

A Review on Combined Business-To-Business Promotion Approaches during the Covid Pandemic Outbreak

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Abstract

Although collaboration should improve corporate performance, it is uncertain how some business-to-business marketing tactics would be used amid large-scale disasters. Consequently, this research examines ways organisations used the cooperation to address the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, guided by asset theory and a relational viewpoint. Retailers exchanging stock information, pharmaceutical companies cooperating to create a vaccine, technology behemoths combining for the common good, and charities establishing partnerships for a common purpose are just a few examples. This article adds to the existing literature by emphasising the diversity of collaboration tactics businesses may use during a universal disaster. Practitioners must strike a balance between the risks and rewards associated with cooperation efforts. Therefore, they must decide whether to continue collaborating with competitors or to revert to individualistic economic tactics after the pandemic has gone. The paper concludes with several suggestions for further study.

Keywords: Coronavirus, B2B, Collaboration

Introduction

The main goal of collaboration is to achieve goals that would be difficult to achieve alone [61]. The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused significant changes in trade [71]. Restaurants and other businesses have closed due to increasing demand for home delivery, and business failure rates have grown dramatically (Washington Post, 2020). Certain industries, such as food and beverage merchants who have replaced closed restaurants and bars, are doing better than others [30]. Open innovation and horizon planning are two ways to prepare for a post-pandemic future [74]. Ritter and Lund Pedersen (2020) advise decision-makers to evaluate their business models in terms of consumers, service offerings, value demonstrations, and competences. They argue that CEOs must set realistic company goals during and after the crisis. As a result, companies like Coca-Cola, Chevron, and Ford are manufacturing protective equipment components rather than their regular goods (Fortune, 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak's significant impact on the global business climate has led to greater cooperation (collaboration) amongst rival companies ([46]; [17]). Given the pandemic's effect and the necessity to balance economic and health-related objectives, even politicians have joined in (National Post, 2020). Whether in horizontal or vertical collaborations, companies combine their resources and talents to help one another, collaboration is defined as "a paradoxical link between these two or more performers" (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Gnyawali, Madhavan, He, & Bengtsson, 2016; Park, Srivastava, & Gnyawali, 2014; Pattinson, Nicholson, & Lindgreen, 2018). The capacity of a company to successfully manage the interactions among network connections is one of the key competencies that directly impacts its competitive strength and performance, according to Ritter, Wilkinson, and Johnston (2002). While poor inter-firm management may lead to conflicts and opportunistic behaviour (Crick, Crick, & Chaudhry, 2020; Czakon & Czernek, 2016; Luo, Rindfleisch, & Tse, 2007; Raza-Ullah, Bengtsson, & Kock, 2014), there is a large body of research on successful inter-firm management (Felzensztein, Stringer, Benson-Rea, & Freeman, 2014; Ritala, 2012; Velu, 2016).

There has been minimal study on using cooperative activities in times of crisis. To cope with the potentially disastrous effects of widespread crises, practitioners in small and large organisations must manage the conflict between cooperation and competitiveness (e.g., COVID-19). In these uncertain times, researchers and practitioners cannot

determine whether competition is (a performance-driving business-to-business marketing strategy. The utilisation of various kinds of cooperation during a pandemic crisis is urgently needed, as are the benefits and drawbacks for the companies engaged (together with their customers and other key stakeholders). These findings illustrate the dangers and benefits of cooperating with industry competitors in unusual circumstances. This article will explore how resource-based theory and the relational perspective may help decision-makers adjust their business models in times of crisis (Barney, 1991; Dyer, Singh, & Hesterly, 2018; Lavie, 2006). (On COVID-19) This study's accomplishment adds three important elements to business marketing:

These findings define cooperation as a collection of firm-level behaviours used to help companies (that would not otherwise collaborate) function in a chaotic environment (building upon Pangarkar, 2007; Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016).

For example, in an emergency, organisations may be unable to collaborate with rivals due to political, bureaucratic, or legal reasons (responding to Neuwirth & Svetlicinii, 2015; Schiavone & Simoni, 2019).

