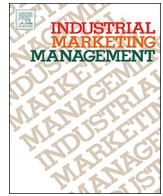




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Review paper

Toward a theory of outside-in marketing: Past, present, and future

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ABSTRACT

Outside-in marketing is a powerful driver of superior firm performance, especially for firms in dynamic, competitive markets. The use and application of outside-in marketing has flourished in the past four decades, but research that synthesizes and extends understanding of this approach is missing, such that extant literature remains fragmented and scarce. This paper aims to deliver a theoretically grounded, managerially relevant framework to guide outside-in marketing research and business practices. Specifically, it offers an integrative conceptualization of outside-in marketing, examines its evolution over the past four decades, and provides business cases that depict how organizations have implemented outside-in marketing. On the basis of a comprehensive analysis of research domains pertinent to outside-in marketing, combined with business examples, this article establishes an evolving theory of outside-in marketing, comprising four key tenets and seven testable propositions.

Recent challenges to firms in dynamic markets—from the Internet of Things to machine learning to artificial intelligence—push them to recognize and leverage the value of outside-in marketing. Unlike inside-out marketing that emphasizes firm resources and capabilities as means to achieve competitive advantages (Day, 1994), outside-in perspectives focus on customer value as starting and end points and thus can improve firm performance. The concept has evolved from a mere reflection of an objective planning view to a multidimensional strategic approach, applicable to various areas (Mu, Bao, Sekhon, Qi, & Love, 2018), and accordingly, research on outside-in marketing has grown exponentially, as Figure 1 reveals. However, this research tradition remains fragmented, without a comprehensive theory to specify the building blocks of outside-in marketing or the opportunities and challenges that confront firms that adopt such a strategy. Accordingly, we seek to establish a *theoretically grounded, managerially relevant framework of outside-in marketing to guide research and business practices*, with four main contributions.

First, we establish a conceptual foundation for the clear definition and scope of outside-in marketing. It refers to the belief in and practice of listening to customers and the market, leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling, and cocreating value through relationship development with customers and external partners, all of which can be evaluated by customer-oriented measures tied to firm performance

(Day & Moorman, 2010; Mu, 2015). This conceptualization highlights multidimensional aspects of outside-in marketing, which we illustrate using real-world business examples of how firms have used it.

Second, we identify the four key stages in the evolution of outside-in marketing and demonstrate its proliferation in the past four decades (e.g., Hardy, 1981; Yang, Jiang, & Xie, 2019). Before 1990, limited research addressed outside-in marketing; starting in the early 1990s, researchers started to develop a foundation for its conceptualization. Then from the mid-2000s to the early 2010s, we note a significant increase in outside-in marketing research and applications; since that period, outside-in marketing research has stabilized while also adding some new directions.

Third, we synthesize empirical evidence by reviewing five major domains: marketing communications, marketing strategy, product innovation, sales, and international marketing (e.g., Bachrach, Mullins, & Rapp, 2017; Berghman, Matthyssens, & Vandembemt, 2012). According to this review, marketing strategy and innovation are the two most studied areas; performance and product innovation success represent the most common outcomes of outside-in marketing. We also find that effect sizes demonstrated by prior research vary by market conditions.

Fourth, we consolidate these comprehensive analyses to provide an overriding theory of outside-in marketing, which we parsimoniously

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Growth of Outside-in Marketing Research

