

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING:  
A Case Study in an Industry**

**Catarina Ferreira Silveira**

*Masters in Production Engineering – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC)*  
*Teacher and Researcher at Instituto Federal de Educação,  
Ciência e Tecnologia da Bahia - IFBA*  
*Address: Rua Marcondes Ferraz, 200 – CEP 48.607-000 - Paulo Afonso/BA, Brasil*  
*E-mail: [catarinasilveira@uol.com.br](mailto:catarinasilveira@uol.com.br) / [catarina.silveira@ifba.edu.br](mailto:catarina.silveira@ifba.edu.br)*

**Leonardo Ensslin**

*Scholarship in Research Productivity at CNPq*  
*Post-Doctorate at Lancaster University*  
*PhD in Industrial Engineering and Systems (University of Southern California/USA)*  
*Teacher at Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina (UNISUL)*  
*Address: Rua Trajano, 199 – Centro 88.010-010 – Florianópolis/SC, Brasil*  
*E-mail: [leonardoensslin@gmail.com](mailto:leonardoensslin@gmail.com)*

**Sérgio Murilo Petri**

*Doctor in Production Engineering and Systems (UFSC)*  
*PhD in Industrial Engineering and Systems (University of Southern California/USA)*  
*Teacher at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC)*  
*Address: Rua João Meirelles, 1435 Bloco B Apto 101  
CEP 88.085-201 – Florianópolis/SC, Brasil*  
*E-mail: [sergio.petri@ufsc.br](mailto:sergio.petri@ufsc.br) / [smpetri@gmail.com](mailto:smpetri@gmail.com)*

**ABSTRACT**

*This article presents a building proposal of a model that allows identify competition criteria for organization improvement of small industry, with aim on relationship marketing. For that purpose, we embraced the Multi-Criteria Decision Aiding Methodologies - MCDA - which is a personalized procedure based upon the constructivist paradigm. This is a qualitative method, as it has subjective features and based on qualitative observations from natural phenomenon, taking into consideration the changeable characteristic of the phenomenon, there isn't absolute concerns about the control of the variables. The differential in this research lies in its capability to interact in two fields: Relationship Marketing, which is generally measured through tendencies and perceptions of the market, and the MCDA, which seeks to generate knowledge through the interaction of objectives as well as subjective aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Decision Aid; Relation Marketing; MCDA*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Performance appraisal and the word competitiveness are present in the discourse and in the actions of many companies, in multiple segments, as an essential item to their survival and prosperity. Within this context, the preparation of this research addresses the analysis of Marketing Relations within the Constructivist Methodology, recognized as the Multicriteria Decision Aid (MCDA). The model does not only evaluate the qualitative issues of the problem, but also quantitative aspects. Ensslin et al (2001) quotes that the MCDA methodology generates knowledge and understating to the decision maker, permitting a visualization of possible actions to better contribute towards the performance improvement related to the objectives within the context.

Within this context, a renowned scholar in the area of Marketing - Mckenna (1997) – is contrary to the use of quantification for the decision-making process. Thus, the differential of this paper is precisely the analysis, under the perspective of the MCDA-Constructivist, of the performance improvement in a company, aiming to create a network with its customers, partners and employees, though the concept of innovation and creativity.

For this purpose, the present article has the object of constructing a model to permit the identification, organization, measurement and integration of the key-factors for the organization improvement of an industry, focused on customer relations, evidencing its strong and weak points and, in this manner, indicating how the

Marketing Relations affects the performance of the company and demonstrate that the MCDA-C methodology is an instrument that could aid in the identification of paths to promote the success of the organization.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY CHOICE

In the present research, the perception of knowledge is based on the constructivist perspective. It is therefore understood that, in this environment, “decisions must be taken on a personalized manner according to the values of the person making the decision and not according to the values of that someone outside the context considers as being rational” (ENSSLIN, 2004).

The goal is not to discover and existing truth, external to the stakeholders involved in the process, but constructing “a set of keys” which might enable the stakeholders to go forward, progressing according to their own objectives and their value-systems (ROY, 1993, p.194 apud FERREIRA, 2004, p. 27).

Such a view of knowledge is justified, in the present research, due to the fact that it considers that decision-making involves the values and the relations of the board of directors of the organization with internal and external customers, partners and suppliers, together with the sundry organizational complexities, such as: negotiation, sales policies, social relations and financial aspects. The present research uses as sample the board of directors of the organization. This choice is due to the recognition of three main factors: the high decision-making power of the board in the various departments, to the small size of the company and to the low opportunities of participation of the employees. In-depth analysis of the interviews with the decision-maker was used for data collection, with semi-structured questions. Such procedures resulted in obtaining basically qualitative information.

## 3 O RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

The various economic, political and social transformations have gradually provided a greater recognition of the marketing area within organizations. Based on the exchange concepts, Relationship Marketing differs to Transactional Marketing, due to standards and objectives declared in the transactions.

