

CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND STUDENTS: SOME PITFALLS OF BEING CUSTOMER DRIVEN

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ABSTRACT

Many educational institutions, based on the marketing concept, routinely evaluate faculty, courses, and departments by using student evaluations (students being viewed as the primary customer). This use of student feedback rests on two assumptions: 1) the ability of the student to assist in the development of the core educational offering, and 2) the ability of the student to assess the core aspects of the educational offering. These assumptions are challenged, and the implications for educational institutions are explored.

INTRODUCTION

The marketing concept specifies that the firm should create exchanges that satisfy the consumer's and the firm's objectives (Day 1994; Drucker 1954; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Kotler 1977; Shapiro 1988). Firms that give consumer welfare a central role in strategic planning will succeed -- absolutely, relatively, and indefinitely. The apparent logical soundness of the marketing concept accounts for its long and intense promotion by marketing academics and business columnists and for its current widespread acceptance among practitioners in a variety of businesses and other areas.

To *implement* the marketing concept, it is typically assumed that the firm should focus on the consumer for detailed guidance in the development of the marketing strategy. Firms employ a variety of research methodologies to obtain information directly from consumers to aid strategic planning at the level of setting objectives, selecting target markets, positioning of products, creating new products, re-designing existing products, developing package designs, appraising advertising copy, designing distribution channels and setting prices (e.g., in-depth interviews, focus groups, conjoint measurement, observational techniques, survey research). Firms also measure/monitor consumer attitudes and satisfaction/dissatisfaction after the consumer has purchased and consumed the product or service. Recently firms have begun

to tie results of satisfaction surveys to employee compensation.

It is not the purpose of this paper to challenge the marketing concept (although some have argued that it borders on being tautological). Instead, we propose that some important changes must be made in the procedures used by firms in their attempt to successfully implement the marketing concept. This paper is only concerned with the application of the marketing concept to students (i.e., when students are viewed as customers by educational institutions). We believe it is especially critical to address this issue at this time since many educational institutions now routinely evaluate faculty, courses and departments (in large part or in whole) on the basis of student evaluations (Cholakian 1994). Also, entire educational programs *across universities* are now being routinely evaluated by outside media organizations; some of these evaluations are based, to a very significant extent, on student evaluations (e.g., Business Week's Survey of MBA Programs).

In this paper we attempt to stimulate research interest in questions concerning: 1) students' ability to assist educators in acquiring the data required for the *development* of the "core" aspects of new educational offerings and 2) students' ability to assist educators in acquiring data for the *assessment* of the "core" aspects of current educational offerings. To achieve our goals we adopt the (admittedly extreme) position that students cannot make such judgments. But our two basic points are that, given the extreme importance of this issue, it behooves us, as researchers in the field of consumer satisfaction, to empirically evaluate the appropriateness of the use of student data in an educational context for these purposes and, if we find that such use is inappropriate, to educate others (e.g., other educators, alumni, government officials, the mass media, the general public) concerning the pitfalls of this approach.

PITFALL #1 -- THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Assumption of the Knowledgeable Consumer

In the development of new products and services, firms engage in many types of research on consumers because they assume that consumers are knowledgeable about their detailed desires with respect to a particular product or service. But due to factors such as the complexity of certain products or services, many consumers simply cannot specify what it is they want in a detailed manner.

Consider, for example, Ohmae's (1988) influential article in favor of a customer-oriented (as opposed to a competitor-oriented) strategy. His best example concerned the huge success experienced by firms who re-designed their "lens-shutter" or compact 35 mm cameras (as opposed to single-lens reflex cameras). But, it is to be noted that little in the way of detailed research on the consumer was actually performed in this instance. Instead the technical staff collected a sample of 18,000 pictures in a film lab and studied intensely the 7% that the technicians judged to be faulty in some manner. The most common types of faults experienced by snapshot photographers were identified to be "poor distance adjustment," "not enough light," "double exposures," and "poor camera-film speed adjustment." The technicians then developed solutions to these problems in the form of new camera features such as "automatic focus," "built-in flash," "automatic film advance," and "automatic film speed reading." It was the technicians, *acting without benefit of detailed information from consumers*, who developed an improved camera and reversed the fortunes of these firms with respect to this particular type of camera. The knowledge on which these product improvements were based came from the expertise of the technicians (concerning photography and cameras) and from the basic research and development efforts conducted by the firms involved. It was simply assumed that the relevant consumer goal was the abstract desire of "taking good pictures."

