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# Sensing customer needs in knowledge-intensive business services: A case study of different practices

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## Abstract

This study explores practices of market sensing within customer relationships in the field of knowledge-intensive business services through a multiple-case study. Market orientation has been widely researched in the literature, whereas market sensing capability and the practices related to it remain relatively under-researched. Although sensing current and future customer needs is a valuable and increasingly important capability for firms to have in an era of competitive and turbulent markets, it is very challenging to put into practice. This article contributes to current research by enhancing the understanding of market sensing as a dynamic capability. It does so by contributing context-specific knowledge on how the practices of market sensing help firms to sense current and future customer needs. The current research also offers an empirical analysis to support the understanding of how marketing practitioners can utilize their market-sensing capability efficiently to create competitive advantage.

# Sensing customer needs in knowledge-intensive business services: A case study of different practices

## 1. Introduction

The current research views market orientation through the lens of market-sensing capability and aims to explore practices related to market-sensing. Market orientation is among the most extensively researched topics in the marketing literature (Narver & Slater, 1990; Oswald, Brettel, & Engelen, 2012) especially as it relates to organizational and business performance (e.g. Kirca, Jayachandran, & Bearden, 2005; Matsuno, Mentzer, & Özsomer, 2002). Market orientation is conceptualized as consisting of customer and competitor orientations (Harrison-Walker, 2001) involving a process of collecting and disseminating market information and being responsive to it (Kok & Driessen, 2012). However, only the customer perspective seems to have a clear positive and significant effect on business performance (Harrison-Walker, 2001). The importance of which will be explained below.

Market orientation is an umbrella term encompassing market sensing capability (Day, 1994). Doyle and Armenakyan (2014) found market orientation relates more strongly to firm-level capabilities than to organizational performance and may affect performance primarily through its relationship with capabilities. Ambidexterity relates to organizational learning (He & Wong, 2004) and is a dynamic capability relatively close to market sensing, and has attracted a great deal of scholarly interest in the last decade. Dynamic capability is the ability of a firm to reconfigure assets and existing capabilities, and explains long-term competitive advantage (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008). Organizational ambidexterity is defined as an organization's ability to be aligned and efficient in its management of current business demands while simultaneously remaining capable of adapting to changes in the environment (Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008) by exploiting existing products to enable incremental innovation, and by exploring new opportunities to foster more radical innovation (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2008; He & Wong, 2004; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008.) The focus in this study is on market-sensing capability, which means the ability of a firm to continuously sense and act on trends and events in its markets and respond faster than its competitors (Day, 2002).

Research that could guide managers in providing practices for implementing and improving market orientation is currently scarce (Gupta, Sahi, & Chahal, 2013). Firms lacking an effective capacity to anticipate changes in the markets are likely to miss opportunities and may be able to do no more than react to customer needs (Day, 2002). Even those reactions on the part of firms may seem to be slow or counter-productive because of flawed assumptions, misinformation, or internal disagreements. Market sensing practices facilitate the development of knowledge that can offer a basis for competitive advantage (Slater & Narver, 1995). Firms competing in extremely competitive environments, such as that of knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS), need to understand how they can develop competitive advantage (Kriz, Voola, &Yuksel, 2014).

The KIBS environment is often characterized by very close, almost symbiotic, relationships between the service providers and their customers (Den Hertog, 2000). The customers in this environment prefer to work with reliable long-term partners, because doing so offsets some of the risk of sharing confidential information (Karantinou & Hogg, 2009). Providing KIBS is strongly dependent on the reciprocal transfer of knowledge and resources between the service provider and its customer (Martin et al., 1999). Collaboration between the provider and customer increases the knowledge of both parties considerably, and long-term customer relationships potentially allow the optimal utilization of the acquired knowledge (Anderson, Narus, & van Rossum, 2011). Such utilization offers the service provider access to different perspectives, which leads to the creation of new ideas (Jimenez-Zarco, Martinez-Ruiz, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2011; Nicolajsen & Scupola, 2011; Sundbo, 2002). Ideas originating from customers are often more innovative than those of experts in terms of uniqueness and their value to customers (Matthing et al., 2004). Successful market sensing requires that everyone in the firm, from service people to the CEO, is sensitized to identifying and seizing market opportunities as they arise (Day, 2002). Being aware of the practices of market sensing is particularly useful for KIBS firms because it enables them to offer services corresponding to customer needs and to develop more persuasive value propositions for their customers.