Relationship Marketing is increasingly present in the corporate world. The consumer determines the rules, imposing a relationship that is more and more unconcerned with marketing interests. The challenge is that this relationship should become routinely interwoven with what the company can offer to the consumer, in the best form possible, making the customers progressively loyal to the trademark. Madruga (2004) conceptualizes relationship marketing as a form of attracting, emphasizing and intensifying the relationship with end customers, middlemen, suppliers, partners and government and non-government agencies. It also indicates an interrelationship, in other words, each individual works within his/her area of competence, nevertheless connected to others to construct, in a collaborative manner, processes for adding value. With the intent of creating a closer relationship, efforts and perspectives are concentrated in some customers, while others are rejected, with the consequent reduction of the portfolio of contacts. There are two important procedures for marketing appraisal and control according to Kotler (2000): the first is to *evaluate and interpret present results* and take corrective actions; and the second is to *proceed with a plan for improving the elements with weaknesses*, but important. It is in this context that the MCDA-C delivers its best contribution, once it acts as a methodology for identifying, organizing and measuring qualitative variables, and quantitative in this appraisal.

Relationship marketing is not limited to a loyalty program with a specific effort. Its functions have a wider span, considering also the importance of software, permitting a greater rapprochement between the customer and the company. The most well-known system is CRM - *Customer Relationship Management*: a technological support that has the purpose of attending, recognizing and caring for the customer in real time. The system searches for useful and centralized information, such as registered data, background of contacts, campaigns performed, products and services acquired, commercial conditions and levels of satisfaction. Relationship marketing, with well-structured strategies, creates mutual benefits – both for the company and for the customer. Observing this parameter, Madruga (2004, p. 29-30) reveals the following effects:

- a) *Increased longevity of the relationship* – characterized by customer retention, significant increase in long-term profit;
- b) *Increased productivity of relationship and sales channels* – increase specially in the customer service and sales channels in the measure in which agents invest more time with the contact that with duties that do not add value;
- c) *Reduction of bargains for prices* – the more the relationship is strengthened, the lower is the interest of the customer in bargaining prices;
- d) *Sustaining competitive advantages* – it is also perceived that there is a great benefit in sustaining competitive advantages between the company and its partners.

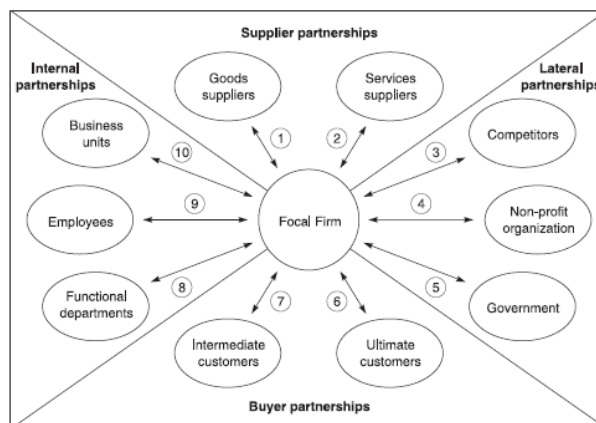


Figure 3.1 Ten discrete forms of Relationship Marketing with different partnerships  
 Source: MORGAN; HUNT (1994, p. 21)

Figure 3.1. clearly explains the four sources of relationships: supplier partnerships buyer partnerships, internal partnerships and lateral partnerships.

### 3.1 Loyalty

For Mckenna (1997) personal relationship is the only form of maintaining customer loyalty. In sectors of rapid transformation, these relations become increasingly important. In the measure in which technologies advance, and overlap, no company alone has the capacity and the necessary knowledge to take products and solutions to the market at the right time. Companies are in rapid growth, though previously very independent, they today form all sorts of alliances. It seems as if the small companies are in search of “sponsors”, while the large companies are trying to be bound to a greater number of beginners as possible. Loyalty is in consonance with the prerequisites of relationship marketing. Furlong (1994, p.3) states that reducing the exodus of customers, even if only 5% per year, causes an increase of up to 85% in profits. In the measure in which relationships remain for longer periods, the greater is the possibility of maintaining the loyalty through word-of-mouth propaganda.

<b>LEVEL 1</b>	<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>NÍVEL 3</b>
<i>Meeting the basic needs</i>	<i>Meeting needs + expectations</i>	<i>Meeting needs + expectations + desires</i>
The “play” button effect occurs. Working only with the price, delivery and basic needs. There is no differential. The focus of the attention is product/service not the person.	In this case, as well as dealing with the basic needs such as price, delivery and meeting the basic needs, the professional aims to meet additional expectations. In this point the service becomes more personalized and specific.	In this stage, apart from attending to the basic needs and expectations of the customer, the professional aims to know, understand and attend to their desires. It is here that “enchanted”, “surprising” the customer occurs. Now the price loses to the feeling of value.
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>RESULT</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
<b>There is no loyalty.</b> The consumer changes stores for a difference of a few cents.	<b>There may be loyalty.</b> Attention is required because the consumer has not been fully attended to.	<b>Fidelity.</b> The consumer feels fully satisfied and enchanted

Table 3.1.1 SERVICE LEVELS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY.  
 Source: RICCIOPPO JUNIOR (2002, p.103).