Hence, this powerful example of a successful customer-driven approach to the development of

strategy actually illustrates that consumers were taken out of the research loop at a very early stage because the average snapshot photographer simply does not have sufficient knowledge about cameras or about photography to allow firms to gain useful insights for significant product improvements from the study of consumers' desires. See Ohmae (1988) for additional examples of the non-use of the consumer in customer-oriented research. And see Martin (1995) for additional and more current examples of the "ignoring" of consumers in successful new product research and development efforts.

Another important illustrative example concerns the physician-patient relationship. At a very abstract level, patients know what they desire; i.e., "good health," "to get well," "to eliminate a disease." But in most cases patients are unable to state the exact nature of their desires because the determinants of ill health are very complex; considerable knowledge about medicine, physiology, pharmacology, microbiology, etc. is required to diagnose a disease correctly and to prescribe an appropriate treatment (i.e., to specify one's detailed desires).

It follows therefore that health care providers (i.e., physicians, hospital administrators, nurses) are greatly limited in what they can learn about the "core" service offerings from a detailed study of a patient's desires, although they may learn something valuable about certain "supplemental" aspects of the service offering. Core product/service offerings deal with the basic goal the consumer wants achieved, such as "getting well." Supplemental services deal with extra amenities of the product/service or the way in which the product/service is delivered; e.g., a physician's bedside manner.

To correctly diagnose a patient's medical needs and to prescribe an appropriate treatment, health care providers either must already have this knowledge from their past, formal medical training or they must obtain this knowledge from continuing education (e.g., by reading the latest medical research journals and attending seminars). In some very important cases, certain health care providers obtain this knowledge by conducting basic research on diseases and/or methods of treatment.

The Assumption of the Knowledgeable Student

How knowledgeable are students about their detailed desires? "Students" are just beginning in their chosen fields; *by definition* they do not have the knowledge that they desire. Like snapshot photographers and medical patients, current or prospective students frequently know their desires only in a vague or abstract way; i.e., "a good education," "a good preparation for a job." Undergraduates are often uncertain about which specific career path they will pursue as evidenced by the frequent switching of majors that occurs during the early years of an undergraduate program. (According to a 1995 study at Indiana University, where students do not enter a degree granting unit until their sophomore year, only 49% of the undergraduate students currently enrolled are in a degree granting unit that they declared at the time of matriculation.) Even among those students within a selected program of study, many don't know which courses to take to achieve their stated goals; frequently they require detailed personal advising on course selection. And, most important, students typically don't know what the core content of a particular course or set of integrated courses should be.

Hence, as with the snapshot photography consumer and the medical patient, the knowledge required by the educator for the design of the core features of a new educational offerings or for the re-design of existing offerings cannot be obtained from students. Instead, as with health care providers, it is incumbent upon *educators* (i.e., professional organizations, the university, the school, the department, and individual professors) to determine students' educational requirements. If the knowledge required for the development of new educational services or for the refinement of existing offerings (e.g., programs, courses within programs, and course content) has not already been acquired by educators during their past, formal training (i.e., their doctoral program) then it is incumbent upon these educators to obtain this knowledge from continuing education efforts (e.g., by reading relevant journals in their fields and by attending conferences). And, importantly, it is incumbent upon educators to contribute to the development of new knowledge by conducting basic research.

To illustrate the very challenging nature of the curriculum design task facing today's educators consider the following quote, "... students now graduating from our universities will change professions -- not jobs, but professions -- several times and will enter professions that do not now exist, as the computer professions did not exist only a short time ago. In these circumstances, in order to succeed, women and men will need the single most important result derived from college education -- the capacity for continual learning." (from the Inaugural Address of Myles Brand, 16th President of Indiana University, January 19, 1995).

And, according to Hamel and Prahalad (1994), in order "to see the future first," business firms must be much more than customer-led. Firms must be prepared to "... lead consumers where they want to go, but don't know it yet." According to the Sony Corporation, "The consumer does not know what is possible, we do!" Hamel and Prahalad (1994) cite several examples of highly successful products for which the customer "lacked foresight" (e.g., cellular phones, fax machines, CD players, global positioning systems, photocopiers). Martin (1995) also argues that firms should "ignore" the customer in the development of new products/services and provides still more examples of successful innovations for which consumers lacked foresight (e.g., microwave ovens, the minivan, PC network servers). No less than business firms, *and maybe more* so since universities educate future business and governmental leaders, it is the responsibility of educators to see the future first and to develop the educational offerings required for that future.