Although having a market-sensing ability can potentially be very beneficial for management, in practice, sensing current and future customer needs and seizing market opportunities it is no simple task. Despite the obvious need for research outlining the

managerial implications of market sensing, it remains relatively scarce, and particularly so in the context of KIBS.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the current literature addressing market sensing and KIBS and to boost the understanding of the phenomenon by offering context-specific knowledge on the practices constituting market sensing within existing customer relationships in KIBS. This study also reveals how marketing practitioners might utilize a market-sensing capability in their business more efficiently. The research question adopted in this study is, "What kind of practices help to sense customer needs in knowledge-intensive business services?"

The study is structured as follows. First, it examines the features of customer relationships in knowledge-intensive business services. Then, the theoretical foundation of market sensing is presented and, after describing the research methodology, there follows an analysis and findings section. The final section discusses theoretical and managerial implications, limitations, and offers avenues for further research.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Customer relationships in KIBS

The aim of this study is to explore practices of market sensing within existing customer relationships in KIBS and examining the characteristics of customer relationships in the KIBS environment is central to that purpose.

KIBS providers are typically involved in the exchange of knowledge with their customers for strategic reasons that influence their current business, and future business opportunities (Landry, Amara, & Doloreux, 2012). Long-term customer relationships require wide-ranging expertise from the service provider to deliver a premium offering (Nätti & Ojasalo, 2008) and to create more value for the customer (De Brentani & Ragot, 1996; Alam & Perry, 2002). In addition, it requires both professional and personal interest from the service provider (Nicolajsen & Scupola, 2011), since service providers cannot force their employees to contribute to customer relationship development. Instead, they need to create a favourable context with, for instance, rewards and organizational pressure that encourage initiating the extension of dialogues to new issues, problems, and topics (Fischer, Sieg, Wallin, & von Krogh, 2014) and collaboration helps to achieve that.

Collaboration is fruitful only when customers feel that it benefits them and they trust the service provider (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2011). Customers have two main motives for collaborating. The first is prompted by collaboration permitting them to create services for themselves, and the second is underpinned by them feeling that their active participation guarantees quality. (Martin et al., 1999). Collaboration can be encouraged by meetings between customers and the service provider's development groups, and, for instance, by conducting in-depth customer interviews (Alam & Perry, 2002). In general, gathering all the relevant knowledge holders around the same table should establish a common understanding and build a common vision, and elicit the different perspectives of the stakeholders (Ritala, Hyötylä, Blomqvist, & Kosonen, 2013).

Collaboration with the customer accelerates mutual learning (Matthing et al., 2004) and enables service providers to exploit the expertise of their customers, which in turn increases the knowledge residing in an organization and can enhance organizational performance (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2011). Collaboration enables the parties to develop, and to achieve something they would not have been able to achieve alone. Collaborative relationships can provide access to another company's resources such as customer information, markets and technologies (Ngugi, Johnsen, & Erdélyi, 2010). Customer collaboration also enables the early recognition of market trends (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2011) through providing a detailed understanding of customer needs (Dörner, Gassmann, & Gebauer, 2011). It is vitally important for service providers to learn to apply the practices of market sensing to gain a deep understanding of customers' expressed and unrecognized needs, and use that knowledge to create superior value for customers (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2011), to enhance perceived quality, and to reduce insecurity and time spent creating services (Alam & Perry, 2002).

Companies can utilize information from customer relationships to increase the quantity and scope of knowledge and innovation by absorbing knowledge through their own capabilities. Consequently, companies that provide innovative support services usually constantly search for new market trends. Such future trends might include the increasing importance of business expertise relating to specific customers and closer ties to customer strategies (Hua, Lin, & Chang, 2013).

## 2.2 Market sensing

Olavarrieta and Friedmann (2007) highlight the importance of market-sensing skills to developing and fostering innovativeness in a company, since market-sensing skills can

be integral to the success and survival of a company. Research conducted by Day (2002) indicates organizations can learn about their markets through the linked processes of market sensing and sense making. Firms that master these two processes have the potential to anticipate market opportunities ahead of their rivals and more accurately forecast how the markets will respond to their moves.