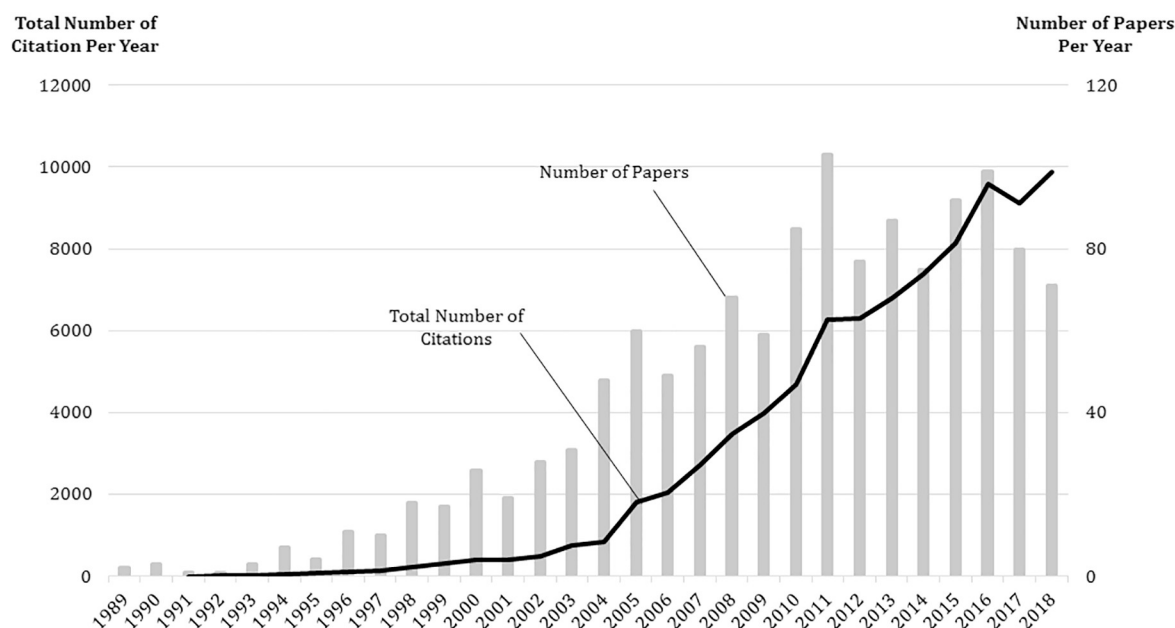


Fig. 1. Growth of outside-in marketing research.

Notes: The results reflect a search of the Web of Science database for “outside-in” and “capabilities,” “outside-in marketing,” “outside-in approach,” “outside-in capabilities,” “outside-in perspective,” “outside-in processes,” “market driven,” or “market orientation” from 1900 to 2018 in the following 28 journals: *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Marketing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Business Industrial Marketing*, *Service Industries Journal*, *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *Management Decision*, *Journal of International Marketing*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Service Theory And Practice*, *International Marketing Review*, *International Business Review*, *Tourism Management*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *European Journal of International Management*, *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, *Journal of Business to Business Marketing*, *Journal of Management*, *British Journal of Management*, and *Journal of Service Research*.

summarize in four tenets and seven propositions. To illustrate our theory, we provide additional business cases. These combined approaches and insights thus provide in-depth guidance and ideas for both academics and practitioners.

1. Understanding outside-in marketing

Using our extensive review of existing definitions of outside-in marketing, we propose an integrative definition. We then briefly review the evolution of outside-in marketing, which helps illustrate how its scope has changed over the past three decades.

1.1. Conceptualization of outside-in marketing

To achieve a comprehensive review of extant outside-in marketing definitions, we searched for both this term and its common aliases (e.g., outside-in approach, view, philosophy, perspective, marketing capability), which produced the list of definitions in Table 1. These definitions reflect shifts in emphasis, from general markets and the external environment in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to considerations of the importance of understanding customers in the 2000s, to the use of data and value creation for customers and business partners in the 2010s. A central tenet of outside-in marketing is that firms must start with customers and the market. By integrating these different conceptualizations, we develop a working definition:

Outside-in marketing is the belief in and practice of listening to customers and the market, leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling, and cocreating value through relationship

development with customers and external partners, all of which can be evaluated by customer-oriented measures tied to firm performance.

With this conceptualization that involves both *beliefs* and *practices*, we distinguish outside-in marketing from marketing capabilities, which reflect the firm’s ability to use available resources to perform marketing activities and accomplish desirable marketing outcomes (Day, 1994; Moorman & Rust, 1999; Morgan, Feng, & Whitler, 2018). That is, marketing capabilities consist of specific processes of linking, transforming, and employing available firm resources (Morgan et al., 2018). Some researchers have studied outside-in capabilities, but outside-in marketing is more than just a type of capability, in that it can be conceptualized as both a belief system and a strategy that puts customers first. Our definition also highlights that outside-in marketing incorporates organizational philosophy and action, as reflected in several key elements: listening to customers and the market (i.e., market sensing), leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling, co-creating value through relationship development with customers and external partners, and linking customer-oriented measures to firm performance. In this way, our definition clearly differentiates outside-in marketing from other related marketing concepts.