According to Furlong (1994, p.167), “customers like to know whether the company is interested in talking to them, mainly those with high buying power.” Therefore, it can be stated that customer loyalty is possible through contact. Analyzing this context, Riccioppo Junior (2002, p. 105) infers that “customer loyalty programs offer a constant relationship with the consumers, being highly efficient in obtaining longstanding relationships”. For this, the company must constantly research the levels of customer satisfaction and their requirements and desires, though intensive communication, without losing personal and marketing opportunities. Gordon (1994, p. 132) alludes to flirting: “it is unlikely to conquer the heart of someone forever, in one sole encounter”.

### 3.2 Relationship marketing in a small company

The growth of entrepreneurship is strongly marked at the end of the nineties. Small enterprises represent 3.5 million organizations, which in turn represent 98.3% of total registered companies, answering for 20.4% of the GDP and for 59.4% of the occupied workforce in the country, as referred by Souza (1995). The lifecycle of these companies is, in general, short and often associated to precarious planning and to uncertainties as to the focus of the business.

The small national retail trader performs an essential role in the distribution network of large organizations, once they are responsible for internalizing products to different markets (PACANHAN et al, 2004).

Pacanhán *et al.* (2004) determined some important recommendations in relationship marketing for small companies:

- a) *In relation to the selection of customers:* the choice of customers should be based on some criteria that indicate their importance to the company, such as the volume or frequency of purchases, reliability and credibility in payment;
- b) *In relation to the training of the salespersons:* this process is of extreme importance in the measure in which, in small companies, the salesperson is the point of contact of the organization with its customer;
- c) *In relation to customer service:* salespersons need to offer greater attention to preferential clients, with whom the company intends to develop a relationship, and this is only possible through the exchange of information;
- d) *Attention to needs:* the company should also be attentive to actions of the competitors and mainly, to the needs and desires of the consumer, aiming always to innovate and add value to their relations;

Relationship Marketing is a tendency that will involve not only small companies, but also organizations identifying in this concept a form of gaining customer loyalty and guaranteeing sales and enduring relationships.

### 3.3 A Constructivist Proposal for Performance Appraisal focused on Relationship Marketing

The Multicriteria Decision Aid Methodology is a science that aims to generate knowledge and understanding to the decision-maker toward a greater performance of the knowledge. Since it is a personalized procedure, the MCDA-C considers not only quantitative aspects (number of complaints, physical variables...), but also qualitative aspects (social, political factors...) in its appraisal. For Ensslin *et al.* (2001), the procedures of the MCDA-C Methodology generate knowledge and understanding to the decision-maker, in order that he/she may visualize possible actions that may alter the performance of the aspects judged necessary by the decision-maker.

To deal with Marketing strategies analyzing them strictly from qualitative aspects is a natural attitude among the scholars of the area. Mckenna (1997) defends this idea when assuring that Marketing personnel that base themselves on numbers have little chance of success.

A qualitative approach to the market goes beyond numbers, exploring trends and perceptions that generate the numbers. Analysis of attitude of consumers and personal relations. Only through understanding the market in a qualitative manner will the tradespeople be able to create a future (...) We need more companies acting in an enterprising manner. Successful entrepreneurs are not concerned with statistical market projections. They are not concerned whether the projections show a market of 5 or of 500 million dollars. They plan their strategy in a qualitative manner. They simply invest in good ideas, transforming these into products, adjusting constantly to the needs of the market. They create their own opportunities, with their best possible efforts in the shortest possible time. (MCKENNA, 1997, p. 36).

Mckenna (1997) states that the qualitative approach is also important for sales. Consumer tend to take decisions based on more qualitative factors such as leadership, service, reliability and reputation, if a company is able to consolidate its credibility with important people for the sector, it will probably be successful.

Mckenna's (1997) research supplied data to substantiate this idea which compromises and limits the field of action of the marketing professional. Over and above obtaining relevant or abstract data on the market and the client, it is essential to characterize the information with the specific references of desires and interests, whereby it is possible to infer that the MCDA-C is extremely appropriate for the case. It should be observed that it was not possible to locate, to date, any research involving interdisciplinarity of relationship marketing and MCDA-C.

#### 4 MULTICRITERIA DECISION AID METHODOLOGY (MCDA-C)

Management is constantly faced with decision-making that lead to uncertain results. Many of these risk decisions are crucial, involving jobs, security, product reliability and the going-concern of the organization (BAZERMAN, 2004, p. 55).

Multicriteria Decision Aid Methodology – Constructivist (MCDA-C) is based on the constructivist paradigm and has the purpose of supplying means for the better understanding of the context to be analyzed.

The multicriteria methods consider more than one aspect and, therefore, evaluate actions in accordance to a set of criteria. Each criterion is a mathematical function that measures the performance of potential actions in relation to a certain aspect (ENSSLIN, 2001, p. 50).

