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## The future is in the past: A framework for the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface (MEI)

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, we review milestones in the 30+ year history of conceptualizations of the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface (MEI) in order to develop an overdue unified framework. This framework finally achieves the original mission of the “Charleston Summit” - to create a research framework for the MEI. We update the 4-perspectives view proposed by Hansen and Eggers (2010). In particular, we retain the first perspective, which is the commonalities between the domains of marketing and entrepreneurship, as is. In updating the perspectives, we define the fourth perspective as entrepreneurial and SME marketing and we combine the second and third perspectives into a single framework. We review some major concepts within the two domains and provide numerous suggestions for future research that emerge from the framework. Our conceptualization of the MEI creates a vast array of research possibilities for MEI scholars old and new.

### 1. Introduction

Nearly a decade ago a group of scholars, focused on research at the interface between marketing and entrepreneurship (MEI), met at The College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, USA. The goal of this meeting was to respond to the growing demand for a unifying framework for the MEI in order to provide guidance for future research. As noted in Hansen and Eggers' (2010) summary and report on the “Charleston Summit,” the demand for a framework emerged from both a survey of research priorities and informal requests by Ph.D. students and junior faculty attending the annual Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship (GRSME) and its predecessor the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship (UIC Symposium). While the meeting spawned numerous insights into the history and future directions of research at the interface, no single model emerged. Thus, the summit, while providing good context and suggestions, failed to complete its primary purpose.

In the years that have passed since that meeting, a single unifying framework has yet to emerge. The standard depiction of the interface remains as a Venn diagram of two overlapping circles: one representing

entrepreneurship and the other marketing. This model, while visually appealing, does not provide any insight into potential research questions, thus is not helpful as guidance for scholars interested in the marketing and entrepreneurship interface. Therefore, the purpose and main contribution of this article is to finish the work started during the Charleston Summit - to provide a new framework to guide researchers, new and old, and provide a model from which they can develop new conceptualizations and empirical studies on aspects of the marketing and entrepreneurship interface.

Another contribution we provide is some clarification on the four perspectives framework introduced by Hansen and Eggers (2010). More specifically, we simplify this to three: that which is common between the two (first perspective), Small Business Marketing (SBM) and Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) as “something unique” (fourth perspective), and we merge the second and third perspectives into a framework where each discipline provides something, which simplifies an aspect of the Hansen and Eggers conceptualization. The model is a reconciliation of numerous prior models of the MEI and EM, thus as Carson says “the future is in the past” (Hansen & Eggers, 2010).

A final contribution of this article is to specify that EM and SBM are unique outcomes of the MEI. Hansen and Eggers suggested that EM

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could be part of the first or fourth perspective or even BE the MEI entirely. Prior research has simply placed it within the MEI or as an application of marketing within entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship within marketing. Others have used EM and MEI interchangeably, suggesting that they are one in the same. We argue that none of these are the case. EM is in fact part of what is the unique outcome of the combination of marketing and entrepreneurship, but does not represent the MEI in its entirety.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. We will provide a brief history of the MEI focused on major milestones, and then more specifically discuss some updates since the Hansen and Eggers paper was published nearly a decade ago. We then present our framework for the MEI. Finally we offer suggestions for research based on the framework, while encouraging scholars to examine the multitude of possibilities from combining concepts, theories and/or phenomena from the domains of marketing and entrepreneurship.

## 2. Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface history

### 2.1. Background regarding the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface

Over the years, there has been ever increasing interest paid to developing an understanding of how entrepreneurship and marketing theory and practice relate. The Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface (MEI) in terms of what is and is not has evolved from an area of interest to a few inquisitive scholars in 1980s to a legitimate area of inquiry resulting in multiple international conferences undertaken annually by scholars and practitioners alike dedicated to understanding and unpacking its principles.

In Europe, the USA, and Oceania there are an increasing number of organizations and conferences in which entrepreneurship and marketing research is presented and discussed (e.g., AMA, AMS, ANZMAC, Babson, EMAC) focused on expanding our understanding regarding this important construct. This comes as no surprise as entrepreneurs and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the catalyst for much economic development and social advancement across the globe. According to the US Small Business Administration (SBA) small companies accounted for 64% of new jobs created in the U.S. between 1993 and 2011.

Research regarding the MEI can trace its roots to the early 1980s. In 1982, Gerald Hills with the support of the American Marketing Association and the International Council for Small Business held the first marketing and research conference to address the marketing/entrepreneurship overlap that later became known as the MEI (see Table 1). It is during the 80s that the first empirical study regarding the MEI is presented (e.g., Hills & Star, 1985) and a research symposium dedicated to exploring the MEI established at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

In the US there has been increased interest in defining the elements and boundaries of the MEI that have evolved from research presented at the conferences of the American Marketing Association, Academy of Marketing Science, Academy of Management, Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference, to name but a few. Likewise, in both Europe and Oceania, we have seen keen interest in exploring and understanding the MEI and its implications. The Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy (ANZMAC) has held special sessions (e.g., 2010, 2013, 2016) dedicated to its elucidation. Additionally, in the U.S. special sessions have occurred directed towards its understanding (e.g., AMS, 2011, 2015). Similarly, attention to the MEI has garnered significant attention from scholars and conferences associated with the European Academy of Marketing.

Important research has evolved since the early 80s that serves to inform our understanding of the MEI (e.g., Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Gardner, 1994; Hills, 1994; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Jones & Rowley, 2009; Miles, Crispin, & Kasouf, 2011; Morris et al., 2002; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). The research shows that the MEI is more than simply

marketing as practiced by entrepreneurs or the SME. Rather, it involves a different way of marketing and competing than what is taught in traditional marketing and business courses. Research also offers a perspective for participating in competitive environments that are characterized by change, market uncertainty, and risk. It involves leveraging customer relationships, co-creation, innovation, leveraging resources and networks, opportunity recognition and having a market and entrepreneurial orientation (Gilmore, 2011; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Jones & Rowley, 2009; Miles et al., 2011; Morris et al., 2002; Whalen et al., 2016). MEI is a unique phenomenon that is growing in importance to today's hyper competitive marketplace. Some of the more notable milestones in MEI development are presented below (see Table 1).