1.1.1. Listening to customers and the market (market sensing)

Outside-in marketing starts with *listening to customers and the market* so that firms can anticipate emerging opportunities and threats (Jüttner & Wehrli, 1994). This factor encapsulates a main difference between relationship marketing and outside-in marketing: Both focus on customers and seek to build and maintain successful relational exchanges

Table 1
Conceptualization of outside-in marketing.

References	Definition	Elements of outside-in marketing			
		Listening to customers and the market	Leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling	Cocreating value through relationship development	Linking customer-oriented measures to firm performance
Hardy (1981)	The outside-in philosophy stresses "the importance of the marketplace and environmental opportunities/threats." (p. 8).	✓			
Drucker (1992)	"For what a business needs the most for its decisions—especially its strategic ones—are data about what goes on outside of it. It is only outside the business where there are results, opportunities and threats" (p. 97).	✓			
Winkleman et al. (1993)	"Outside-in marketing means starting at a point outside the company with the consumer and working back in toward the marketing organization and the brand rather than setting a corporate financial goal and then heading out to look for buyers." (p. 26).				✓
Day (1994)	"Outside-in marketing capabilities are those capabilities whose focal point is almost exclusively outside the organization. The purpose of these outside-in capabilities is to connect the processes that define the other organizational capabilities to the external environment and enable the business to compete by anticipating market requirements ahead of its competitors and creating durable relationships with customers, channel members, and suppliers." (p. 41).	✓		✓	
Jüttner & Wehrli (1994)	"The dominant outside-in perspective expresses that the marketing management process starts with a definition and selection of target markets (based on an overall environment, industry and market analysis), focuses on customer needs and deduces the necessary internal activities which provide customer satisfaction." (p. 44).	✓	✓		
Kotler (1994)	"Outside-in companies take their clues from the marketplace. They spot unmet needs and translate them into business opportunities. They define target groups and develop a value-delivery system that is superior to competitors who are serving the same market." (p. 354)	✓	✓	✓	
Goodman (1999)	Outside-in perspective means "fulfilling customers' needs" and "ensuring that the products offer potential customers superior perceived value for money." (p. 112).		✓	✓	
Day and Moorman (2010)	"Outside in means standing in the customer's shoes and viewing everything the company does through the customer's eyes...the purpose of a solution is to help our customers find value and make money—to our mutual benefit." (p. 5).	✓		✓	
Gulati (2009)	"An outside-in perspective means that companies aim to creatively deliver something of value to customers, rather than focus simply on products and sales... an outside-in firm actively cultivates the fifth level - connections with suppliers and other allies to bolster the value of its solutions by expanding its periphery while at the same time seeking out ways to cost-effectively shrink its core." (p. 210).			✓	
Day (2011)	"An outside-in approach to strategy begins with the market. The management team steps outside the boundaries and constraints of the company as it is and looks first to the market: How and why are customers changing? What new needs do they have? What can we do to solve their problems and help them make more money? What new competitors are lurking around the corner and how can we derail their efforts?" (p. 187).	✓			
Grönroos (2011)	"Value creation (of value-in-use) takes place in the user's sphere, and therefore, it is the supplier that is invited to engage with the customer's usage processes, in order to support the customer's value creation. This is a truly outside-in approach in accordance with the marketing concept." (p. 243).			✓	
Mu (2015)	"The central tenet of outside-in perspective is that superior firm performance emanates from sensing, setting and managing customer expectations, and delivery of superior customer values and successful customer outcomes." (p. 152).	✓		✓	✓
Mathewson and Moran (2016)	"Outside-in marketing is the practice of learning the language of your clients and prospects and building messages for them on (and in) their terms." (p. 4).	✓	✓	✓	
Yang et al. (2019)	"Marketing capabilities from the outside-in perspective begins from the external market... This perspective stresses the importance of sensing and responding to the external environment, beginning with the external environment by anticipating market change and leveraging outside resources to develop capabilities accordingly... Therefore, firms have to shift from a reactive to a sense-and-respond (adaptive) approach." (p. 2).	✓			
Proposed definition of outside-in marketing	Outside-in marketing is the belief in and practice of listening to customers and the market, leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling, and cocreating value through relationship development with customers and external partners, all of which can be evaluated by customer-oriented measures tied to firm performance.	✓	✓	✓	✓

(Morgan & Hunt, 1994), but only outside-in marketing aims to identify customers' needs by taking their perspective and viewing the world through their eyes (Day & Moorman, 2010). Moreover, outside-in marketing requires continuous monitoring of changes that involve various market actors, including competitors, technology artifacts, and business partners. Therefore, market sensing is a foundation for the other elements of outside-in marketing; in our view, outside-in marketing inherently encompasses market orientation.