For most situations there are various objectives which are generally conflicting. It is in this context that the MCDA-C provides benefits, once it intends to indicate the best understanding of the context, in order to focus the improvement of the issue in accordance with the view of the decision-maker, as well as considering quantitative and qualitative criteria. The MCDA methodology has as its basic objective, according to BANA & COSTA (1997), to generate knowledge for the decision-makers, through tools (models) based on their value systems. On this aspect, Ensslin (2004) emphasizes that the MCDA is a science aiding decision-making which aims for greater coherence and performance through the improvement of knowledge of the context. Montibeller (2005) ponders about the evaluation of the model in question, signaling that there are trends to be considered in this increasing interest for the MCDA. In first place, the rising recognition of the importance of considering the examination of multiple views which are, many times, conflicting. Second, the involvement of many participants in the decision-making process, which (often) implies in different stakeholders, with their own values, priorities and objectives. The first phase for preparing the model is known as Structuring.

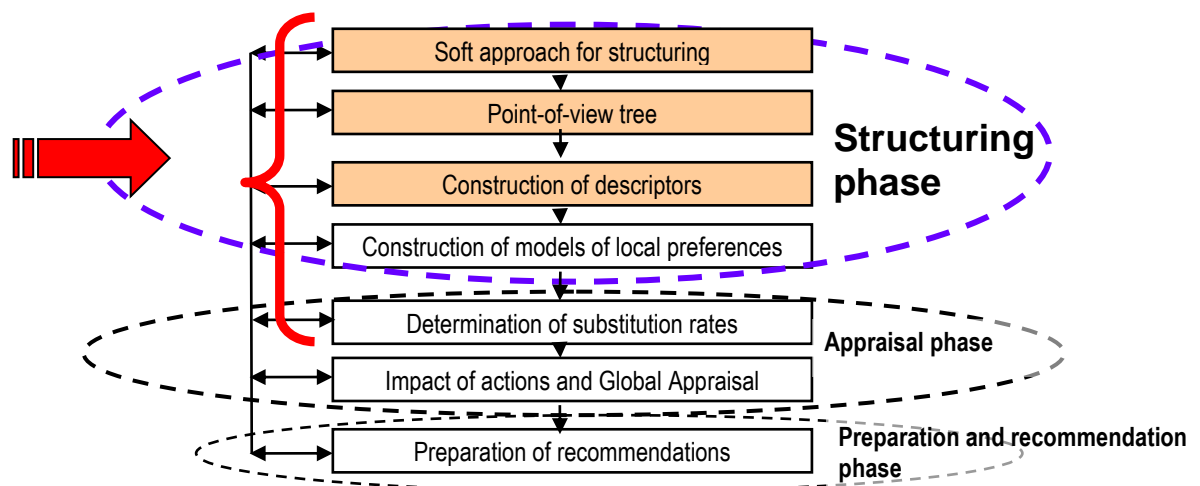


Figure 4.1.1 MULTICRITERIA DECISION AID MODEL

Source: ENSSLIN, Leonardo, NETO, Gilberto M., NORONHA, Sandro M. (2001).

In these terms, the differential of this research is in formatting the decision-making process involving three interconnected phases: structuring phase, appraisal phase and recommendations.

The structuring phase is comprises the following phases: contextualization, identification of the issue and establishment of the label, primary elements of evaluation (PEE), guidance of the PEEs for action and grouping by areas, preparation of maps related to means-and-ends relations, clusters, determination of fundamental viewpoints and descriptors. The evaluation phase of the model contains the value functions, substitution rates, profile of impacts of potential actions, formula for additive aggregation and sensitivity analysis. The following phase is generated from the prior parts, in order to permit recommendations and final considerations of the model. In the case of the present article, the first phase of the MCDA will be approached – Structuring, as demonstrated in figure 4.1.1.

#### 4.1 Contextualization of the Issue

MSF<sup>i</sup>, is a small sized industry, located in the metropolitan region of Salvador, and is the focus of this research. It is managed by one of the shareholders who has been running the enterprise for 30 years. With a portfolio containing over 350 models of products, with emphasis for leather handbags and briefcases, MSF caters to the

market of Bahia and the northeast, mainly focused on innovative products and with quality. With approximately 14 industries as direct competitors and present since the eighties in the market with the manufacture of leather handbags and briefcases, MSF serves as a reference to the market in the matter of creativity and innovation. Presently, with the objective of enhancing relations with customers of the industry, and improving its performance in relation to competitors (be more competitive), an appraisal of its relationship marketing was decided, in order to identify opportunities for attaining the yearned improvements.

**4.2 Stakeholders**

According to Ensslin (2001), stakeholders are those people, groups and institutions participating in a decision-making process. Ensslin (2001) states that different decision-makers perceive the same situations in different manners, once they have different mental reference frameworks. The stakeholders participating in this decision-making process are indicated below:

- *Decision-maker*: M. – Director of the organization.
- *Acted*: Clients, employees, partners, suppliers and competitors (those participating indirectly in the problem and suffering the consequences of the decision-making).
- *Facilitator*: authors of the article

For data collection interviews were made with the decision-maker. These interviews (structuring) took two hours and were registered with a recorder.