### 2.2. Milestones in the history of the marketing-entrepreneurship Interface

In this section we provide a brief history of the MEI, presented as a table of key milestones with a short description of the conceptual impact of the intervention. To further assist the chronology of the interface, we have, included a 'time frame' descriptor to loosely describe each stage of the conceptual development of the interface from 1982 – through to 2017.

The first stage covers a period of inception (1982–1990), where scholars within the fields of Marketing and Entrepreneurship recognized commonalities between both theories and practice. In academe as in practice, it was also the era of challenge – challenge to normative beliefs and theories and arguably the birthplace of cross disciplinary collaborative research within our subjects.

Our second stage (1990–2005) acknowledges the broadening out of the EMI concept with context and content. Here we see the integration of a wider mix of theoretical concepts that support the 'overlap' of Marketing and Entrepreneurship. During this time scholars from the wider domain of social sciences contributed to the interface with insight of both how and where the interface took place and who was involved and why.

Stage three (2006–2010) is a stage of reflection. We can observe scholars becoming introspective and reflective – by which we mean that the earlier developments are further enhanced and understood, scholars searched for depth of meaning (logic) and developed fluid and informal models (experimentation) that revealed the reality of practice at the interface.

Finally, the fourth stage (2010–present) reflects the cumulative impact of conceptual development. Commonalities and challenges have become divergence and convergence epistemologies. The MEI assists with our understanding of the 'messiness' that surrounds both Marketing and Entrepreneurship thinking and behavior and in that way it is divergent – seeking new ways to explore and express the fluidity of both. However, it is also convergent – as challenge has become the catalyst of change.

### 2.3. Prior models of the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface

Various frameworks have emerged over the past two and a half decades in an attempt to elucidate the MEI. What follows is a collection of frameworks of the interface that have appeared in the literature over the past several decades. Summarized below is how they provide some context for our proposed model, presented in Fig. 1 below.

In one of the earliest models, Gardner (1994) approaches the MEI from a behavioral perspective. He describes the market as 'both the structure of the market and all the elements of supply and demand' (p.42), and further discusses the dynamic and turbulent nature of the market. A major point of this model is its emphasis on the importance of information (as part of opportunity recognition), drawing from the work of Casson (1982) and that the MEI represents 'that area where innovation is brought to market' (p. 37).

At the same time, Hills' (1994) model brings entrepreneurship to

**Table 1**

Major milestones in the history of the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface.

Adapted from Hills, Hultman and Miles (2008)