1.1.2. Leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling

To be able to establish accurate customer profiles, firms that practice outside-in marketing leverage data. They attempt to detect unmet needs and convert them into business opportunities by defining target customers and learning their language, then building personalized messages for them (Kotler, 1994; Mathewson & Moran, 2016). In addition, outside-in marketing firms can tailor their value proposition, value delivery, and value communications.

1.1.3. Cocreating value through relationship development

Outside-in marketing firms use their knowledge of customers and markets, attained through their data-based customer profiling, to enable value (co)creation and relationship development efforts with both customers and external partners. The extended scope of this strategy moves beyond generating market intelligence and delivering value; it embraces value cocreation and relationship development with customers and other external parties, such as educational institutions or suppliers (Gulati, 2009; Kotler, 1994). In this way, outside-in marketing differs from a market orientation, which focuses more on the organization-wide creation, distribution of, and response to market intelligence relative to present and future customer needs (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). However, both concepts share a common element of market sensing and highlight the importance of collecting and analyzing information pertaining to customers, competitors, and business partners to identify market opportunities and threats, as well as to develop customer relationships (Hunt & Morgan, 1995).

1.1.4. Linking customer-oriented measures to firm performance

Outside-in marketing efforts must be evaluated by customer-oriented measures tied to firm performance. The firms thus use metrics that are meaningful and relevant to customers (Petersen et al., 2009); financial measures such as sales and profit are insufficient. The effectiveness of outside-in marketing instead should be tracked by measures that reflect customer engagement (e.g., likes, comments) or relationship quality, across multiple channels and touchpoints (Winkleman et al., 1993).

1.2. Outside-in marketing in practice

Using this conceptualization of outside-in marketing, we identify relevant business examples to illustrate how organizations have implemented it (Table 2). The presentation of these cases and the resulting managerial insights reflect the dimensions contained in our conceptualization.

1.2.1. Listening to customers and the market

To obtain valuable insights into customers' needs and challenges, outside-in marketing firms go beyond typical market research and ask customers reflective, open-ended questions (Gilbert, 2010). For example, the U.K. telecommunications services provider O2 asked customers to define "customer-led" in their own words (Hosea, 2018), then used the insights to identify key customer needs and translate them into its own "customer experience principles." These firms also closely monitor consumers' behavior and listen to their opinions and complaints, such as when Philips Healthcare sought to map a typical day in the life of a radiologist, a key purchase influencer, irrespective of whether Philips products were involved in those daily activities. Doing so helped the firm understand key challenges for radiologists (e.g.,

being unable to compare different patients' scans) and identify new opportunities (Bodine, 2013).

Firms use various methods to accumulate customer knowledge too. For example, Nike placed sensors on professional athletes' bodies to monitor their performance (with Nike products) and understand these clients' needs (Petro, 2016). On the Nike+ website, customers can share their running histories and obtain tips and information about forthcoming events, which also give the firm information about how these customers engage with its products. In another example, SAP engages actively with its customers on its online Idea Place platform, which incorporates advanced functions that allow customers to propose new product features and functionalities, then vote on the relative merits of each user-generated idea. Business partners have joined this community to share their ideas and feedback (Kiron, 2012).

Social media offer a notably effective platform for gathering market insights from customers and partners, such as trends, feedback on offerings and marketing performance, and ideas for new features (Kiron, 2012). Many firms also use real-time supplier data, such as system performance category alerts and input about how geopolitical events are affecting supply chains, to inform their strategy (Munnally, Liddell, & Marrison, 2017).