**4.3 Structuring Phase of the Model**

This is the phase for preparing the model which required greater care, once it will be used as a basis for the whole development of the understood decision-making context. In the first moment, the label of the proposal is determined. This label is analyzed together with the decision-maker and obtained through non-structured interviews determining, in this manner, a name representing the context of what is to be improved. For the present study, the chosen label was: “*Improvement of Relationship Marketing*”. Its definition was based on free reports on the problem, in order to avoid value judgment of the facilitator. Next the primary elements of evaluation (PEE) are prepared – through brainstorming with the decision-maker(s), through interviews performed with the decision-maker. The facilitator for better guidance of the work, mentally uses questions as presented below:

Strategy	Questions the facilitator should consider during the interview
Desirable aspects	What are the aspects you would like to consider regarding this issue?
Actions	What characteristics distinguish a good or bad action (potential or fictitious)?
Difficulties	What are the greater difficulties in relation to the present state?
Strategic objectives	What are the strategic objectives in this context?

Table 4.3.2.1 STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING PRIMARY ELEMENTS OF EVALUATION  
 Source: ENSSLIN, *et al.* (2001, p.80).

The PEEs originate in the objectives, goals, values, actions, option, concerns etc., which factors the decision-maker considers to make decisions (KEENEY, 1992).

The identification of primary elements of evaluation should not be the end purpose of the study for aiding decision making, but a phase that will help identify the most fundamental point of view in relation to representations and reflexes of the values of the stakeholders (BANA e COSTA, 1995, p. 24).

The result obtained from the interview with the decision-maker is a list of concerns, of the decision maker in relation to the context, called PEEs. The figure below illustrates an example for the PEE “cost”, considering that there are various possibilities relating to the word cost. The arrows S1, S2 and S3 indicate these possibilities.

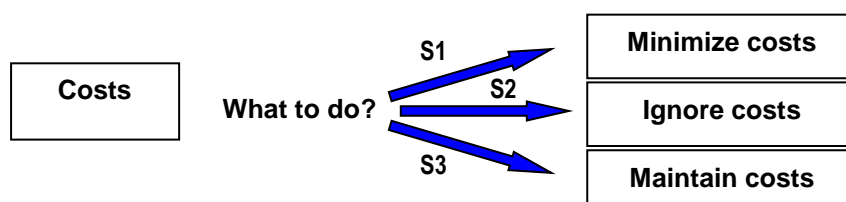


Figure 4.3.1 ALTERNATIVES IN THE PREFERENCE DIRECTION OF A PEE  
 Source: Ensslin (2001)

The perfect clarification of this preference permits to go forward in the Decision Aid, focused on what really is important for the decision maker. In the case under study a total of 62 PEEs were obtained through an interview with the decision-maker. Below is a representative sample.

1. Values	6. Lack of interest to routine orders
2. Quality of life	7. Preference for large sized customers
3. Reinforcement in the sales area	8. Deadline for closing an order
4. Co-participation in decisions of customer objectives	9. Product identity
5. Socio-cultural contribution to the country	10. Lack of interest for small customers

For a clearer understanding of the Primary Elements of Evaluation, the construction of a concept is aimed from a PEE guided towards action. This action is based, partly, on the suggested action. Such dynamism can be obtained identifying the verb representing the action contained in the concern of the decision-maker, placing the verb in its infinitive form and, then, questioning the decision-maker what he/she considers the psychological opposite (ENSSLIN, 2001, p.80). This construction focuses on the psychological opposite, in other words, the opposite to the first pole of the concept, once (ENSSLIN, 2001), the opposite is important in the measure in which the concept only makes sense when there is a contrast between two poles. The transformation of the PEEs in concepts, guided to the action, correspond in identifying the verb that represents the concern of the decision-maker in order to characterize the dynamism of the concept. According to Ensslin (2001, p.80), the sense of the concept is based, partly, in the action it suggests. Such dynamism may be obtained placing the verb in its infinitive form and, then, requesting from the decision-maker his/her understanding of what he/she considers as the psychological opposite. Below is part of the PEEs guided to the action found in the research.

1. Increase ethical values as a basis for negotiation with customers and suppliers...Permit lack of respect.
2. Guarantee quality of life within the company... Maintain work overload.
3. Reinforce sales area... Have a limited amount of salespersons with small diversity and a volume below necessary.(...)

Thus, the next phase is determined by the grouping of the concepts, in accordance with the perception of the facilitator (form and content of the map). The detection of clusters permits a “macroscopic” view of the map, being, therefore, of great relevance for its analysis. With these concepts in hand, the next step is to join them, according to the content, in the intention of having a “magnifying glass” to observe the peculiarities of the analysis. In this manner, a division in three aspects was established: Personal, Marketing and Industrial.

**4.3.1 Means and Ends Relation Maps**

After the identification of the PEEs, construction of the concepts and grouping it is necessary to prepare means and ends relations map for each cluster which can be defined (ENSSLIN, 2001, p. 77) as an expansion and organization of the concepts (objectives) considered relevant by the decision-maker for that area of the problem.