PITFALL #2 -- THE EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The Assumption Concerning the Ability to Evaluate Products/Services

The second assumption to be critically evaluated concerns consumers' ability to evaluate the performance of a particular product or service. This assumption may be incorrect for various reasons.

Consumers may lack the necessary sensory capability; for example, consumers cannot detect

(i.e., smell, taste, or see) even dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide gas leaking from a faulty heating device.

Consumers frequently lack the knowledge required to evaluate the performance of a product or service. The physician-patient relationship serves to illustrate this type of limitation. Given the complexities of certain diseases, their treatments, and their associated tests it is often impossible for a patient to evaluate the quality of the service provided by a physician. For example, without detailed imaging data and the training required to accurately read/interpret these data, it is impossible for the patient to determine if a particular cancer treatment has been effective. Even if the outcome "appears" to be good (i.e., the patient feels better), the patient has no valid way of knowing whether or not the disease has been cured. Further, even if the patient actually knows the outcome is good (i.e., the disease has been successfully cured), the patient has no valid way of knowing whether another physician could not have provided the same or even better service in a more effective manner or for less time or cost. And, if the outcome is bad, the patient has no valid way of knowing whether or not any other physician could have performed any better.

To add still more complexity to this already complex evaluation process, the outcome of many medical treatments depends in large part upon the motivation and ability of the patient to conscientiously follow the prescribed course of treatment. Prescriptions may never be filled and if they are filled patients may deviate from the recommended amounts or schedules.

The distinction made in the service quality literature between "core" product/service offerings and "supplemental" services is also relevant here. When the core service is difficult to judge, the consumer is likely to base evaluations on supplemental services. A theoretical perspective is provided by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1986), which states that people can form an attitude based on either a careful evaluation of relevant arguments concerning the stimulus (central route) or based on peripheral cues that do not involve active processing of the message arguments (peripheral route). For central processing to take place, the individual must have both the motivation to

process the message and the ability to process the message. When either is missing the individual is assumed to base his/her attitude on peripheral cues. Similarly, when consumers do not have the ability to judge the core product or service, they may base their evaluation on the supplemental services (Iacobucci, Grayson, and Ostrom 1994). The validity of consumer satisfaction surveys is suspect for this reason in several domains. In the automobile industry, for example, the J.D. Powers survey may be fundamentally flawed because most consumers are unable to evaluate core services such as repairs on mechanical or electronic systems. Low quality replacement parts could be used that do not reveal their deficiencies until long after the satisfaction survey has been completed.

Assuming that the physician has given careful consideration to each patient's unique characteristics during the diagnosis stage, it follows that the administration of patient satisfaction surveys can provide meaningful feedback only about the supplemental aspects of the patient-physician relationship. Which is not to say that patients will not comply with a request to evaluate the core services but that their evaluation of the core services may be based solely on their evaluation of the supplemental services. A valid source of feedback concerning the core aspects of medical services provided can only be provided by other persons who are knowledgeable in the field. (It is to be noted that in malpractice suits, only physicians who are qualified in a particular area of specialization are typically called to testify.) Hence, if health care providers are to produce truly satisfied patients, then they must be knowledgeable enough about diseases to be able to accurately diagnose and to treat these diseases effectively (i.e., the core services) *and* they must be able to provide the supplemental aspects of the services desired by the patient. Hence, patient surveys have value in as much as they can provide information concerning the patient's perception of these supplemental services.

The Assumption about Students' Ability to Evaluate Educational Services

Even after students have successfully completed a course or an entire program of study they still do not have the knowledge required to

accurately evaluate the core aspects of their educational experiences. This is due, in part, to the fact that they do not have the same amount of formal education and experience as the educators who designed and delivered the educational services. Typically, the instructors/professors who are assigned to teach courses or to develop a program of study have considerably more knowledge and experience in a basic discipline and hence are in a much better position to judge the appropriateness of the course content and the methods of teaching. But, perhaps equally important, students are unable to evaluate core aspects of educational services because they are unlikely to adopt the broad perspective that professional educators adopt. The student is likely to adopt a perspective that emphasizes personal, short-term benefits (e.g., "Am I enjoying this course?", "Will I get a high-paying job when I graduate?"). Professional educators, on the other hand, are more likely to adopt a perspective that emphasizes the benefits for "all" students involved (each of whom may be pursuing separate career paths). Professional educators are also more likely to emphasize the basic intellectual capabilities students require for the long term, not just "skills" for their first job. And professional educators are likely to adopt a "macro" or societal perspective, one which emphasizes issues such as the welfare of the state, the nation, the world, future generations, minorities, etc. In short, professional educators take into account a greater variety of "customers" than just students.

