**

**Appendix 6:  
Distribution of quantitative answers before and after the KM  
intervention**

Distribution of quantitative answer before and after the KM intervention						
		Do not agree	Least agree	Slight ly agree	Ag ree	Agree very much
Q1. Marketing is a process for improving sales.	Before	5	5	9	36	45
	After	24	29	10	19	19
Q2. Marketing is in fact advertising.	Before	10	10	30	40	10
	After	10	24	19	14	33
Q3. The marketing department is important but not the most important in the organization.	Before	9	9	32	32	18
	After	19	33	19	19	10
Q4. Branding is a visual process for conveying messages.	Before	9	0	27	41	23
	After	5	38	24	24	10
Q5. The product/service determines the customers' response to the organization.	Before	9	23	36	27	5
	After	20	30	30	15	5
Q6. In order to obtain customers it is necessary to reduce prices.	Before	0	27	23	36	14
	After	24	24	14	29	10
Q7. In my job I have minimal contact with marketing.	Before	9	5	0	27	59
	After	5	14	33	38	10

Q8. Compared to large organizations we do not deal with professional marketing.	Before	14	36	32	18	0
	After	14	33	38	14	0
Q9. The organization's marketing goals are clear to me.	Before	57	19	14	5	5
	After	38	19	19	14	10
Q10. The organization's strategic forces are clear to me.	Before	23	9	36	23	9
	After	5	33	38	24	0
Q11. I now understand the organizational hierarchy.	Before	5	14	23	14	45
	After	0	0	5	25	70
Q12. At present, the organization has maximized its marketing.	Before	0	5	45	23	27
	After	0	0	0	24	76
Q13. My organization's graphic language is clear to me.	Before	0	5	9	32	55
	After	5	0	5	38	52
Q14. The organization's customers understand the organization's marketing concept perfectly.	Before	5	5	27	18	45
	After	0	5	0	19	76
Q15. The flow of information to various stakeholders is controlled by the organization.	Before	0	14	41	23	23
	After	0	0	20	60	20
Q16. As a rule, marketing messages are conveyed systematically and efficiently in my organization	Before	5	29	24	29	14
	After	5	5	43	29	19

Q17. At present, I have room to contribute to the marketing dimension in the organization	Before	5	14	23	45	14
	After	14	24	43	14	5
Q18.	Before	5	9	41	23	23
	After	0	0	5	5	90
Q19	Before	0	9	14	41	36
	After	0	5	14	57	24
Q20	Before	5	14	27	23	32
	After	5	0	0	43	52
Q21	Before	9	14	23	32	23
	After	5	32	32	32	0

**Appendix 7:**  
**A print screen of the researcher log, 2 pages' sample.**

13 Page

Day and time	content	Associative reflection	Inductive conclusion
1/02/2010 / 18:00	St [REDACTED]: Second seminar. Good fun atmosphere.  The impact of the first seminar is clear and the players are very much familiar with the first seminar outcome.  The willingness of the owners to make change is shown, every subject that comes up in the second seminar is agreed upon to be changed with accordance of the seminar outcomes.  The group used KM terminology. The staff thanked me personally.	This reminds me of the process with the other subjects in the second seminar  same good energy as with other SME.(ask them about feelings)	Once the marketing rules are clear the confidence level of the players is higher.

Day and time	content	Associative reflection	Inductive conclusion
3/02/2010 / 18:00	St [REDACTED]: Third seminar. Good fun atmosphere.  The impact of the second seminar is clear and the players are very much familiar with the second seminar outcome.	This reminds me of the process with the other subjects in the third seminar  The CEO, is now much more involved.	Once the marketing rules are clear the confidence level of the players is higher.

	<p>The involvement of the players through the seminar is high due to the fact that the sales texts are now in discussion; the agreement is that sales text must be changed.</p> <p>We split the third seminar due to time constrains of the players. The staff thanked me personally.</p>	<p>The group discussion was very good and productive.</p> <p>reported communications with regards to the KM between members of the staff</p>	
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Day and time	content	Associative reflection	Inductive conclusion
<p>4/02/2010 / 18:00</p>	<p>Third seminar. Good fun atmosphere.</p> <p>The impact of the second seminar is clear and the players are very much familiar with the second seminar outcome.</p> <p>The players ask questions that indicate that they are thinking about the first two seminars.</p> <p>After the seminar the CEO informed me that the consultant they hired for marketing development will now work only on business development. she thanked me.</p>	<p>This reminds me of the process with the other subjects in the third seminar</p> <p>In my practice I get a lot of managers that confuse marketing with business development, this happened with [redacted] CEO, at the end she understood the difference.</p> <p>The discussion over difficult business issues was productive and creative.</p> <p>This is true with all SME in this process.</p>	<p>Once the marketing rules are clear the confidence level of the players is higher.</p>