Maps are graphic representations that aid in the localization by people in relation to their information environment, structuring and simplifying thoughts, making communication and action possible. Maps permit a reflection on the nature of the issue in question (DAGOSTIN, 2005, p. 72).

The map preparation process permits the addition of a greater awareness of the problem in order to generate knowledge. Nevertheless, Eden (1992, apud ENSSLIN 2001, p.77) warns that a direct correspondence between the map and the thoughts of the decision maker should not be made, but it is a powerful tool to deal with subjective information.

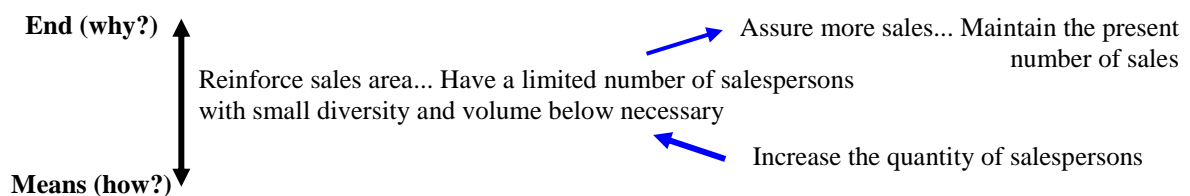


Figure 4.3.1.1 Construction of the Hierarchy of the Concept in Relation to Means and Ends  
 Source: Adaptation Ensslin (2001)

In the measure in which the decision-maker discoursed on the matter, new concepts emerged and, once again, the facilitator required further information until conclusion, as indicated below in Figure 4.3.2.1 – Map of

Means and Ends Relations. As of a certain concept (*Reinforce the sales area.....Have a limited number of salespersons with small diversity and a volume below necessary*) it was examined with the decision-maker what were the means ( *Increase the quantity of salespersons*) necessary to attain it, or, what were the ends (*Assure more sales... Maintain the present number of salespersons*).

The structure of the map is formed by means concepts and end concepts, connected by bonds of influence. These connections between concepts are made through relations of influence, symbolized by arrows ('→'). For identification of the ends to be attained (ENSSLIN et al, 2001, p. 83), the decision-maker shall answer whether a certain concepts is important, once it permits reaching an end. In this same manner, it will direct the concept to be reached *through* a certain means.

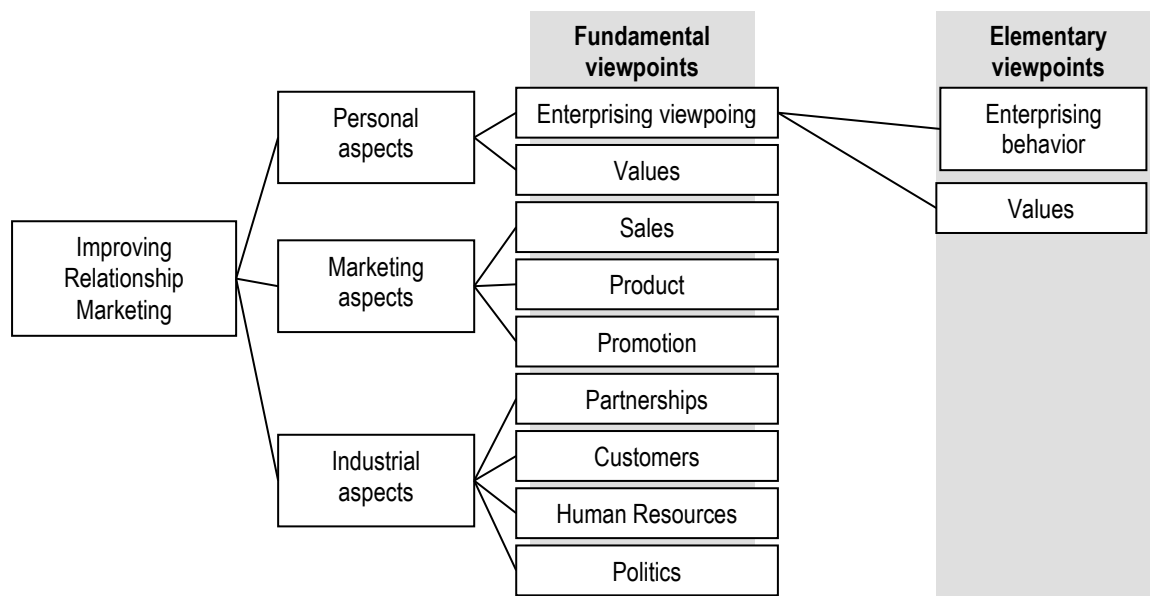


Figure 4.3.1.2 – TREE OF CANDIDATES AND FUNDAMENTAL VIEWPOINTS  
 Source: Author

Given the hierarchical structure of the map, it is interesting that the facilitator identify the concepts that are the head and those that are the tail (ENSSLIN, 2001, p. 112). The heads indicate the most strategic objective, most subjective and ample, and the tails represent a less subjective focus and less specific. After the dismemberment and detailing of the map, the final version is adjusted into two parts: a superior and smaller art that identifies the Areas of Interest (Fundamental Viewpoints – FVPs), and a smaller part, that reflects the breakdown of each FVP called Elementary Viewpoints – EVPs. Once the FVPs are established, it is necessary to represent them in the form of the Viewpoint Tree, in order to increase the degree of understanding in relation to the aspects to be evaluated in the group of potential actions (BANA e COSTA, 1992, apud ENSSLIN, 2001, p. 139). Figure 4.3.2.1 reveals the hierarchical structures of value and explains clearly the FVPs and EVPs obtained in the research.