Firms striving to lead their field should focus on learning continually and applying their knowledge to anticipate market changes (Lara, Palacios-Marques, & Devece, 2012). Some of the necessary knowledge is codified and easy to receive, but that related to complex linkages in the customer's business or decision making is more difficult to access (Ritala et al., 2013). The literature currently views market sensing as a continuous process of acquiring information, sharing and interpreting it within the organization, and utilizing it to increase business performance (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Practices of market sensing that help to anticipate opportunities and threats include (1) creating a spirit of open-minded enquiry, (2) carefully analysing competitors' actions, (3) listening to frontline personnel , (4) seeking out latent needs, (5) active scanning of the periphery of the market, and (6) encouraging continuous experimentation (Day, 2002). Foley and Fahy (2004) suggest market-sensing capability comprises four dimensions that facilitate its development. These dimensions are organization systems within the organization (the degree of formalization and decentralization, and the linking of reward systems to performance), marketing information, organizational communication, and a learning orientation.

Enquiry activities are often threatened by closed-minded attitudes masked by an arrogance typified by statements like, 'We know what the market wants' and an inward orientation in respect to readily available activities and standards of performance. Customer facing personnel often receive requests for new services directly from customers or are aware when a customer is lost due to a competitor initiative, which is why channels for the upward flow of information could be established. Firms can seek out latent needs by asking customers to identify problems in offerings and provide subjective feedback on the services provided. The third potential method is observation and spending a day in the life of the customer to find opportunities to deliver superior value (Day, 2002). Identifying customer needs demands time and effort of the service provider, but it pays to research the customer's businesses enough to help solve their problems (Anderson et al., 2006). Managers are continually exposed to a wealth of data ranging from statistics to sales reports and they should actively scan the periphery to

look for new opportunities (Day, 2002). Creativity, in terms of generating new ideas and seeing new opportunities, is very valuable, as is systematically collecting and storing the acquired customer knowledge and utilizing previous customer experiences and accumulated knowledge (Ritala et al., 2013).

Hence, firms could continually assess and develop their market sensing by assessing their market-sensing abilities, by formulating business and marketing plans that are genuine learning tools, and by mapping prevailing processes to support market sensing. In addition, the information that is gathered through the market-sensing process must be transformed into knowledge available when required. A shared knowledge base in the company will help make sense of market information. Further learning comes from the feedback on how the market responds. This begins a cycle of market sensing, which to be fully effective has to be continuous; with knowledge flowing throughout the firm like blood through the circulatory system in the human body (Day, 2002). Open communication positively influences the development of market sensing (Foley & Fahy, 2004) by facilitating knowledge acquisition, which implies the combination of situational sensitivity and a deep understanding of what is relevant, as the knowledge is collected by way of intensive interaction with the customer. It is important to encourage the customer to enter into dialogue and accept knowledge sharing, and then to iteratively elicit the required knowledge by making proposals and guiding the customer's choices (Ritala et al., 2013). In addition, intuition-led decision making becomes a powerful tool in instances where there is a paucity of data, when options are manifold, when the future is uncertain and when the logic of strategic choice requires confirmation (Patterson, Quinn, & Baron, 2012).

To conclude, long-term customer relationships are a typical feature of the KIBS environment (Den Hertog, 2000), which creates a favourable context for open communication (Foley & Fahy, 2004) and knowledge acquisition (Ritala et al., 2013). Market sensing is a continuous process of acquiring information, sharing and interpreting it within the organization, and then utilizing it (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Adopting market-sensing practices would help firms continuously sense and act on trends and events in their markets and respond to stimuli faster than their competitors (Day, 2002).

### 3. Methodology

The research design chosen for the current work is a qualitative multiple-case study. The choice was made because qualitative methods help to produce the most comprehensive and rich description of the phenomenon being researched (Gummesson, 2005), and a case-study methodology permits the phenomenon to be researched in detail in its specific context, especially when the boundaries of the phenomenon and the context are unclear (Yin, 2009, p. 180). In business-to-business research, several phenomena may benefit from case research For example, organizational aspects (e.g. practices of market sensing within the organization), and the relationships between several organizations (e.g. business-to-business customer relationships) are business-to-business phenomena that occur within rich contexts (e.g. knowledge-intensive business services) and can benefit from case-study research (Johnston et al., 1999).