1.2.2. Leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling

With the rise of the Internet and multichannel models, outside-in marketing firms can turn to vast data sources to develop highly detailed customer segmentation strategies. Smart devices (e.g., home assistants, wearable products) provide expansive information about how and when people look for answers to questions or research products, and firms can leverage these data to create accurate, real-time customer profiles. Wescom Credit Union gathers daily data of its 200,000 members, across myriad sources, then uses these data to identify those members' status and behavioral profiles, create targeted marketing campaigns, and provide recommendations (Ransbotham & Kiron, 2019). By analyzing historical purchase patterns (e.g., frequency, digital journey), Keurig identified customer segments with which it tested different messages and tones of language. New coffee machine owners received emails introducing available flavors instead of promotional messages, for example. Such segment-specific tailored communications reduced complaints and increased email click rates, which in turn generated additional data to inform its branding, education, and promotional strategies (Downey & Beaudin, 2018). The importance of segmentation also has prompted advertising agencies, such as Publicis Groupe and Interpublic Group of Companies, to acquire data aggregators, so that they can more readily access market insights about their clients and end-users and quickly identify audience segments (Haggin, 2019).

Diverse data sets further enable firms to fine-tune their customer profiles, across all aspects of the business. Virgin Money relies on artificial intelligence tools to generate in-depth understanding of customers, such as their likelihood to switch credit card providers (Austin, 2019). L'Oreal's diagnosis tool, codeveloped with dermatologists, relies on analyses of more than 6000 patient photos, spanning all ethnicities, genders, and various skin conditions, to profile customers by detecting signs of aging and suggesting tailor-made skincare routines (Hammett, 2019).

1.2.3. Cocreating value through relationship development

The outside-in business model revolves around improving the customer experience, which implies that firms must build collaborative relationships with customers. Deep customer insights from a multitude of touchpoints empower them to offer more personalized services and incorporate customer feedback into their innovations (Tanaka, 2010), as exemplified by LEGO. In its open innovation, it makes great use of external ideas and technologies by involving customers in innovation and value cocreation processes. With Mindstorms, programmable motors with plastic parts, customers build custom designs; LEGO also

Table 2
Outside-in marketing in practice.

References	Key takeaways	Firm name	Business examples
Listening to customer and market (i.e., market sensing)			
Hosea (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses must start by listening carefully to their customers. They should establish themselves as customer-centric from the very beginning. They need to listen and digest feedback to be able to react to it quickly. 	O2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O2 conducted extensive research asking its customers to define customer-led. Key customer needs identified in this research were translated into its customer experience principles, which O2 uses to shape its decisions, communications, and designs of its processes, propositions, and products.
Bodine (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies need to commence innovation initiatives with an outside-in approach that maps out their business challenges, according to the conditions of customers' unmet needs. 	Philips Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify new opportunities, Philips Healthcare mapped out a typical day in the life of a radiologist, regardless of whether those activities involve Philips. With this approach, the company identified a key pain point in radiologists' daily work (e.g., inability to compare one patient's scan with those of others), which Philips hadn't considered, even though it was capable of providing a solution.
Petro (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smarter segmentation and real personalization require an understanding of buyer behavior in various touchpoints, and new insights on every customer's true associations and preferences. 	Nike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nike develop insightful knowledge about how customers use its products through the Nike+ website. On this platform, runners share recent runs with their friends and view the history of their runs on maps; they also can acquire suggestions and information about forthcoming events. Nike tries to understand the needs of professional athletes by applying sensors and monitoring how they perform with Nike products.
Kiron (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to monitor and listen to what customers are posting in social media. Social media offer outside-in market insights for the company, which can take many forms: general insights into trends, feedback about marketing messages, or specific product insights about future features and functionality. 	SAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAP's Idea Place is an online forum on which customers can provide suggestions about new attitudes and functionality for company's offerings. Other members can improve and vote on these ideas. Thus the company obtains a list of ranked, customer-driven features that can be added to future solutions to address emerging trends in the market. The approximately 4000 daily posts in the company's main community network constitute direct feedback from customers. Many partners also engage in these communities, providing additional feedback and ideas.
Leverage data for customer segmentation and profiling			
Downey and Beaudin (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firms need to develop audience profiles based on not only demographic attributes and expected behaviors but also when and how customers can be reached. Technology can help marketers identify patterns in customer behavior that can be applied directly to their communications and choice of media. Leading marketers prioritize tech integration and are more advanced users of their technology. 	Keurig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keurig analyzed its customers' purchase patterns, using 2 years of historical data, including purchase frequency and their digital journeys. With this analysis, Keurig identified four customer segments, prompting it to move from daily customer emails with price-based promotions for coffee pods to testing different messages and email cadences tailored for each segment.
Haggin (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad-agency holding companies are acquiring data-driven marketing businesses to collect, analyze, and leverage information about their clients' customers. This knowledge enables them to develop ads targeted at narrow market segments. This effort is necessary to create a strong point of differentiation. 	Publicis Groupe, Interpublic Group of Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicis Groupe SA acquired a data business that gave it access to a trove of data about 250 million Americans, featuring up to 7000 attributes, as well as technology to analyze the data. The Interpublic Group of Companies' acquisition of a data business helped it reduce the time needed to identify audience segments and enhanced its ability to target them with timely messages. For example, it can quickly find and focus on "auto intenders," who intend to purchase cars, and tailor ads to appeal to them. The speed ensures that auto intenders are unlikely to have bought a car by the time the ads are served.
Austin (2019); Hammett (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new wave of artificial intelligence should be human-centric and outward. Therefore, marketers need a clear picture of the person on whom they use the technology, including the frequency with which this person receives communications and how much targeting is occurring. 	Oral B, L'Oréal, Virgin Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral B's smart toothbrush integrates knowledge about human brushing behaviors to identify individual brushing styles. L'Oréal's spot diagnosis tool was codeveloped with dermatologists and has been modeled on more than 6000 dermatology patient photos of all ethnicities, genders, and skin conditions, graded by acne experts. Virgin Money uses artificial intelligence to gain a more in-depth understanding of its customers and enable more effective and targeted strategies, based on customer profiles.
Cocreating value through relationship development with customers and external partners			
Chesbrough (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness generally refers to welcoming external contributions and exchanges of ideas and information. Outside-in open innovation happens when a company makes greater use of external ideas and technologies by involving customers in its value creation process. 	LEGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindstorms include programmable motors with plastic parts, so consumers could build LEGO designs that move. The company opened its software so that anyone could modify it and watched what customers decided to create. In