#### 4.3.2 Descriptors

For Bana & Costa (1992, apud ENSSLIN, 2001) a descriptor is a set of levels of impact associated to an objective, which shall describe and give a hierarchy to possible consequences of the alternatives, permitting an ordinal measurement of performance of the action in this dimension.

It is thus possible to say that the descriptors reinforce the understanding of the concern of the decision-maker, and in this manner, must be expressed clearly (as little ambiguous as possible) not giving margin for multiple interpretations. There is no optimum descriptor, states ENSSLIN (2001, p.146). According to Roy (1996), descriptors are built mainly for:

- Aiding in the understanding of what the decision-makers are considering;
- Permitting the generation of actions for improvement;
- Permitting the measurement of performance of actions in one criterion;
- Aiding in the construction of a global model of appraisal.

The preparation of the descriptor requires caution and exigency in relation to the further development of discussions. For each viewpoint a descriptor is constructed associated to it, in order to reflect the values of the



decision-makers, as well as the characteristics of actions to be considered. In the MCDA-C methodology the facilitator aims to construct, for each viewpoint, various descriptors representing the axis that the decision-maker judges relevant to justify his/her preferences.

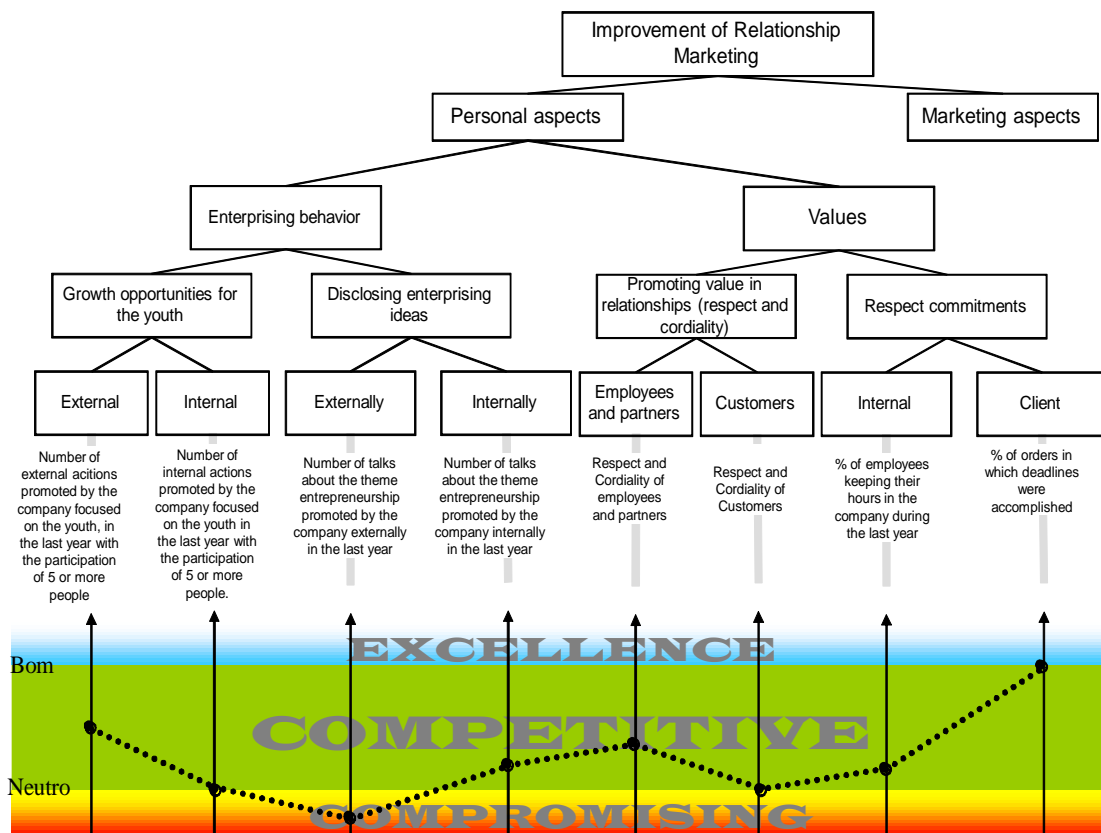


Figure 4.3.2.1 Hierarchical Structure of Value I  
 Source: the Author

Each descriptor should be interpreted as a partial preference. Each descriptor is constructed in a personalized manner for each context. The quality of the descriptor shall reflect the quality of the model. For the descriptor to be able to serve as a basis for comparing performance, as well as for testing isolability, among different viewpoints it is necessary to establish anchors or levels of reference for possible levels of impact. These references are named GOOD and NEUTRAL. With these it is made more clear, in the decision-making process, the identification of more attractive actions (those with performance above neutral) and those which are not (with performance below this level). The level GOOD marks actions that have a performance judged by the decision-maker as of excellent performance. Among the levels GOOD and NEUTRAL are the actions that in this concern present market performance. For the present article, the definition of the descriptors was essential to clarify understanding and aid in the communication process and subsequent identification of strategic actions. A quantitative descriptor and a qualitative descriptor are presented in tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Level	Descriptor	Reference
	<b>Number of external actions promoted by the company focused on the youth in the last year with the participation of 5 or more people.</b>	
N7	7 or more	
N6	6	<b>GOOD</b>
N5	5	
N4	4	
N3	3	
N2	2	<b>NEUTRAL</b>
N1	1 or none	

Table 1. Descriptor for the elementary viewpoint *Ensure the Growth of the Youth in the Community*

Level	Descriptor	Reference
N6	Respect and Cordiality are observed and encouraged	
N5	One is observed and encouraged while the other is only observed	GOOD
N4	Respect is observed and encouraged but cordiality is not taken into account or Respect and Cordiality are observed by neither is encouraged	
N3	Only one is observed but neither encouraged	NEUTRAL
N2	Cordiality is observed but Respect is not taken into account	
N1	Respect and Cordiality are not observed	

**Table 2. Descriptor for the elementary viewpoint *Promote Relationship Values (Respect and cordiality) towards Employees and Partners***

A similar procedure was performed with the other descriptors. For each one a level of impact of the present situation was determined generating a Profile of the Present Situation (*Status Quo*) as can be observed in Figure 4.3.2.1 for the area “Personal Aspects” of the model.