### 3.1 The cases

This study features two cases. The first case reports on an organization that is here called Edu. Edu is a small KIBS firm that offers modular education and consulting services primarily in business-to-business markets. The customers of Edu operate in various fields from engineering to education and health businesses, and appreciate Edu's ability to sense what is central to their business by customizing the service offering according to their needs. Edu's market-sensing capability enhanced its customers' perception of receiving a high quality service and improved customer satisfaction and commitment.

The second case concerns a firm here called Tech. Tech is a large global knowledge-intensive service provider offering modular engineering and consulting services to business-to-business markets. For Tech, long-term customer relationships with key customers are central to its business. Tech's customers also operate in various fields ranging from metal and chemicals to the security business. Tech's approach envisages developing long-term customer relationships that help recognize and anticipate customer needs, and thus create persuasive value propositions and a continuous supply of new projects.

### 3.2 Data collection and analysis

These two cases together offer a comprehensive description of the phenomenon and provide a fruitful basis for analysis. Both Edu and Tech provide highly customized

knowledge-intensive services to business-to-business customers, but the service providers differ in terms of their size and business area. Those differences provide sufficiently diverse settings to support a comparison of market sensing in two different KIBS cases.

A total of 12 face-to-face interviews with the service providers and their customers supplied the primary data for this study (see Table 1). Respondents were deliberately chosen to include people whose everyday work brought them into contact with the research phenomenon. Longitudinal interviews with people from two different KIBS firms and in different organizational roles were supplemented with interviews with customers of both case firms to provide the most rigorous insight into the research phenomenon. During the interviews, the respondents were allowed to raise topics and themes that were not introduced by the interviewer. This study investigates practices of market sensing within existing customer relationships, so creating a dyadic setting, which is why the customer perspective is relevant. There might be some practices that are relevant, but which the service provider cannot name or detail because they are actions that are not consciously practised.

The interviews were supplemented with secondary data from sources such as web pages, company brochures, meetings and memoranda, which served as a means of 'perceptual triangulation' and provided a fuller picture of the phenomenon (Bonoma, 1985; Perry, 1998). The empirical data for this study is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. The research data.**

| Firm | Field of business | Type of data | Interviewee | Duration |
|------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Edu | KIBS (Education and consulting) | Interview<br>Web pages<br>Company brochures<br>Meetings<br>Memos | Deputy General Manager<br>Lecturer | 57 min<br>60 min |
| Customer of Edu | Health | Interview | Manager | 36 min |
| Customer of Edu | Engineering | Interview | Manager | 61 min |
| Customer of Edu | Education | Interview | Lecturer | 37 min |
| Tech | KIBS (Engineering and consulting) | Interview<br>Web pages<br>Company brochures<br>Meetings<br>Memos | Head of Business Unit<br>Head of Department | 57 min<br>53 min |
| Customer of Tech | Chemicals | Interview | Manager<br>Buyer | 80 min<br>52 min |

| Customer of Tech | Meta | Interview | Head of Department | 39 min |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Customer of Tech | Security | Interview | CEO Manager | 103 min (joint interview) |

Data analysis began with taping and transcribing all the interviews in full. Thereafter, the qualitative data were analysed by comparing each transcript with the others by case and by searching for similarities, differences, and recurring themes as well as by allowing new themes to arise from the empirical data. Although these two different KIBS firms have different backgrounds and organizational cultures, there were similarities in the practices of market sensing in both that made the analysis process intriguing.

## 4. Analysis

The empirical data helped identify seven practices of market sensing within existing customer relationships in the KIBS environment. These practices are detailed below.

### 4.1 Trust creation

Both case firms considered the creation of trust a prerequisite of market sensing within existing customer relationships. Edu emphasized the fact that knowledge-intensive business services are traded between people, often friends, making it crucial to have good relationships, trust, and a common understanding with the customer. Tech's representatives stated that, in professional work, success is based on trust and personal relationships, and that trust creation depends on face-to-face communication, which avoids misunderstandings and ensures that provider and customer goals remain aligned in ways that using less direct forms of communication like email could not guarantee. It was noted that learning about the customer and focusing on trust creation ensures the service provider recognizes the needs of the customer, sees its perspective, and understands how its management's decisions can be influenced.