(3) The cooperation paradox's sensitivity is evaluated to better understand how companies may collaborate with competitors during (and perhaps after) a pandemic catastrophe (following Luo et al., 2007; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Crick, 2019).

This essay is structured to offer these three contributions. First, we review the literature on collaborative framing. 2 papers on basic issues in B2B marketing literature are discussed. These describe how some companies have adapted their business structures to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, managerial implications and recommendations are addressed. On finally discusses possible research possibilities.

An examination of the relevant literature

Relational and resource-based philosophies the resource-based viewpoint examines how an organization's resources, capabilities, and performance interact (Barney, 1991). This lens' fundamental assumption is that larger companies with greater resources and expertise can typically outperform smaller companies with lesser earnings (Barney, 1991; Nason & Wiklund, 2018). In order to achieve a competitive edge, firms must utilise resources and talents in a systematic way (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2014). However, ownership of resources and talents does not necessarily indicate a competitive advantage; strategic decision-making flexibility is often more important (Priem & Butler, 2001). Collaboration as a business-to-business marketing strategy is consistent with resources and competences – a performance-enhancing resource-based theoretical link (Gnyawali & Charleton, 2018; Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018). For example, Rindfleisch & Moorman (2003) discovered that by working with rivals (inter-firm cooperation), companies may gain new resources and talents (along with their assets) to reach greater levels of performance.

Despite this, the resource-based approach fails to account for the nature of the connection within collaboration strategies, such as which rivals businesses cooperate and how cooperation happens (as noted by Crick, 2019). The relational viewpoint looks at how good inter-organizational relationships (including with competitors) may help businesses succeed (Dyer & Singh, 1998). A recent study by Barney (2018) added a stakeholder component to the resource-based approach, highlighting instances when decision-makers should work closely with key partners (e.g, competitors) to achieve great market success. Thus, resource-based theory and the relational viewpoint may be utilised to examine the cooperative and competitive aspects of cooperation (building on Lavie, 2006; Barney, 2018; Dyer et al., 2018). This study utilised asset theory and the relational viewpoint to evaluate the deployment of cooperation techniques in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The origins of the collaboration construct

In the 1990s, two schools of cooperation emerged as an organizational-wide attitude regarding managers and functional-level workers believing in the necessity of working with industry competitors. Comparative advantage is a set of firm-level behaviours where companies exchange resources and skills with rivals to enhance market success. This latter viewpoint has led to a sustained interest among decision-makers in resource and capacity sharing, as well as the connection to business success (see Bouncken & Kraus, 2013; Crick & Crick, 2019; Hoffmann, Lavie, Reuer, & Shiplov, 2018; Luo et al., 2007). Furthermore, Bengtsson & Kock (1999) did not define collaboration, instead focusing on competitor collaboration. Bengtsson & Kock (2000) defined collaboration as the interaction of cooperation and rivalry between two competing businesses. They then expanded their conceptualizations to include horizontal and vertical channels, as well as cooperation between competitors (Bengtsson & Kock, 2014). That is, how different types of cooperation connect to respective practitioners' reactions to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Large-scale crises and competition activities

There is scant research on how collaboration may help reduce global disasters (see Medrano & Olarte- Pascual, 2016). Pangarkar (2007) found that partnerships helped businesses survive the global financial crisis. Pangarkar (2007) claims that partnerships helped these firms save costs, increase productivity, and satisfy customers (supplementing Rindfleisch & Moorman, 2003; Ritala, 2012; Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018). As a consequence, this research examines how particular businesses have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from current study on different B2B marketing strategies related to the global pandemic (e.g., [71]). In order to illustrate the collaborative architecture's advantages to the businesses involved, their consumers, and other key stakeholders, the following news articles were selected. These ideas extend earlier scholarly arguments on how businesses may alter their business models in response to COVID-19 (Chesborough, 2020; Lund Pedersen & Ritter, 2020).