Even alumni and recruiters who have had years of "practical" work experience typically adopt a highly parochial perspective on education (e.g., "what my education did or didn't do for me," "the needs of my business firm now") rather than the multi-career, future-oriented, societal perspective adopted by professional educators. Alumni and recruiter views can be useful sources of information, but only if they are gathered in a methodologically sound and systematic fashion.

To provide some concrete examples of how difficult it is to meaningfully evaluate the quality of an educational program, inspect the 36 questions posed by Business Week in their assessment of MBA Programs. (See Table.) The first observation to be made is that only a few of the questions on this survey relate to the core

aspects of the educational experiences; the rest relate directly to supplemental services. (Yet, Business Week touts its survey as an attempt to determine the "best" MBA programs.) And of these core-related questions, it is clear that students are not capable of answering these questions in a valid or meaningful way. For example, Item 3 asks, "How would you rate the quality of the teaching in core courses?" How could any graduate of any MBA program answer this question meaningfully? Not only does the question combine all teachers in all core courses, it fails to address the fundamental issue of what constitutes "quality" teaching. (This is to say nothing of the possible bias MBA students may show toward their degree-granting institutions by providing the highest ratings possible knowing, as they do, that these results will be made public and will influence the value of their degree.) Item 9, "Do you believe the faculty compromised teaching in order to pursue their own research?", is an incredibly biased question. Finally, consider Item 22, "Were your teachers at the leading edge of knowledge in their fields?" Without extensive knowledge of every discipline involved, how could any student know which professors were or were not on the leading edge? Further, it is likely that faculty who are actively engaged in research are also at the leading edge of knowledge in their field, producing a conflict with Item 9.

As stated above, when asked to do so, students will make judgments of the core aspects of their educational experiences. In addressing the question of why respondents respond when they shouldn't, Fischhoff (1991, p. 841) states, "... In this regard, an inherent difficulty with most surveys and experiments is that there is little cost for misrepresenting one's values, including pretending that one has them. By contrast, offering no response may seem like an admission of incompetence. Why would a question have been posed if the (prestigious?) individuals who created it did not believe that one ought to have an answer? With surveys, silence may carry the additional burden of disenfranchising oneself by not contributing a vote to public opinion..."

But evaluations of core aspects are very likely to be based on supplemental aspects such as keeping office hours, being friendly, and helping to find jobs. It is even possible for individual