Year	Entrepreneurial marketing evolutionary milestone	Conceptual impact
1982	First marketing and entrepreneurship research conference International Council for Small Business (ICSB) and American Marketing Association (AMA)	Marketing/entrepreneurship ‘overlaps’
1985	First empirical study of the marketing and entrepreneurship interface in <i>Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research</i> (Hills & Star, 1985)	Documented empirical research at MEI
1986	First UIC/AMA Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship (Chair: G.E. Hills)	Provided scholars a venue to share conceptualizations of MEI/EM
1986	‘Missing the boat and sinking the boat: a conceptual model of entrepreneurial risk’, (Dickson & Giglierano, 1986)	First <i>Journal of Marketing</i> article to directly focus on MEI
1987	‘The relationship between entrepreneurship and marketing in established firms’, (Morris & Paul, 1987)	Develops MEI conceptualization by exploring market orientation (MO) and entrepreneurial orientation (EO) interrelationship
1989–1991	Hills and Hultman (2013) and, later, Special Interest Group is established for the marketing and entrepreneurship interface First EM Tracks are created in the AMA summer (1990) and winter (1991) conferences. Academy of Marketing Science Congress track in Singapore (1989) (Chair: G.E. Hills)	A period of conceptual broadening and acceptance
1994	Marketing and Entrepreneurship – Research Ideas and Opportunities (Hills, 1994)	Proposed future research directions and conceptions for MEI
1995	Marketing and Entrepreneurship in SMEs: An Innovative Approach’ (Carson, Cromie, McGowan, & Hill, 1995)	Period of conceptual development to consider ‘context’ and empirical research design/approach of MEI
1999	First Academy of Marketing Symposium (U.K.) (Chairs: D. Carson, A. McAuley)	Provision of a platform for conceptual and model development, research design and experimentation
2000	Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship founded (Carson, D., Hills, G.E.)	The ‘overlap’ conceptualization broadens further with development around ecosystem
2000	Special issue of the Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice on the marketing and entrepreneurship interface (Ed. M.P. Miles)	Provided additional guidance on content and context of EM
2002	‘Entrepreneurial Marketing: The Growth of Small Firms in the New Economic Era’, (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002)	Proposition of a model for MEI with seven integrated dimensions and used widely as a framework for further research at the MEI
2002	‘Entrepreneurial marketing: A construct for integrating an emerging entrepreneurship and marketing perspective’ (Morris, Schindehutte, & LaForge, 2002)	
2005	International Journal of Technology Marketing founded	Presenting work conceptualizing the interface between Technology/Marketing/Entrepreneurship as a MEI context and ecosystem
2006	20th UIC Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship (Chair: G.E. Hills)	At this point the symposium had been a catalyst for encouraging high quality scholarly thought and research at MEI mainly conceptualizing variables of EO and MO
2008	Special issue of Journal of Small Business Management on EM (Eds.: M. Grunhagen and C. Mishra)	Yet a further broadening of the MEI concept taking in aspects of entrepreneurial behavior, business model development and context.
2009	Inaugural Gerald E. Hills Best Paper Award: ‘Causation and Effectuation: Toward a Theoretical Shift from Economic Inevitability to Entrepreneurial Contingency’ (Sarasvathy, S.) (Sarasvathy, 2001)	The Gerald E. Hills Award is presented annually at what is now known as the Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship (GRSME) to the author(s) who have made a significant impact on MEI research - published in the previous 10 years in any refereed publication. The award is peer reviewed by a subcommittee of the GRSME Advisory Board.
2009	‘Marketing Under Uncertainty: The Logic of an Effectual Approach’ (Read, Dew, Sarasvathy, Song, & Wiltbank, 2009)	Acknowledged the concept of effectuation, an approach that built on entrepreneurs’ behavior, context and ecosystem
2010	The ‘Charleston Summit’ is held in an attempt to identify a unifying research model for the MEI	Many insights about the MEI were gathered and reported in Hansen & Eggers, 2010. Since no research model emerged, other than the four perspectives, this article is an attempt to fulfill the original mission of the summit
2010	ANZMAC Special session: The Development of Entrepreneurial Marketing: Is Entrepreneurship Relevant to Marketing (Christchurch, NZ) (Chairs: Morrish, S; Miles, M.P.)	Acknowledgement within ANZMAC proceedings of EMI research and debate (further panel discussions and tracks at: Auckland, 2013 and Christchurch, 2016)
2010	Second G.E. Hills Paper Award	‘Social Capital, Knowledge Acquisition, and Knowledge Exploitation in Young Technology-Based Firms’ (Yli-Renko, Autio and Sapienza, 2001)
2011	Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) (Coral Gables FL) Special Sessions: Entrepreneurial Marketing Entrepreneurship within Marketing Academia (Chair: Uslay, C.) Practice of Marketing in Entrepreneurial Firms (Chair: Evanschitzky, H.) Entrepreneurial Marketing: Is Entrepreneurship the Way Forward for Marketing? (Chair: Morrish, S.)	Presentation of MEI research and panel discussions at AMS and thus ‘mainstream’ marketing research
2011	‘Academic Roots: The Past and Present of Entrepreneurial Marketing’ (Hills, G.E. and Hultman, C.M.) Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship	A 20-year retrospective of EM gathering key insights and conceptions from the leading MEI scholars – concluding that EM is simultaneously divergent and convergent with extant Marketing and Entrepreneurship theories
2011	Third G.E. Hills Award	‘The Effects of Entrepreneurial Proclivity and Market Orientation on Business Performance’ (Matsuno, Mentzer, & Ozsomer, 2002)
2012	Fourth G.E. Hills Award	‘Entrepreneurial marketing: A construct for integrating an emerging entrepreneurship and marketing perspective’ (Morris et al., 2002)
2013	‘Entrepreneurial Marketing: Global Perspectives’ (Sethna, Z., Jones, R., Harrigan, P.) Emerald Publishing	A scholarly text outlining the evolution and acceptance of EM around the world, by delving into the leading components of EM; the perspectives and approaches which have enabled EM to become an established school of thought.
2013	Fifth G.E. Hills Award	‘Network Dynamics in the International New Venture’ (Coviello, 2006)
2014	Sixth G.E. Hills Award	‘Look Before You Leap: Market Opportunity Identification in Emerging Technology Firms’ (Gruber, MacMillan, & Thompson, 2008)
2015	AMS (Denver) Special session: Opportunities and Challenges at the Marketing Entrepreneurship Interface (Chair: Salehi-Sangari, E.)	Panelists: Salehi -Sangari, E., Morrish, S., Thongpapanl, N., Miles, M., Mills, A.J. and Pitt, L. - a ‘coming of age’ session, illustrating the cross disciplinary and international nature of MEI research

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Year	Entrepreneurial marketing evolutionary milestone	Conceptual impact
2015	Seventh G.E. Hills Award	'Marketing Under Uncertainty: The Logic of an Effectual Approach' (Read et al., 2009)
2016	'The Anatomy of Entrepreneurial Marketing: International Perspectives', Journal of Strategic Marketing (Eds.: A. O'Casey and S.C. Morrish)	Illustrating the reach and range of MEI research – internationalizing the concepts of EO and MO
2016	Eighth G.E. Hills Award	'Consumption-Driven Market Emergence' (Martin & Schouten, 2014)
2017	GRSME 30-year anniversary meeting at Babson College - San Francisco Campus	The initiative for this issue – and exemplars the rich modeling, conceptualizations and relationships of theory and practice at, around and beyond the MEI
2017	Ninth G.E. Hills Award	'Where is the Opportunity without the Customer? An Integration of Marketing Activities, the Entrepreneurship Process, and Institutional Theory' (Webb, Ireland, Hitt, Kistruck, & Thihanyi, 2011)

traditional marketing. This is most profoundly demonstrated in his discussion of how the purpose of marketing (“to create and distribute values among market parties through the process of transactions and market relationships”, Hills, 1994, p5) could serve also as a definition of entrepreneurship. Many of the concepts he brings from entrepreneurship to marketing are incorporated into our model, such as creativity, opportunity recognition, value creation and risk taking, the last of which is a component of entrepreneurial orientation (EO).

Bjerke and Hultman (2002) present a conceptual framework that serves to integrate entrepreneurship and marketing into a model that is based on four pillars that clearly fit within our framework: entrepreneurship; resources; processes; and actors. Their model begins with capabilities needed by the entrepreneur and entrepreneurial firm to create and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Further, they contend that the entrepreneurial firm's internal and external value creation is always done in cooperation with external partners (the entrepreneurial ecosystem). As with Gardner, they include the importance of leveraging information, along with other resources.

Morris et al. (2002) proposed EM as a system that integrates marketing and entrepreneurship and reflects a perspective for proactively seeking novel ways to create value for customers and build customer equity. Their model shows an organization's external environment is experiencing rapid change, becoming relatively hostile, and increasingly more complex; in essence, how turbulent the firm's external environment is. This MEI model brings in the firm characteristics entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and market orientation (MO).