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

References	Key takeaways	Firm name	Business examples
Reiss (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most valuable companies are those that understand innate human desires for flexibility and personalized experiences and are able to create incredible experiences for their customers to build customer relationship. However, this outcome cannot be achieved without a strong bond with partners. 	Convене	<p>addition to ideas for innovation, it resulted in higher rate of engagement and stronger bonds with customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convене has partnered with Class A landlords to establish a network of premium places for meetings, work, and event hosting. Convене's landlord partnership approach allows it to differentiate itself from competitors in the workplace rental landscape. The company embraces authentic, personalized hospitality and motivates employees to develop genuine relationships with customers, keeping in mind that everything at Convене starts and ends with human interactions between team members and clients.
Furr and Shipilov (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital technology has the greatest effect on customers, such as the customer experience or relationship synergies, and provides firms better customer care options. 	Marriott, Galeries Lafayette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriott created a digital platform to engage its customers by focusing on delivering a great hotel and customer experience. Galeries Lafayette put customers at the center of the business by using a hybrid model: a physical space to build an emotional relationship with customers and digital to understand their needs. The brick-and-mortar store is staffed by salespeople known as personal shoppers or personal stylists who build emotional relationships with their customers. Digitally enabled transactions use new technology to store customer preferences, which help salespeople provide more individualized perks.
Munnelly et al. (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important for firms to integrate their supply chain network with their partners and suppliers, and employ business intelligence to develop in-depth insights into their customers and market. Greater collaboration with partners and suppliers enables information and resource sharing, such as timely updates on delivery or pricing changes. 	Swisse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swisse integrated its supply chain management system, using Microsoft Dynamics 365. This technology-enabled integration and delivery of effective relationships relied on the exchange of timely and accurate business insights, seamless integration of supply chain information and financial information, and facilitation of cross-organization data and reports.
Customer oriented measures tied to firm performance Hemsley (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A great customer experience can translate into tangible business outcomes. Customer feedback is an important metric for evaluating a firm's performance. 	British Airways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Airways uses multiple customer-oriented metrics (e.g., net promoter scores) and gathers feedback from a customer satisfaction tool and sentiment analysis. It plans to develop metrics that measure emotion.
Schrage and Kiron (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most firms have clear commitment to creating greater awareness and accountability around customers. Multidimensional views of customers should draw on diverse functional unit perspectives. More traditional metrics, such as customer lifetime value, brand equity, and churn, are still important. However, firms seek externally focused performance indicators that enable them to segment and engage customers better. 	Adidas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adidas recently reduced its focus on short-term metrics such as sales to ensure its long-term brand health, motivated by a desire to transform its best customers into advocates and de facto brand champions. Its media strategy is built on audience attention and engagement, not impressions. In addition to key financial metrics such as listings acquired and return on spending, Airbnb focuses on how the brand is perceived by consumers, such as by assessing brand sentiment and net promoter score.