Technological collaboration for the greater good

The COVID-19 CTI League includes top executives from Microsoft and Amazon to fight the pandemic's cybersecurity risks (Security, 2020). Because of the increasing number of individuals working from home and buying online, there is an increased risk of cyberattacks, such as phishing efforts. Environ 400 members from rival companies make up the COVID-19 CTI League. These high-tech companies already had the ideas and assumptions that collaborating with competitor firms would help them perform better than competing under an individualistic business model (as evidenced by Security, 2020). This confirms previous findings that a collaborative attitude is a key driver of behavioural forms of cooperation (e.g., Gnyawali & Charleton, 2018; Gnyawali & Park, 2011; McGrath et al., 2019). So they were ready to collaborate on B2B marketing in a crisis. It seems that the COVID-19 CTI League had the means and skills to transform their competitive attitudes into collaborative initiatives to assist consumers and companies throughout the epidemic.

To achieve mutually advantageous results from business-to-business partnerships, companies must invest in value-adding physical and intangible assets (reinforcing Ritala et al., 2014; Czakon & Czernek, 2016). Other COVID-19-related technological collaborations have occurred. For example, Apple and Google have collaborated to improve tracking technology to determine the number of infected, those in close contact with those sick, and the number of cases and fatalities in certain areas (The Guardian, 2020). The data-sharing features of the Apple iPhone are currently incompatible with Android devices, which this collaboration aims to rectify. This kind of

cooperation has several advantages. First, by tracking illness and possibly saving lives, B2B marketing creates benefit for society (building upon Milne, Iyer, & Gooding-Williams, 1996). In addition, organisations are using their resources and skills to assist stop the epidemic (in line with Neuwirth & Svetlicinii, 2015). Troisièmement, productive workers may get additional assets and knowledge. These firms use better data to create better products and services in the future (extending Lacoste, 2012). These large-scale technologically focused cooperation tactics highlight the many benefits of these business-to-business marketing partnerships (Gnyawali & Charleton, 2018; Gnyawali & Park, 2011). These processes include social results that indicate that cooperation is a good approach in times of crisis (Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012; Crick, 2019). (Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016; Pangarkar, 2007).

Non-profit organizations forming alliances for a joint cause

Concerning the non-profit sector, a small group of competing organisations in the UK have been working together to react to COVID-19 by pooling funds, borrowing equipment (e.g. contact centres and cars), and sharing personnel and volunteers (Wyllie, 2020). Charities work to raise awareness (or eliminate) a certain problem (e.g., homelessness, cancer research, heart disease, and animal welfare), thus working with rival businesses may be acceptable (O'Shaughnessy, 1996). As for why charity should work together to combat this epidemic, job losses and corporate bankruptcies have increased homelessness and hunger (CNN, 2020). So nonprofits are under more pressure to assist needy people. Less important to the COVID-19 epidemic than sales and profit are the mutually beneficial non-profit outcomes of cooperation activities that charities seek to achieve (see Milne et al., 1996). In other words, these non-profit groups have set aside their competitive differences (about the need for contributions) to work together for this shared purpose (Wyllie, 2020). The "social" value of these B2B marketing partnerships is enhanced by the fact that they help under-resourced companies improve their performance, among other mutually beneficial consequences (following Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Rusko, 2011; Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018). These non-profits have also demonstrated how shifting market pressures may change a sector's cooperative and competitive dynamics, pushing them to cooperate with competitors (building upon Priem & Butler, 2001; Crick, 2019). Here are some management implications and suggestions.

Implications for managers and suggestions

This article discusses the implications for practitioners.

Market-level conditions that allow competitors to work together in times of crisis should be exploited. Consider this:

- ◆ If competition restrictions are relaxed, firms should take advantage of the increased freedom to trade resources and talents with trustworthy and complementary industry rivals.
- ◆ For example, in the case of a worldwide disaster, companies should consider how to improve performance, meet unexpected demand, streamline supply chains, or even survive in a volatile market. Second, owner-managers should know their legal rights to engage in cooperative enterprises.
- ◆ This includes establishing monopolies, charging excessive rates, or driving down prices to influence the performance of smaller competitors who are not part of their cooperation agreements.
- ◆ While crisis cooperation is allowed (e.g. COVID-19), many countries continue to penalise collusive competitive strategies. As a consequence, companies must avoid illegal

cooperation. In other words, even when businesses cooperate with rivals, there will be some degree of rivalry (no matter how small).