Hills and Hultman (2006) indicate their model of EM is part of the

MEI when they write that it is useful to “regard entrepreneurial marketing as an interface between marketing and entrepreneurship” (p. 225). In this model, change is considered part of the ecosystem in which entrepreneurial marketers operate. This corresponds with Gardner's depiction of the market as dynamic and turbulent. They also build on Penrose (1959) in discussing internal entrepreneur resources.

Jones and Rowley's (2009) EMICO framework combines the familiar EO and MO with innovation orientation (IO) and customer orientation (CO). IO is a combination of elements of both 'risk-taking and proactiveness' within the enterprise. It is based on early work conducted by Hurley and Hult (1998) on developing constructs around 'innovativeness and the capacity to innovate in relation to a firm's MO'. The concept of CO is based on understanding, responding to and delighting the customers' wants and needs. The customer-orientated firm does this by adapting the firm's behavior in order to satisfy those particular needs better than the competition.

The Business Model Canvas (canvas) (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) has been popularized as a tool for lean startups by Blank (Blank, 2013; Blank & Dorf, 2012) and Reis (2011), although it originated as a model for large organizations (Osterwalder, 2004). There is a clear connection to marketing as well. The design/layout of the model is built on Porter's Value Chain. Inputs from partners and suppliers are on the left. They flow through the organization, which uses its key activities and resources to create new value. The value proposition is communicated and delivered to customers.

Miles et al. (2011) present a model that maps the nature and scope of entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial perspective to marketing

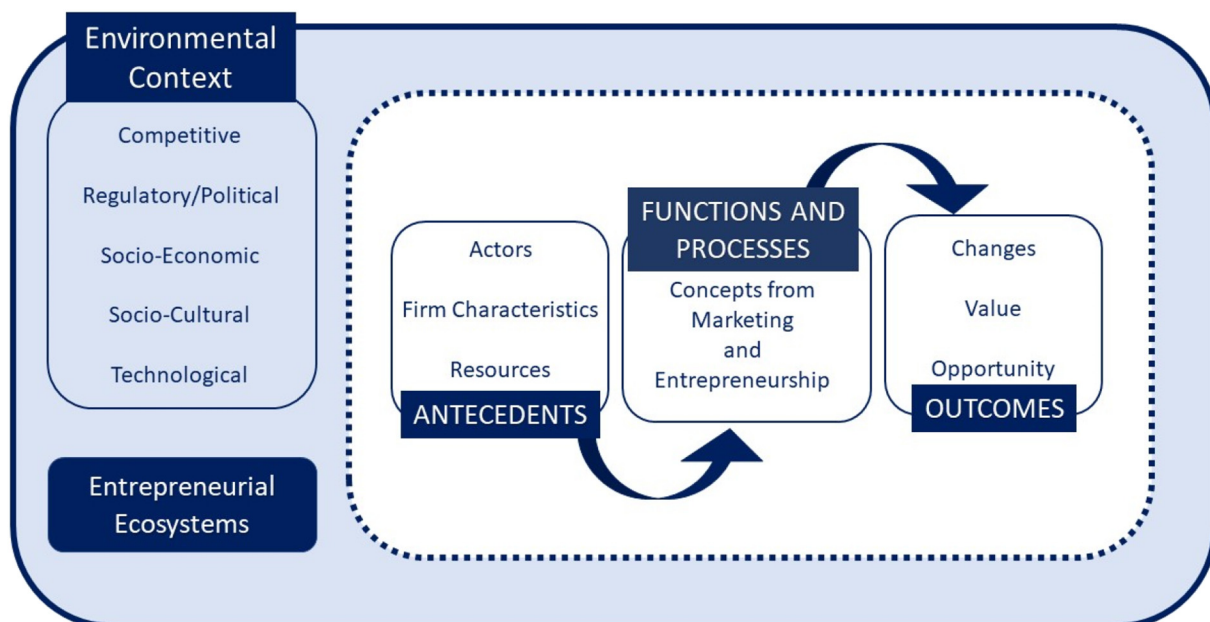


Fig. 1. Framework for the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface.

**Table 2**  
Summary of key concepts from prior models of the MEI.

Key concepts	Interface models
Change/growth	Hills, 1994; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, & Coombes, 2006; Miles et al., 2011
Entrepreneurial opportunities	Hills, 1994; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Bjerke & Hultman, 2002
EO components - risk-taking, innovativeness, proactiveness	Gardner, 1994; Hills, 1994; Morris et al., 2006; Jones & Rowley, 2009
Innovation/new product development	Gardner, 1994; Morris et al., 2006; Jones & Rowley, 2009; Miles et al., 2011
Market orientation	Morris et al., 2006; Jones & Rowley, 2009; Miles et al., 2011
Resources - internal and external, including information	Gardner, 1994; Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010
Uncertain, turbulent, dynamic markets	Gardner, 1994; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Morris et al., 2006
Value creation	Hills, 1994; Bjerke & Hultman, 2002; Hills & Hultman, 2006; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010

thought and practice. EM is shown to complement a MO (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Miles et al. (2011) explain how EM is applicable to the development and application of disruptive technologies and dynamic capabilities but somewhat less so to service dominant logic perspectives.

### 2.3.1. Summary

All of the above models feed into our conceptualization of the MEI. In the Table 2 below we outline the key concepts that informed our framework from each of the models.

## 3. A framework for the research domain of the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface

Hansen and Eggers (2010) brought to light the need to think about the interface as more than simply where marketing and entrepreneurship overlap. As described above, there have been a variety of models and conceptualizations of the MEI. Building on these, along with numerous concepts related to the interface gathered from attendees during the “Charleston Summit,” we offer an updated conceptual framework for the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface, thus, belatedly, fulfilling a primary purpose of the Charleston Summit.

Building on the Hansen and Eggers (2010) 4-perspectives framework, we suggest that there are just three components to the Marketing-Entrepreneurship Interface.