In professional work, when there is trust, it is very easy to do business; it all comes down to personal relationships. You have to know how to influence people's decisions and recognize how they perceive their need and know how they think. Representative of Tech: Head of Business Unit

**4.2 Knowledge sharing**

In both case firms, sharing knowledge enabled mutual learning, which increased the knowledge and improved the performance of both parties. Both case firms emphasized the need to hold regular meetings. The empirical data revealed that knowledge sharing between different units and departments helped identify the needs of the customers. According to the representatives of Tech, knowledge sharing within their organization improves customer satisfaction, because knowledge held means the customer does not have to outline its situation and requirements repeatedly. Customers of Edu pointed out that knowledge sharing creates a virtuous cycle, one that helps customers to identify their own recognized and unrecognized needs. On the other hand, knowledge sharing is a typical challenge in knowledge-intensive firms. The findings indicate that knowledge held by experienced people is not easily transferred to younger people. Tech has used documentation and IT as tools to solve this problem inside the organization. Both of the case firms and their customers stressed the importance of arranging meetings, where they could negotiate development areas and new areas for cooperation. Meetings, face-to-face communication, and active interaction facilitate knowledge sharing, which seemed to be a firmly-established practice in both case firms used to support market sensing and identify customer needs.

Every day we are involved with the customer either regarding the project or we try to figure out the customer's future projects and what needs the customer has in the near future and in long haul. Representative of Tech: Head of Department

**4.3 Customer visits**

Visiting customers is a practice that is very important to market sensing. The interview data reveals that the information collected as a result of the practice of visiting customers helped the service provider learn its customers' processes and needs, which enabled to recognize emerging needs and trends and be well placed to tender for their customers' large projects. Both case firms recognized the role of customer visits in developing their services in the right direction. Customers of Edu also pointed out that when firms visit customer companies they should be prepared to systematically seek out areas of potential collaboration and establish future needs. The customers suggested they would welcome pilot schemes to reveal the real benefit for their firms without requiring a huge investment from them.

When experts visit and work in firms, they sense new needs and themes. Representative of Edu: Deputy General Manager

## 4.4 Reducing administrative constraints

The findings indicate the importance of reducing and avoiding administrative constraints in market sensing. Edu pointed out that expertise developed over a long period may create a major barrier to trying new ideas. On the other hand, extensive knowledge was suggested to be a condition of flexibility. Tech emphasized that managers should not remain in the same position for too long, as a fresh perspective enables a manager to see customer needs from different angles.

Administrative constraints should be reduced. It is a huge challenge but information technology and web opportunities help. Representative of Edu: Deputy General Manager

## 4.5 Tracking competitors

Tech representatives recognized that the world, the firm's customers, and their needs changing were reasons why a firm wanting to grow and be successful cannot wait passively for orders to arrive. This means that service providers must track competitors and constantly be alert to changes in their markets. Tech's managers pointed out that the firm has kept its head above water through difficult times by anticipating the changing needs of its customers and the strategic moves of its competitors. Edu's management stated tracking competitors had proved to be a catalyst for renewing its service offering and acquiring new ideas.

We might have a doubt that our competitor does certain issues better than us, and we have to think what we should do about it. Customer of Tech: Development Manager

## 4.6 Tracking the external environment

It is important to constantly track changes in the markets and follow world politics and different industry reports. A successful firm will then reflect on, analyse, and react to these market messages. Service providers need to be proactive and try to sense new trends. According to Tech, when a firm actively applies the various practices of market sensing, market sensing starts to happen automatically, almost subconsciously, as the practitioners follow their intuition. Edu representatives underlined the importance of

developing the ability to react quickly to changes in the market and to anticipate future events far enough in advance to enable the firm to be proactive.