Table 1
Business Week's Survey of MBA Students

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1. To what extent did your MBA experience fulfill or fail to meet your expectations of what a good program should be?
 2. Do you believe your MBA was worth its total cost in time, tuition, and lost earnings?
 3. How would you rate the quality of the teaching in core courses?
 4. Overall, how did the quality of the teachers compare with others you have had in the past?
 5. Were the faculty available for informal discussion when classes were not in session?
 6. To what extent were faculty aware of the material other faculty members would cover?
 7. To what extent was the course work integrated as opposed to being taught as a cluster of loosely related topics?
 8. How current was the material/research presented in class for discussion and review?
 9. Do you believe the faculty compromised teaching in order to pursue their own research?
 10. Did you receive practical information during the program that will be usable on the job?
 11. How would you judge the responsiveness of the faculty and administration to students' concerns and opinions?
 12. How would you assess the responsiveness of the school in meeting the demand for popular electives?
 13. How would you judge the opportunities given to you - either in class or in extracurricular activities to nurture and improve your skills in leading others?
 14. How would you judge the aggressiveness of the school in helping you with summer job placement or a summer internship?
 15. How would you characterize the school's performance in helping you find a job before graduation?
 16. How would you characterize the number and quality of firms recruiting on your campus?
 17. How would you appraise the placement office's help with matters such as interview training, negotiating strategy, resumes, etc.?
 18. Based on your own personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's efforts to include ethics in the MBA program.
 19. Based on your personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's efforts to include leadership topics in the MBA program.
 20. Based on your personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's efforts to include quality concepts in the MBA program.
 21. How would you rate the quality of the teaching in elective courses?
 22. Were your teachers at the leading edge of knowledge in their fields?
 23. To what extent were analytical skills stressed in the curriculum?
 24. As a result of the program, how would you judge your ability to deal with computers and other analytical tools that affect your ability to manage?
 25. How would you judge the school's performance in providing you with numerous ways of thinking or approaching problems that will serve you well over the long haul?
 26. Do you feel you classmates emphasized individual achievement at the expense of teamwork?
 27. Did the caliber of your classmates impede or enhance the learning process?
 28. Would you urge friends or colleagues to take the same MBA program at the school?
 29. How would you judge the school's network and connections that can help you throughout your career?
 30. If the organizations you targeted for employment did not recruit on campus, how would you assess your school's assistance in supporting your independent search for a job?
 31. Based on your own personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's effort to include international topics in the MBA program.
 32. Based on your personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's efforts on diversity.
 33. Based on your own personal level of satisfaction, please appraise your school's efforts to include information technology concepts in the MBA program.
 34. Was the amount of assigned work and reading so excessive that it impeded learning?
 35. To what extent were interpersonal skills stressed in the curriculum?
 36. How would you appraise your school's efforts to bring you into contact with practicing professionals in the business community?
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instructors and program administrators to "manipulate" teaching ratings or program ratings by taking advantage of students' inability to evaluate core services. For example, a professor could increase student ratings by emphasizing the amount of "consulting" or "real world" experiences that the professor has done or is currently doing with major business firms. Students may *infer* that this professor is therefore on the leading edge of knowledge in a particular area or discipline. Yet, the specific type of consulting or real world experiences may be equally difficult for students or anyone else to evaluate, and, even worse, it may be that the professor's real world consulting experiences are so highly "situational" that they have little relevance for helping today's students succeed in tomorrow's business world. (This is part of the

argument against hiring business practitioners as adjuncts to teach business courses in place of professional educators.) Indeed, professors who spend all or most of their time developing theories and conducting research on the behavior of business firms, managers, or consumers or developing new data analytic techniques may be in a much better position to identify/influence the fundamental forces that will shape entire industries and hence better prepare students for tomorrow's challenges. Consider, for example, the eventual and enormous impact on business practice of such "academic" topics as conjoint measurement and Black and Scholes' option pricing model.

To add to the complexity, many students who "pass" a course have mastered only a small part of the assigned material; not all students who enroll in a course have the motivation and/or ability to successfully complete all aspects of the course. Even those who receive very high grades may have learned only a small portion of the assigned material due to grade inflation, grading policies (e.g., only A's and B's are assigned), and the grading of "team" projects.

To produce satisfied students, educators must know what must be taught and must know how to teach it. They must not only know the content of their respective fields but they must keep abreast of changes in their field and they must know how this knowledge might be applied in the future. Educators must contribute to the generation of new knowledge and to the identification of trends within their discipline. And, most importantly, educators must persuade students of the long term value of their educational experiences. If it is communicated well and if it is communicated consistently (i.e., by all involved in the educational enterprise), students may come to accept the relevance and importance of the educational offerings educators believe are best for their students' long term welfare.

In order to provide and to continue to provide effective educational offerings, it is clear that educators who are new to academia must be well trained. This implies that students enrolled in doctoral level programs must acquire the latest and most appropriate content in their field and they must receive instruction in effective methods of instruction. And this implies that prospective educators must be taught how to continue their

education and how to generate new knowledge and skills by being able to conduct basic research in their field.

The above is not meant to imply that educators can be cavalier with regard to students. To produce truly satisfied students, educators must also attend to the supplemental services desired by students. A professor can treat students with respect, can be organized in the course, can be fair in grading, can be friendly to students, and can help them find jobs.

How then should the core aspects of educational services be evaluated? It should be clear that only those educators who have the expertise in a field and a multi-career, future-oriented, societal perspective can accurately evaluate issues such as course content, methods of instruction, and overall program quality. Clearly, this important evaluation task should not be undertaken solely by students nor should it be undertaken by outside firms such as the mass media whose motives (e.g., increasing magazine circulation, satisfying today's recruiters' needs) may not be consistent with the broader perspectives adopted by educators.