- Concepts that are commonly used in the two domains (first perspective in Hansen & Eggers, 2010)
- Entrepreneurial and SME marketing (4th perspective)
- Applications of marketing and entrepreneurship in different contexts (2nd and 3rd perspectives)

The commonalities between the two, the first perspective, are interesting and they provided the origins of the interface. Some examples of commonalities include opportunity recognition, opportunity scanning, value creation, new products, and innovation. Other than looking at how these concepts apply to both research domains and building on and borrowing from each other, they offer little guidance on future research questions about the MEI.

Hansen and Eggers (2010, p. 44) described the fourth perspective as “[c]oncepts that are distinct to the interface and evolve out of the combination of entrepreneurship and marketing.” They suggested that Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) might be considered to represent the fourth perspective. We contend that it does indeed, along with Small Business Marketing, represent the fourth perspective. EM is defined as the proactive identification, and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches, to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation (Morris et al., 2002). Miles and Darroch (2006), suggested that firms adopting EMPs (entrepreneurial marketing processes) ‘will engage in marketing processes emphasizing opportunity creation and/or discovery, evaluation and exploitation.’

There is considerable evidence that marketing is different between

large firms and small- and medium-sized (SME) businesses (Hills et al., 2008; Morrish, 2011; Schwartz, Birch, & Teach, 2007). Thus, we also consider SME marketing to be something unique that emerges from the combination of marketing and entrepreneurship. While both of these are unique outcomes from the MEI, EM is an already robust area of inquiry, and there is a long history of research on SME marketing at the MEI, thus research opportunities are outlined elsewhere and limited compared to the vastness of possibilities of examining a wide range of organizations and activity in context of both entrepreneurship and marketing. Thus we focus the remainder of the article on our third component, the simultaneous application of concepts from marketing and entrepreneurship.

Our model of the research domain of the MEI is comprised of four components – antecedents, functions/processes, outcomes and environmental context – each of which is briefly described below.

### 3.1. Antecedents

Antecedents reflect the entities and the resources they use to initiate processes within the MEI. The entities include individual and team actors, such as the entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and marketers, as well as firms of all sizes. These enterprises can be for-profit or not-for-profit organizations. In the for-profit context, many are SMEs or individuals that can be found across many markets and are located worldwide. These organizations and actors vary by type, size and age and research to identify the characteristics that define and motivate these entities is of keen interest in MEI research. Further, identifying the resources (human, financial, experience, etc.) that can be employed to facilitate the desired outcomes sought by these entities and how these resources influence outcomes motivates considerable research at the interface. In the organizing framework, three groups of antecedents have been outlined: Actors; Firm Characteristics; and Resources.

#### 3.1.1. Actors

The actors in our model are the individuals, teams and organizations engaged in the marketing and/or entrepreneurial processes. The entrepreneurship literature, more so than the marketing literature, has had a strong focus on the individual actors who discover and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Early research focused on differences between entrepreneurs and managers (c.f. Stewart Jr, Watson, Carland, & Carland, 1999).

More recently there is a growing literature on entrepreneurial cognition (Grégoire, Corbett, & McMullen, 2011), such as creativity (Ward, 2004), intentions (Fayolle & Linan, 2014; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993), knowledge (Shane, 2000), judgement and decision making (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Simon, Houghton, & Aquino, 1999) and alertness (Kirzner, 1997). This said, recent marketing literature has started to give team marketing/sales credence; from industrial B2B marketing perspectives (Mullins & Panagopoulos, 2018), and by developing theoretical models of diversity at the team level (team diversity) and within individuals (personal range) to predict how various sources of diversity influence team effectiveness (Tasheva & Hillman, 2018).

**Table 3**  
Marketing concepts with potential for future MEI research.

Marketing concepts	Description	Key references
Brand management	The management of a brand. A brand is a “Name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. (AMA)	Aaker & Keller, 1990; Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993
Consumer behavior	The study of consumers and the processes they use to choose, use (consume), and dispose of products and services.	Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Holbrook, 1987; Sheth & Atul, 1995
Customer relationship management	A comprehensive business model for increasing revenues and profits by focusing on customers. Manages the most valuable customers relationships. Cuts across the entire organization but most used by marketing, sales, and customer service. Impels the firm to be customer-centric.	Berry, 1983, 2002; George, 1990
Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	A strategic approach to communicating the brand and company message to targeted customers in ways that are clear, concise, and consistent to maximize the impact on a particular audience.	Reich, 1998; Schultz, 1998; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1993
Market orientation	A firm orientation that (1) places the highest priority on the profitable creation and maintenance of superior customer value while considering the interests of other key stakeholders; and (2) provides norms for behavior regarding the organizational development of and responsiveness to market information.	Day, 1994; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Slater & Narver, 1994
Market segmentation	The process of dividing the market into segments (groups) of consumers whose needs can be grouped together.	Johnson, 1971
The 4-Ps	Known as the marketing mix and stand for product, price, promotion, and place. Represent the key elements involved in marketing a good or service to consumers.	McCarthy, 1964
Resource-advantage theory	An evolutionary process-based theory of competition based on Austrian economics and resourced-based theory of the firm. Put forth by Hunt as a General Theory of Marketing.	Hunt & Morgan, 1996, 2005
Service dominant logic	A framework for explaining value creation, through exchange, between configurations of actors. The basis of S-D logic is that humans apply their competences to benefit others and reciprocally benefit from others' applied competences through service-for-service exchange.	Ballantyne & Varey, 2008; Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2004
Target marketing	A process of evaluating relevant market segments, then making decisions about which among them is most worthy of targeting for development.	Aaker, Brumbaugh, Grier, & Trickle, 2000; Marshall & Johnston, 2015

### 3.1.2. Firm characteristics

Two common aspects of firm characteristics found in the entrepreneurship and marketing literatures, and thus used in research at the interface, are entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and market orientation (MO). EO, which has become a dominant concept within the field of entrepreneurship, has been defined as: ‘the propensity of a company's top management to take calculated risks, to be innovative, and to demonstrate proactiveness’ (Morris & Paul, 1987). Market Orientation on the other hand is defined as an organizational culture that results in the: ‘true adoption of the marketing concept leading to a strategic customer focus’ (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). Two dominant perspectives are proffered by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990).