We constantly track changes in the field and in the operations of firms…what kind of market messages are flowing. Then, different institutions produce various kinds of summary reports. (…) We have to follow them and then, of course, world politics. (…) We interview and collect information through different means, through friendships and by other practical means. Representative of Edu: Lecturer

### 4.7 Developing expertise

In-depth knowledge and expertise gained through education, continuous learning, work experience and relationships enables a firm's staff to anticipate what the customers want at a given moment. Tech representatives emphasized that their in-depth knowledge meant they did not have to act like a vacuum cleaner salesperson and harass their customers, because they knew the situation the customers were in, and when they should contact them. Consequently successful firms realize experienced professionals are crucial to the firm's market-sensing capability and the wisdom of hiring and retaining the best people. Intuition was seen as very important by respondents from both case firms. Intuition is developed on the basis of extensive knowledge and experience gained over a period of years. Intuition helped firms to anticipate the current and future needs of customers and to contact them at the right time with the right proposal.

The more in-depth knowledge you have, the more able you are to analyse the entity and the priorities there. Customer of Edu: Manager

To conclude, anticipating the current and future needs of a customer is a huge challenge, and requires firms to develop their market-sensing capability. The findings of this study isolate seven key practices of market sensing within existing customer relationships in the KIBS environment.

### 5. Conclusions, limitations and avenues for future research

The purpose of this study was to explore the practices of market sensing within existing customer relationships in the KIBS environment. Its findings suggest seven important practices can help a firm to sense the current and future needs of its customers.

Consistent with the claim of Harrison-Walker (2001), market sensing was seen as a continuous process of acquiring information, sharing and interpreting it within the organization, and utilizing it. The findings of this study support the view of Day (2002) especially with regard to tracking competitors and the external environment, but also reveal other practices that Day did not mention. These practices are trust creation, knowledge sharing, visiting customers, reducing administrative constraints and developing expertise. The findings of this study show that trust is not just a feature of customer relationships in the KIBS area (Den Hertog, 2000; Karantinou & Hogg, 2009), but rather an informed and deliberate practice. A firm should consciously focus on creating trust and reducing administrative constraints to create a basis for smooth knowledge sharing within the organization and with its customers. Visiting customers, on the other hand, enables a service provider to learn the processes and the needs of its customers, which is essential if it is to be able to recognize new needs and trends sufficiently early. The findings showed that the practice of developing expertise seemed essential for market sensing, since extensive expertise made it possible to anticipate what customers wanted at a given moment and meant the service provider did not have to harass the customer. The findings also indicate that deep expertise support the development of intuition, which is a powerful tool in market sensing, as was also suggested by Patterson et al. (2012). Overall, the findings confirm the importance of a firm encouraging its customers to enter into dialogue and commit to knowledge sharing in order to elicit the required knowledge (Ritala et al., 2013). The findings of the current research confirm that the practices of market sensing should be continuous with knowledge flowing throughout the organization like blood through the circulatory system in the human body, a metaphor suggested by Day (2002).

This article makes a theoretical contribution to the scientific discussion on market sensing and KIBS by illustrating market sensing as a dynamic capability. It does so by presenting context-specific examples of the practices of market sensing within customer relationships in the KIBS environment. From a managerial perspective, being adept at the practices of market sensing is important for strategic decision making and is a skill that can deliver competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate. Thus, this study not only adds to the current literature, but also offers far-reaching practical implications for managers. Its findings illustrate through seven practices how marketing practitioners can utilize a market-sensing capability to understand current and future customer needs more efficiently. The current research offers context-specific knowledge obtained by

undertaking a case study in two different KIBS firms. Its findings reflect the perspectives of both the service providers and the customers, and that dual perspective facilitated a complete description of the phenomenon. To conclude, awareness of the practices of market sensing appears to be a prerequisite to survive in a tough competitive environment, and if true would make adopting these identified practices essential for every firm.

There are some limitations to this study. Its findings might not be generalizable beyond KIBS firms, and the single country location of the data set might further limit generalization. Nevertheless, the findings of this study clearly show that there are important practices related market sensing that firms would be wise to adopt to improve their chances of survival in hyper-competitive environments. Market sensing is an emerging and increasingly important topic and more research is definitely warranted on the area. An interesting topic for future research might be examining the role of other stakeholders, such as competitors, in the market-sensing phenomenon. Another interesting topic would be to explore market sensing in other types of KIBS. In addition, it might be beneficial to research market sensing in other service sectors or in b-to-c markets to explore possible differences and similarities compared to KIBS.

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