- ◆ Rather of depending on their cooperation partners to flourish in their marketplaces, decision-makers should have measures in place that allow them to compete under an individualistic business model.
- ◆ Owner-managers should be aware that after the global pandemic has passed (and certain forms of cooperation may be banned), it may be tough to break up with rivals. As a consequence, they should decide ahead of time how much they would cooperate rather than compete.
- ◆ Fourth, owners, managers, and employees must understand that cooperation is a risky business-to-business marketing strategy. Hence:
- ◆ Decision-makers should supplement cooperation efforts with reliable partners to avoid unfavourable situations that lead to conflicts, intellectual property loss, and reduced competitive advantages.
- ◆ Opportunistic cooperation partners should be avoided by owners-managers and functional-level employees.
- ◆ These managerial implications are important to keep in mind while using collaborative methods in times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Contrary to popular belief, working with dishonest competitors may be risky. If these conditions are met, cooperation efforts may be helpful during a global emergency. The next section will discuss future research areas.

Further Scope for Research

A corpus of study on cooperation exists in the wider business-to-business marketing literature (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Crick & Crick, 2019; Czakon et al., 2020; Pattinson et al., 2018). It is important to first investigate cooperative initiatives in times of crisis, like COVID-19 (building upon Pangarkar, 2007; Medrano & Olarte-Pascual, 2016). Or, in other words:

Q1: When did businesses (from various industries and countries) collaborate with rivals during the COVID-19 epidemic?

Q2: During the pandemic crisis, what collaboration methods (important resources and skills) were used?

Q3: During this large-scale catastrophe, how did this collaborative effort benefit the company?

Second, cooperative and competitive factors underlie cognitive cooperation (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Lascaux, 2020; Luo et al., 2007; Mattsson & Tidstrom, 2015). Consider what happens once the COVID-19 situation is addressed. Until the worldwide epidemic is finished, it will be impossible to explore these problems. However, here are some study topics:

Q4: How will businesses utilise their resources and talents in the future?

Q5 : How does withdrawing substantial physical and non-physical assets function in practise?

Q6: The owner-managers and functional workers would need to violate their cooperation agreements for how long?

Q7: Can small and big businesses survive after the COVID-19 pandemic? Third, assume ineffective management. This raises the question of the benefits of collaboration during (and after) a pandemic. Common sense suggests that cooperative operations may damage business performance by increasing conflicts (e.g., dispute, power imbalances, and opportunism), reducing intellectual property, and reducing competitive advantage (Crick & Crick, 2020; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Tidstrom, 2014).

Q8: Is there any downside to cooperating during (or after) an epidemic emergency (such poor performance)?

Q9. Is the relationship between cooperation and business success simple (e.g., quasi-inversion U-shaped – including moderating effects)? RQ10: In a worldwide crisis, how can managers and workers manage collaborative relationships to avoid disaster? For example, rather of concentrating on policy or B2C marketing (e.g., Gao et al., 2015; Neuwirth & Svetlicinii, 2015; Schiavone & Simoni, 2019), future study could demonstrate how B2B marketing researchers may help to understanding cooperation techniques during (and after) a pandemic crisis (e.g., COVID-19). These follow the previous outcomes and practitioner suggestions. This article leads to numerous conclusions.

Conclusions

This study examined how companies may change their business models via collaborative methods during times of crisis, guided by resource-based theory and the relational perspective (concentrating on COVID-19). For this study, the following three findings were drawn from academic and practical sources. The first conclusion is that cooperation may be a successful business-to-business marketing approach in a pandemic, benefiting both parties (as well as their customers and other key stakeholders). The second conclusion is that cooperation activities combine cooperative and competitive pressures, and that decision-makers should avoid collaborating with competitors who perform poorly. The third (and last) conclusion is that after the COVID-19 outbreak, the future of current cooperation methods is uncertain. These issues were framed into interesting future research topics for business-to-business marketing academics to explore.

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