There have been several other firm orientations that have appeared in the literature, such as Customer Orientation (CO), Technology Orientation (TO) (Jones & Rowley, 2009, 2011), and Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) (Michel, Brown, & Gallan, 2008). In SDL, skills, knowledge and competencies (the operant resources) can be exchanged by embedding them into objects/products. Thus, firms wanting to embed SDL are required to take a broader view of innovation, far beyond that involved with just the customer orientation or indeed value-in-exchange through technology orientation. Two other characteristics found in the literature are firm age and firm size. As Carson (2010) states: ‘Depending on how we define Small Business, anything from 80–90% of all enterprises in any developed/developing economy are small in characteristics, especially so in a marketing sense in terms of limited resources, limited expertise and limited impact upon the market sector in which they belong’ (2010 p 10).

### 3.1.3. Resources

The final antecedent, resources, has long been relevant in entrepreneurship (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001), marketing (Hunt, 1997), and small business (Lee, Lim, & Tan, 1999; Weinrauch, Mann, Robinson, & Pharr, 1991). A variety of different resources are relevant to the MEI. These include, but are not limited to: networks (Coviello, Brodie, & Munro, 1997; O'Dwyer, Gilmore, & Carson, 2009); knowledge

(Busenitz & Lau, 1996); human (Bates & Dunham, 1993); and financial (Morrison, Breen, & Ali, 2003). Different resource configurations can explain the differences between small/young and large/established firms (Heirman and Clarysse, 2004).

### 3.2. Functions and processes

The antecedents feed into the various functions and processes of entrepreneurship and/or marketing. These may take place at the individual, team or organizational level. There are a multitude of functions and processes across the two fields. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide an exhaustive list. However, we review some of them in sections below.

#### 3.2.1. Marketing concepts

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Gundlach & William, 2009). This definition is the basis of much of conventional marketing practice. It is argued that marketing plays an integral role in many business functions to include new product development, supply chain management and customer relationship management (Srivastava, Shervani, & Fahey, 1998). Moorman and Rust (1999) have argued that it also serves to motivate the functional processes that link a firm with its customer and is key in building customer-centric organizations which excel at customer relationship management, customer service delivery, and innovation management (Wilkie & Moore, 1999).

In order to “create, communicate, deliver and exchange offerings” processes must exist that enable organizations to identify and address opportunities in the environment. To this end, the marketing construct has evolved to identify those processes that are integral to its successful implementation. As such, the following areas have become key to our understanding and application of the marketing concept (Table 3). Although not exhaustive, they represent some of the key marketing functions or areas that serve to define marketing and affect firm

**Table 4**  
Entrepreneurship concepts with potential for future MEI research.

Entrepreneurship concepts	Description	Key references
Capital investment	Investments made typically in early-stage ventures by individual “angels” or venture capital firms whereby the investors assume some of the risk for a chance at a high rate of financial return	Fried & Hisrich, 1994; Gompers, 1995; Mason & Stark, 2004
Change/growth	Firm growth, especially rapid growth, is typically the focus in entrepreneurship. However, growth is a subset of change.	Davidsson, 1991; Thakur, 1998; Carson, 2010.
Effectuation	The inverse of causation. The process takes the means as given, rather than the ends. New ends are created from the given means, rather than determining and acquiring a set of means to achieve a given ends.	Perry, Chandler, & Markova, 2012; Read et al., 2009; Sarasvathy, 2001.
Entrepreneur	Definitions of an entrepreneur vary widely. Research on the individuals has focused instead on behavior, cognition and psychology, also as the actor recognizes and pursues opportunity.	Baron & Ward, 2004; Carland, Hoy, & Carland, 1988; Gartner, Shaver, Gatewood, & Katz, 1994; Grégoire et al., 2011; Kirzner, 1997
Entrepreneurial action	Behavior in response to a judgmental decision under uncertainty about a possible opportunity for profit	Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006
Entrepreneurial orientation	The propensity of a company's top management to take calculated risks, to be innovative, and to demonstrate proactiveness	Covin & Slevin, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996
Intrapreneurship/corporate entrepreneurship	New venture creation within existing organizations or the transformation of ongoing organizations through strategic renewal.	Covin & Miles, 1999; Dess et al., 2003
Lean start-up/new or nascent organizations/emergence	An early-stage organization, with limited resources and revenue, still in search of a product-market fit.	Blank, 2013; Gartner, 1993; Lichtenstein, Carter, Dooley, & Gartner, 2007; Katz & Gartner, 1988; Tornikoski & Newbert, 2007
New markets (market creation)	Firms that seek new product market spaces that allow the firm to move from over-crowded hypercompetitive markets to markets with little or no competitive threats into a new commercial and technological ecosystem	Coutant, 1936; Kim & Mauborgne, 2004; Morris, Kuratko, & Covin, 2008; Darroch, Morrish, Deacon, & Miles, 2013
New value creation	There are many forms of value creation, including, but not limited to: new products, profit/wealth, opportunities, employment, and recently there has been an interest in social value creation	Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon, & Trahms, 2011; Mair & Marti, 2006
Opportunity and related processes	Exogenous market conditions and/or endogenous business ideas that could lead to new products, production methods, organizations or markets and the processes of observing or creating them	Hansen, Giglierano, & Whelan, 2018; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Short, Ketchen Jr, & Shook, 2010
SME's/owner-manager	Small-to-medium-sized businesses, typically run by a manager who is also the owner of the business	Aldrich, 1992; Borch & Arthur, 1995; Acs & Audretsch, 1988; Birch, 1979; Gilmore & Carson, 1996
Uncertain, turbulent markets; high rate of change (including growth)	Markets that are rapidly changing and/or where the future is highly uncertain or unknowable.	Knight, 1921; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2001

performance (and maybe survival).