## Appendix 8: Researcher log content analysis sample:

Screenshot, page number 1:

1

Appearance number	DATE	SOURCE	CONTENT	code	STATUS
4	25.01.10	RL	The players ask questions that indicate that they are thinking about the first two seminars. The players are planning their advertising and are letting me know that they understand the mistakes made in the past in that department.	1	RL
2	25.01.10	RL	In the context of the conversation we are conducting as to marketing issues I can sense the ability to think in a strategic manner, some issues are contributed to the long run and of great importance and some are tactics to "prove" that this is the "way" for the organization	1	RL
1	25.01.10	RL	The same process happened with the other groups/subjects that had gone through seminar 2.	1	RL
4	25.01.10	RL	Once the terms and knowledge is there it is easier to make and call strategic decisions.		RL
1	04.03.10	RL	██████████ Seminar 4 Many of the issues decided in the seminar, are still not done by the CEO. The CEO explained that she was busy working- However, assured the researcher about her commitment to the process. Finished seminar 4. As in ██████████, a long gap between the seminars creates a lack of input to the KM details and decisions. A momentum must be kept between seminars.	4	RL
1	25.01.10	RL	██████████ Second seminar. The owner MR.M, was reluctant to enter the seminar on time, I approached him and reflected the issue to him, he replied that the work is hectic and he is sorry.	5	RL
	25.01.10	RL	Meeting with full staff plus new employee added to organization- owner explained that now, the marketing scheme is clear to them therefore, they are willing to spend more money and hire new employees.	7	RL
2	01.03.10	RL	██████████ changed to ██████████ First meeting after the end of the seminars Meeting with full staff plus new employee added to organization- owner explained that now, the marketing scheme is clear to them therefore, they are willing to spend more money and hire new employees.	7	RL

SScreenshot, page number 14:

14

1	15/09/2009	RL	I think that I have developed quite a bit, and I tend to view my work differently, the way to describe the change will be to say that I have added depth, as to the 'flat' way I have used to use in the past.	24	RL
1	15/09/2009	RL	I have developed a way of thinking, I think that everything is an equation, and as such there are two ends to it, one must consider both ends and the string itself in order to reach a decision or in order to weigh issues. This is a part of my inner critical thinking I am developing...Hopefully.	24	RL
1	10/10/2009	RL	Others have said no as well, the reasons supplied to me vary, 'we do not have the time', 'we have a lot on our plate now, may be in the future' some simply did not return my phones and ignored me. I believe that the bigger the organization is the hardest is to reach a decision about something like what I offer, it feels like the decision maker believe that they need a special time to implement a method as offered and they are not sure that the present is the time, it seems they are too busy with everything else but marketing, I know this phenomena from my work, the SME owners cannot reach a decision even though they are very impressed with what I do and offer them, I refer to them as sales culture managers as oppose to marketing culture managers; the sales culture managers – SCM – tend to view sales and sales alone, they do not feel that anything else is important enough to interfere with the routine.	24	RL
1	10/10/2009	RL	Usually, they need to inject a lot of effort into their organization in order to meet the proper targets, there is very little aftermath effect and there for there is a constant need to invest more and more in order to reach the targets, once failed to meet the targets, the investment balance is immediately negative and can place the organization in great jeopardy; then organization as no marketing culture –thus no affect to carry it through these times, it needs more efforts. i.e., time and money, to reach his targets. One can understand the SCM, because, back in the day, when started operating that was the correct method, may be. Even young SCM – are very much affected ontology wise.	24	RL
1	31/12/2009	RL	The CEO then said that they have worked with the consultant on other issues such as suppliers, costs etc, I have suggested that maybe the consultant are of business nature and less of marketing nature, the CEO replied that this may be so and the KM process is very different to anything she knows in a good way, the others agreed.	24	RL
1	31/12/2009	RL	After this seminar I have decided to take two courses, regardless of my busy time spread courses in Psychology and of cultural Psychology. I now realize that the training I have in this subjects is not enough for the purpose of what I do.	24	RL
1	11/01/2010	RL	The financial state of the organization ██████████ is not very stable, this fact causes the owners to fantasies on a rescue move – "a magical button" to solve all their problems.	25	RL

## Appendix 9: During intervention, open ended questionnaire analysis.

Sample One:



**Date: 19.1.2010 company name [REDACTED] Participant\_ [REDACTED]**

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the third stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us. The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours. The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

**:What thoughts did the session give rise to?**

- Effective tool
- participants participation
- Development of a process

**Code 23**

**In relation to the part of the seminar that we have completed, what personal statements can I make?**

we need to work on the realization and deepening of differentiation of different potential clients such as private, business etc.  
We have to improve on our materials and incorporate more prove of our services.