Students can provide useful feedback concerning important supplemental aspects such as the friendliness of the professor or the ease of accessibility of the instructor. But, student evaluations on such dimensions must not be interpreted as providing valid measures of the *core* educational offerings even though they may be closely related and have an important impact on the learning process. And student evaluation of supplemental aspects of educational services must be viewed as just that -- supplemental.

The problem arises because students are only capable of evaluating the supplemental aspects hence these supplemental aspects in effect become the *only* things that are measured in student surveys. Without other measures of performance on the core services by those qualified to make such evaluations, the supplemental attributes gain an inflated importance. And if these evaluations become too important, it may cause professors to alter their educational offering such that it gets good evaluations, even though it may not be in the student's best long-term interests. Faculty will be tempted to be entertaining without being demanding, and even begin to manipulate the

evaluations (e.g., send students birthday cards, administering evaluations after a particularly good class session, give few low grades, etc.). Given the co-occurrence of student evaluations and grade inflation, this may in fact be happening (Cholakian 1994). Even worse, it may lead to a reduction in the quality of the educational offerings (e.g., dropping rigorous statistical courses because they are perceived by students to be irrelevant).

DISCUSSION

We recognize that many educators view students as consumers due to important megatrends such as declining enrollments, rapidly rising tuition, and the impact of outside rating agencies such as Business Week on the prestige or relative "quality" of MBA programs. Educators, particularly many administrators, are under a great deal of pressure to "please the consumer" in the interest of maintaining revenues not only from enrollments but also from state legislatures and from private donors. Strong and steady pressures are also exerted on educators in other ways by alumni (e.g., comments collected during exit interviews or surveys, unsolicited comments), the general public (e.g., unsolicited letters), the mass media (e.g., their call for accountability in education), and even some educators (i.e., those who adopt the students' or firm's limited perspectives).

In this paper we are making a call for research in this very important area. If we are correct about students' inability to contribute meaningful information for the design of the core aspects of educational offerings, then important decisions concerning degrees, programs, courses, faculty rewards, etc. based mainly or entirely on student evaluations, will ultimately result in a deterioration of the quality of these offerings; the "worst" or the "mediocre" will be evaluated as the "best." (As would surely occur in medicine if health care providers abandoned their current commitment to core services in favor of supplemental services only.) In such an evaluation system, many educators will choose to spend the least amount of time engaged in the development of improved core offerings and in basic research in order to spend the most amount of time engaging in supplemental activities that are highly rated by the students.

If research in this area supports our position, then we must attempt to educate all relevant groups of the dysfunctional consequences of student evaluations. This may not be easy but it must be attempted. For example, it is unlikely that Business Week could be persuaded to discontinue their rating of MBA programs; but, it is reasonable to attempt to convince them to adopt a more valid method of evaluation of the core aspects of an MBA program. And, it is unreasonable to expect to alter the critical views of individual alumni concerning the *irrelevance* of basic mathematics or statistical courses; yet it would be possible to systematically sample a large, representative group of all alumni in order to obtain a more valid indication of the experiences of alumni in all types of career paths over a wider range of time periods rather than the views of a vociferous few or the views of the few who have been highly successful (and who are therefore disproportionately influential).

Educators in business schools must be particularly resistant to pressures to fill professional educators' positions with real world practitioners who promise instant "relevance" but who may actually deliver long term stagnation of "irrelevant" courses and course content (due to their lack of formal training in the conduct of basic research and their limited perspective on education). While the experiences of practitioners are valuable and usually are of great interest to students, these experiences can be incorporated into the curriculum in other, more effective ways (e.g., by guest speakers, short-term visiting positions). An important additional negative side-effect of the hiring of practitioners (e.g., as long term adjuncts) is to diminish the influence of professional educators in fundamental decisions concerning educational offerings (e.g., in committee meetings each participant typically casts one vote regardless of training).

Iacobucci, Grayson, and Ostrom (1994) have argued, "... no business would seek to satisfy customers if it meant jeopardizing their long term existence." Yet this is precisely what educators appear to be doing today. If educators are not successful in reversing this trend toward using student evaluations to guide the design of educational offerings, in the long run, everyone may lose. Current and prospective students may

get less for their money and time. Educators who believe in a multi-career, future-oriented, more societal perspective may become discouraged and detached. High quality students may no longer be attracted to the teaching profession. American universities may lose their world-wide status as premier centers for higher education and research. And, society at large may lose a very valuable educational resource that may be very difficult to restore.

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