### 3.2.2. Entrepreneurship concepts

Unlike marketing, there is no official definition of entrepreneurship. One widely accepted description of the entrepreneurship research domain comes from the Entrepreneurship Division at the Academy of Management. “Specific domain: (a) the actors, actions, resources, environmental influences and outcomes associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities and/or new economic activities in multiple organizational contexts, and (b) the characteristics, actions, and challenges of owner-managers and their businesses” (AOM, 2011). An important point is that entrepreneurship is more than simply the creation of new ventures; it extends also to existing organizations, large and small. Our model of the MEI closely follows this description. We highlight some central themes that may be useful for identifying future research opportunities in the MEI in Table 4.

### 3.2.3. Entrepreneurial marketing

We have suggested above that entrepreneurial marketing (EM) is a unique outcome of the combination of marketing and entrepreneurship, thus it earns a section distinct from marketing and entrepreneurship concepts.

EM is described as a “proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation” (Morris et al., 2002, p.5) and “a spirit, an orientation as well as a process of passionately pursuing opportunities and launching and growing ventures that create perceived customer value through relationships by employing innovativeness, creativity, selling, market immersion, networking, and flexibility” (Hills, Hultman, Kraus, & Schulte, 2010, p.6). Seven underlying dimensions to EM have been identified which include proactiveness, calculated risk-taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resource leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation

(Morris et al., 2002).

Firms using EM are seen as being proactive with respect to the environment. Within EM, actions are viewed as a means by which firms not only create change but also adapt to change within the competitive marketing environment (Collison & Shaw, 2001; Morris et al., 2002). EM is characterized as “a seemingly intuitive ability to anticipate changes in customer demands” (Collison & Shaw, 2001, p. 764). Entrepreneurial firms are exposed to a higher level of uncertainty both externally and internally (Wang, 2008). EM allows firms to manage risk by leveraging relationships with lead customers, networking, and outsourcing key marketing activities in order to reduce environmental uncertainty and lessen firm vulnerability (Collison & Shaw, 2001; Gilmore & Carson, 1999; Morris et al., 2002).

Innovativeness within the entrepreneurial firm is presented as the firm's ability to identify and develop new technologies, product or services, thus EM is ideally suited to motivate this process. As argued by Morris et al. (2002), “EM is fundamentally an opportunity-driven and opportunity-seeking way of thinking and acting” (p. 13). EM seeks to leverage external alliances and networks. In doing so, opportunities for new innovations can manifest through these relationships (Deshpande et al. 1993; Morris et al., 2002). As such, firms that utilize an EM should produce higher rates of new product and service development, which in turn are also characteristic of an entrepreneurial orientation.

### 3.3. Outcomes

We suggest three categories into which the outcomes of the processes can be organized. The first is labeled as “change”. Change itself is not a widely used concept in the literatures, but it does provide a good umbrella for concepts that are often used, such as firm growth which, as previously mentioned, is commonly used in the entrepreneurship literature. Other changes include, but are not limited to, strategy, markets, target customers, etc.; in essence, changes in both the micro- and

macro-environments. The second category of outcomes is any form of value created. Value may be created for customers, the firm, stakeholders, employees, etc. One of the most common variables found in the literature is new products or more broadly, new offers (Davidsson, 2003). Finally, subjective or created opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Dimov, 2007) have been included as they have received growing attention in the entrepreneurship literature.

### 3.4. Environmental context

Historically, theorists such as Porter (1990) have notionally mapped the space within which firms operate as a form of environment or context. Typically, this includes forces that impact a firm, such as competitive structure, technological change, the regulatory or political environment, socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions. Research in this area owes much to the work of Penrose (1959) and what she calls the 'whole firm'. The 'whole firm' concept relates to the influence that the environment or space has on the individual entrepreneur or marketer and how social context (the individuals' relationships within the space and the other 'actors' within it) impact the strategy and operation of the firm. While the range of relevant environmental context concepts is obviously vast, a few examples are highlighted here. Many studies show that the industry in which a firm operates has an influence on the firm. Other variables include (for example); turbulence (Eisenhardt, 1989), risk/uncertainty (Knight, 1921), firm type (Schwartz & Teach, 2001), culture (Bjerke & Hultman, 2002), government/regulation (Klofsten, Heydebreck, & Jones-Evans, 2010), and society (Read et al., 2009).

Recently, scholars in entrepreneurship have focused on a subset of environmental context referred to as an entrepreneurial ecosystem (Neck, Meyer, Cohen, & Corbett, 2004). This focus acknowledges both the diversity of firms and a recognition of societal influence on them. It also perhaps better reflects the interconnectedness of the interface environment. Stam (2015) describes an 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystem' as a system where, entrepreneurship takes place within a community, that emphasizes the role of entrepreneurship in context. Roundy, Bradshaw, and Brockman (2018) suggest entrepreneurial ecosystems operate as complex systems using qualitative comparative analysis, agent-based modeling, and interpretivist methods.

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is fitting for MEI research because a firm's basis for their market development activities – arguably all their business decisions – is on knowledge that is derived at a socially-constructed level, where the individual entrepreneur is the focal point and not the firm (Stam, 2015). The socialized nature of this approach begins with the individual entrepreneur who then leads the focal firm to create a unique, non-linear, fluid and adaptive, 'situation specific' MEI ecosystem within a wider business/societal environmental context.

### 3.5. Summary of the framework

It is our intention that the model functions as a way to bring together all the work that has been done as well as provide a multitude of research questions for future generations of MEI researchers to pursue, regardless of whether or not there are existing measurement tools (Morrish & Deacon, 2011). This is accomplished by identifying relevant relationships that have been examined and examining the multitude of relationships that have not been examined. We provide a non-exhaustive list of suggested research opportunities below.

## 4. Discussion of future research

As described, we suggest that our framework can spawn hundreds of research questions. One needs only to draw concepts, contexts, and/or theories from both marketing and entrepreneurship. We suggest that the concepts can be drawn from any of the elements of our model - antecedents, functions/processes, outcomes, and environmental

context. We recommend that scholars look at the vastness of the marketing and entrepreneurship literatures to find theories, concepts and contexts that can be applied at the interface. We've provided a sampling of major concepts from both marketing and entrepreneurship above. Any combination from the two fields would, per our framework, fit within the MEI. Below, we offer some suggestions based on Tables 2–4 - some more obvious and conventional than others.