**Code 14**

**What personal breakthroughs or insights do I have?**

- - to gather more evidence from our clients in order and make sure the new potential clients will believe us.

**Code 22**

General notes as to the KM?

Really floated in an easy manner our daily dealing marketing wise.

**Code 23**

sample 2:

**Date: 24.1.2010 company name [REDACTED] Participant [REDACTED]**

Dear participant, below are a number of questions concerning the third stage of the seminar. In the next stage we will address the results that you present before us.

The questions should be answered after reflection on the seminar for at least 24 hours.

The results will be discussed during the next phase and will contribute to the marketing strategy for your company

**What thoughts did the session give rise to?**

thoughts of positive energy

**Code 17**

**In relation to the part of the seminar that we have completed, what personal statements can I make?**

I have great hope that this seminar will contribute for me and the company

**Code 17**

**What personal breakthroughs or insights do I have?**

Not yet

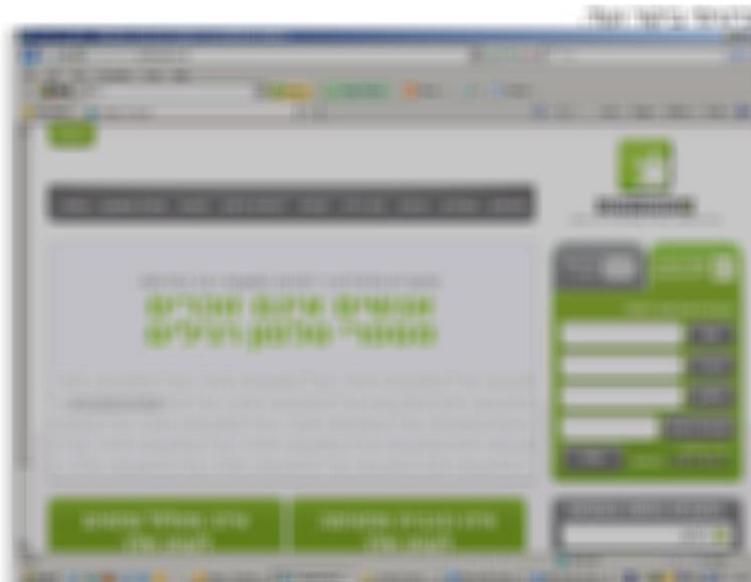
**Code 17**

**Appendix 10:**  
**A sample of one SME, before and after the intervention web site content and appearance change.**

Before the intervention / SME web site print screen.



after the intervention / same SME web site print screen.



# Appendix 11: A sample of one SME, content analysis of interview ( semi structured), prior to the intervention.

Before Intervention Interview number 8					
Researcher note	Question	Answer	Category	Code	Sub category
	Please explain and elaborate what is marketing in your understanding?	I do not know as much in marketing however, I do think that marketing is about advertising, of presenting your best product in the best way you can present it, you have to think that your product is the best even if the product is only average. If you have an average product here and an average product there, who ever thinks he has the best product should print it in the best manner, who ever is the most verbal with the highest confidence and charisma will sell his product much better then the other guy	Preception marketing		3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
	Do you have an example of someone who is doing marketing well?	Brand marketing- the more you advertise your product or you establish that your product as better value or you have sales in the beginning and people start picking the product more then a group pressure will be established, say with kids or teenagers, you bump up the price and people will still buy the product, then you raise the group pressure for the product, this may be good marketing the question is how does one start all this that is the thing	Preception marketing		1 Understanding of strategic and tactical processes
uncertainty in marketing processes marketing knowledge	please give me a sample to someone who does just that to a company like that	Billabong, Nike, Nike especially, no one even looks its not that their top is not crazy, it's a Nike top so you buy Nike because Nike created a name and marketing, their top will cost 270 NIS not 50			3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
Understanding the enterprise's marketing	In your opinion in the current organization you are employed in do you think that the marketing is done professionally? why do you think yes?	I do not understand marketing but I think they do  I think that we advertise the thing and that is it maybe we need people to stand in the middle of the work and maybe they will set an example as marketing say if someone is asking about this or that you can demonstrate knowledge or tell them it is good or things like that but I think we are doing marketing in the most professional			4 Understanding the enterprise's marketing activities 3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
perception as to SME capabilities/ core abilities	what do you think you do best in your organization?	that but I think we are doing marketing in the most professional manner that we know how to, like now we will learn better marketing but for now we do marketing the best way we know I know that preparation, this is very Organised I think that if some one booked catering he expects catering but this is expressed in the design, people are impressed this is the main thing in the organization and I think you can market this. Using pretty pictures and designs and place it in places, this is the advantage I think we have design. It is the first thing people realise and we get good response for that. I think that design, yes. I think they will agree with me.			2 Understanding the enterprise's marketing capabilities
	And if I will ask the rest of the crew and management, will they agree?	The clients so far? I think they are very happy because I think we have managed the work well, from what I have seen and with the payments made by them I think they are very happy. We put everything we had to work, they are pleased I think.	what others think of the SME		15 Organization awareness of topic
	your competitors, suppliers, your clients what do you think they think of you?				
	In your position, do you think you are related to marketing of the organization?	Sure, because I am with the people, let me give you an example. Maybe it is not so eleventh, in a discussion if you want a discussion to evolve you plant people there they are amongst the people then people are drawn after them, if a person is with 100 people then and he is not the boss from distance but working with them, saying a word here and there, it is like our CEO said every person is a potential client	Structure and positions		5 SME structure and roles
Uncertainty in marketing processes	in your opinion, do you have confidence in the marketing scheme today?	I think that marketing can improve much more, I do not know if that is the ideal marketing, but it is what we know how to do best, I think that the more we will get better we will be in a better place.			17 Employee's feelings
	so do you have a confidence or not?	Not so much			17 Employee's feelings
	Do you feel you can add to the current marketing scheme, at your position?	Yes			18 Activities of employee
	How would you do it?	By meeting people everyday. like I said before, you open in a conversation with them, you recommend the organization, you say:			1 Understanding of strategic and tactical processes