For this purpose, figure 4.3.2.1. reflects the descriptors related to Personal Aspects. It is observed that the information of the descriptors was reflected in the grade attributed to the relationship research in relation to respect and cordiality. The next phase of the MCDA-C methodology consists in transforming the ordinal scales into cardinal scales and in the establishment of harmonization rates between the viewpoints. This additional information permits improvement in the degree of understanding of the context and improve the understanding of the consequences of possible actions. The structuring phase is often sufficient to offer an understanding and generate improvement recommendations. The analysis is performed on each viewpoint individually. The possibility of improving performance of the organization from the viewpoint of the present situation of a superior level is examined, preferably to the level “good”. Multiple possible alternatives emerge, each with its respective cost. Care must be taken in examining equally the consequences of the actions on other viewpoints. When the analysis is performed with the ordinal model the comparison is restricted to ordinal comparisons. To illustrate see the viewpoint “Promoting Relationship Values (Respect and cordiality) towards Employees and Partners” presented in table 2. The present situation is at Level N4 – Respect is observed and encouraged, but Cordiality is not taken into account. In order to go onto Level N5 – One is observed and encouraged while the other is only observed, it is necessary to implement an action to alter the present state where Cordiality is not taken into account to a situation where Cordiality is observed. As can be observed the use of the descriptor guides the focus of what is desired making the creative process for generating actions simple. From the actions it is possible to perform a cost-benefit analysis. Should a more detailed analysis be required, the evaluation phase should be promoted.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Marketing, and in particular relationship marketing, is one of the most present instruments in the corporate world. In this manner, it is believed that the proposal of this research was attained in the measure in which it personalized the issue of the MSF industry, through the preparation of a the Multicriteria Decision Aid (MCDA) model, which permitted the author to identify, organize, measure and integrate the key-factors for organizational improvement. This objective is clearly observed in the results obtained from the construction of the map which, over and above routine market practices identified variables that could guarantee a greater bond between MSF and its internal customers. Descriptors such as “number of talks about the theme of entrepreneurship, promoted by the company internally and externally during the last year” portray this.

The director of the organization under study, in various moments accompanied the construction of the model and considered it adequate for analysis of the existing relationship with customers. Naturally, the director was aware that the methodology did not have the objective of an optimum solution, but of attractive alternatives for improving relationship marketing of MSF. This intercession Relationship Marketing and MCDA-C permitted innovation, in the theoretical and practical fields, and aims for a better understanding of marketing and industrial values that encircle the company and how to measure growth through descriptors. It should also be noted that MCDA-C granted to the director/decision maker a greater awareness of the key-points that involve the relationship of MSF, making it possible to identify necessary opportunities for the success and growth of sales and strengthening relations with partners, suppliers, customers and employees. A limitation of this research is understood as being the fact that this research creates a multicriteria model centered on only one case study. Nevertheless, the model could not be generalized. Finally, it should be observed that the research was prepared based on preferences and values of the decision-maker of the gift store MSF, with the purpose of having a better understanding of a specific issue guided towards relationship marketing and for having a personalized multicriteria model, it cannot be applied in a distinct decision-making context.

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<sup>i</sup> Fictitious name