Lean start-up (Blank, 2013; Reis, 2011) is a fast-growing area within entrepreneurship. Customer development (Blank & Dorf, 2012) and the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder, 2004) are at the heart of it. An important part of lean startup is direct research with potential customers. Consumer behavior literature can offer many insights. For example, what are the most important considerations concerning modern consumer behaviors that are of most import to the lean start-up? Likewise, what consumer behavior considerations have the greatest impact on lean start-up success? Blank and Dorf (2012) also discuss the importance of "earlyvangelists" - early customers during the development of a new firm/product that passionately support and promote the company's effort. These earlyvangelists function in the role of promotion. How do they communicate with other potential customers? What can be learned from them in regards to integrated marketing communications (IMC)? Generating sales in a startup is a major challenge, especially in new markets. What can entrepreneurs learn from sales management and what can sales management learn from the creative ways entrepreneurs generate demand? Similar to the value they may play towards IMC, how do earlyvangelists generate demand? Some of this research has been started and published in a recent issue of the Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship (Hansen et al., 2018).

Marketing communications is a fundamental area of marketing practice and education. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) involves the coordination of elements of the promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct and interactive marketing). Research concerning the concept itself or of its various components is extensive. However, its consideration within the MEI context is not. As such, some questions that arise might include, what is the role of IMC in today's lean start-up? Other research might address how critical IMC is to SME or lean startups success. A major part of the process of developing a high-growth venture involves pitching a business plan to investors. While the content of the plan is important, an area of potential research is to link marketing communications, especially personal selling, to the investment process. The current challenge of the 'pace' at which marketers need to be communicating with consumers in the technology driven environment is very real. Digital technologies offer marketers the potential to get the most out of integrated campaigns. Included in this is speed-to-market and a test-and-learn mentality, but marketing teams' today need to be agile and flexible, as in a lean startup. So another research question might be how marketing teams can apply lean startup methods to keep up with the rapid change in communications.

Target marketing and segmentation strategies are fundamental marketing principles practiced by successful businesses. The concepts are key and part of most marketing curriculums. It is commonly advised that startups target small niche markets - "there are riches in niches." Their practice and use by start-ups and SMEs could serve to forward our understanding of marketing as practiced by market-oriented and entrepreneurial-oriented firms.

Ever since McCarthy (1964) proposed his 4Ps (i.e., product, price, promotion, place) model, the concept has served to influence marketing practice and marketing thought. Used as an integrating framework that infers that marketing strategy and implementation must consider the coordination and synergy of these four elements in order to succeed in the marketplace. It has been argued that the 4P's do not apply to entrepreneurial ventures. However, there is no question that ventures must sell some product or service, through some channels, with some pricing strategy using some form of promotion. What can marketing



bring to better understanding these within an entrepreneurial context and how might that impact marketing's understanding of the 4P's?

Service-dominant logic (SDL) is another area that lends itself to MEI research. Although SDL has received significant attention in the marketing literature its impact in high-change/growth firms has not. Understanding its role in high growth firms can serve to inform our understanding of the concept when investigated within the MEI.

Similarly, customer relationship marketing is a crucial area of marketing practice in today's competitive market environment. The use of marketing information systems and database mining is commonplace with many retailers. However, for small firms that lack the resources that larger, more capitalized organizations possess, understanding its application in these settings is an area that lends itself to MEI research. As such, research on understanding what relationship marketing is in uncertain markets or how it is practiced within high-change/growth markets could make a significant contribution to our understanding of the processes used within the MEI.

Another good opportunity is to do a much broader review of the literature using the MEI model above. Prior reviews tended to focus on marketing journals, various other outlets via special issues (like this one), and/or interface-specific works (Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship; Global Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship.) Hansen and Eggers (2010) pointed out that most of the work that combines marketing and entrepreneurship appear in management and entrepreneurship journals.

We contest that within the contemporary understanding of the 'Entrepreneurial Ecosystem' approach, a deeper understanding of the MEI, the context specific, is required. There is an acknowledgement that the entrepreneur is key to creating economic value through opportunity recognition and innovation, however, what is absent is an understanding of how the individual entrepreneur ideates and then links ideation to market opportunity - to some extent this remains a black box within the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

Some further ideas can come from less obvious connections of marketing and entrepreneurship concepts. For example, how might SDL apply to equity investment in startups? How is place/distribution channels affected by an uncertain turbulent market? How does a firm maintain a market orientation when creating new markets? How can a customer focus through CRM adapt to an uncertain changing environmental context? How does opportunity creation impact market segmentation? How can SDL be used with effectuation? How might we examine the entrepreneur, rather than a customer, from a consumer behavior perspective? Or conversely, how does understanding of the psychology of the entrepreneur help inform understanding of consumer behavior? Or perhaps what are the connections between consumer behavior and entrepreneurial action? How does branding working with effectuation? How do cultural differences affect entrepreneurial marketing?

#### 4.1. Conclusions

We believe that the conceptualization of the MEI described here will provide better guidance to researchers working at the interface, particularly those who are new to the MEI, than prior definitions, frameworks, and reviews. We also hope that researchers within the marketing and entrepreneurship domains will find new research opportunities by incorporating concepts from the other domain. As this article demonstrates, there are decades worth of research upon which to build new research questions, thus the future is indeed in the past.

To conclude our discussion, we call upon researchers to seek a depth of understanding of the psychological and sociological aspects of the focal firm marketer/entrepreneur at the center of a business. The impact of the external macro environment may be observed, however the rationale, logic and reasoning that underpin actions in the internal micro ecosystem may not. As such, MEI research offers an opportunity for a wide range of collaborative social science and cross business

discipline research projects, which themselves could be focal firm, intra-firm and cross sectoral.

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