		you recommend the organization, you say: listen I know the catering from the inside, and I am telling you that you will enjoy yourself. you will not be disappointed things are of high quality here		
perception as to SME capabilities/ con	How would you describe your marketing uniqueness as to the competitors?	I think that we are a small organization and some of the competitors are monsters However, in the competition we have here with the small catering I think that our uniqueness is in the design it is very special.		2 Understanding the enterprise's marketing capabilities
	Why do you think that new and repetitive clients will purchase your services?	New that have never seen the catering I do not know why they will come, I do think that people that have seen this catering will come, but the problem is that if you want new people to come then you need marketing, marketing that will tell them, because they do not know of you, you will need a very convincing marketing very charismatic marketing, to show them that here is better than any place else, this is what marketing is all about.		3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
	what then do you think will make them come and order a service with you?	advertising and marketing that is the main thing		3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
what others think of the SME	what kind of emotional value do you believe the clients get once they purchase a service with you?	Once the event is done I think that they are very satisfied It shows that they really have a smile on their faces they say : we have gone through this very well we have come out great with this.		15 Organization awareness of topic
	What about values relating image, what do you think?	That is it that is the main problem we do not have no grandiose marketing like Nike, they say we need a BAR-MITZVA for our son a small one so I take it but if you will have better advertisement then people who wants to do big events will trust you due to your name		3 Existing Knowledge in marketing
	what kind of phrases are repeated when	That we invest our all, that our CEO will spare no efforts		4 Understanding the enterprise's marketing activities
	what kind of phrases are repeated when you meet prospective clients?	That we invest our all, that our CEO will spare no efforts this is what I hear most, that they will put all into the event and I think that the clients feel that		4 Understanding the enterprise's marketing activities
	what are the unique colors of the organization and what are their meaning?	the shirt is black with the logo in purple I think that the colors are black and purple but it depends, at the table every time we have a different color and I do not think that it is related.		10 General visibility 11 Communications of SME
	What is the Company's slogan?	I think that catering and events, something like that meaning is also a problem this is also marketing it is a key sentence our name tells you what it is but does not blow you a way		
	in your opinion, within the organization, do you have fixed criteria for as work methods?	I think not, we have to try the hardest for the client not to be lazy, work on the money, be on time always I think this is very important		6 SME procedures
	Do you think deliberate efforts are made to crea positive rumours with different clients?	No, I do not think so, I think there are rumours but we do not engage in a deliberate manner.		4 Understanding the enterprise's marketing activities
	Do you feel their is a strategic advertising method in the organization	Yes, with what we know. but not like with strategic thinking as in the nig firms		4 Understanding the enterprise's marketing activities
	Do you know if you pay attention to the market competition?	I do not know		14 SME market position
	In the case of developing new services do you think that you develop them with regards to the strategic way, the way clients perceive you?	I think that is clear, yes it is clear		6 SME procedures
	Do you think there is enough marketing and advertising operation	Again, with what we know yes, but not enough to make this organization succeed.		1 Understanding of strategic and tactical processes