released software that allowed users to make modifications and observe others' creations (Chesbrough, 2011), which in turn improved both future product innovations and customer engagement.

Outside-in marketing firms also focus on creating and nurturing relationships by providing customer value, such as when Marriott encourages customer engagement on its digital platforms through storytelling and shared experiences. Its real-time social media command centers geofence all its properties, to inform social conversations (Furr & Shipilov, 2019). If Marriott notices that a guest has posted an anniversary celebration on social media for example, it will find ways to "surprise and delight" that consumer with a special treat such as a cake or bottle of champagne (Solis, 2018).

Creative solutions to customer problems require networks of partners too (Gilbert, 2010), so for example, Convене, a corporate version of Airbnb, offers building tenants access to a shared network of workspaces, amenities, and hospitality services, according to a win-win landlord partnership approach that effectively meets customer expectations (Reiss, 2019). To leverage these collaborative partnerships, firms also can rely on new technology. Swisse, an Australian supplement manufacturer, engaged with suppliers and partners using Microsoft Dynamics 365 to exchange timely, accurate business insights and

integrate their supply chain and financial information, which then contributed to the increasingly effective development of all the parties' customer relationships (Munnelly et al., 2017).

1.2.4. Linking customer-oriented measures to firm performance

Firms often focus myopically on short-term assessments (e.g., annual budgets, sales figures), which may limit their broader perspective. To tackle such issues, Adidas actively seeks to avoid using short-term metrics such as sales, motivated by its stated desire to turn its best customers into advocates and brand champions (Hemsley, 2019), which constitutes a salient representation of an outside-in perspective. Outside-in marketing firms emphasize innovation, experimentation, and customers' hearts and minds, not myopic insights from a corporate perspective, and thus, their key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics differ. Rather than chasing short-term, "vanity" metrics, Adidas considers viewability and contextual targeting (Schrage & Kiron, 2019). Its media strategy builds on audience engagement rather than quantifiable metrics like impressions.

Customer feedback and relationship strength are other important KPI for outside-in marketing (Hemsley, 2019). Some traditional metrics, such as brand equity and churn, may remain important, but firms

also embrace externally focused KPIs pertaining to how well they segment and engage customers (Schrage & Kiron, 2019). Thus, Airbnb assesses listings acquired and its return on investments, but it also carefully factors in brand perceptions, using brand sentiment and net promoter scores. Similarly, British Airways uses multiple customer-oriented metrics and gathers feedback from customer satisfaction tools and sentiment analyses. The multidimensional perspectives that customers reflect also require diverse functional unit perspectives and measures that can reflect their attitudes, affection, and behaviors. Thus, British Airways plans to include emotion metrics to evaluate the emotional bond it has developed with its customers (Page, 2019).

1.2.5. Summary of insights

Outside-in marketing begins and ends with customers. Market sensing has a dual function (idea generation and feedback channel), and the resulting data can inform both customer profiling and customer and partner relationship development. These aspects in turn contribute to firm performance, as evaluated by customer-oriented metrics. Outside-in marketing firms must be able to act on those insights, and data have key roles in this process. Firms need to develop multiple targeted iterations, use new information generated to augment and update their systems, and expand their data sets to deliver more value to customers. Technology is important for each of these functions; outside-in marketing firms thus are often advanced users of technology. Although firms might adopt different approaches to outside-in marketing, their decisions are always informed by their market and their customers. They pursue long-term outcomes while monitoring even the smallest changes in their external environments.

1.3. Evolution of outside-in marketing

As we summarize in Table 3, the evolution of outside-in marketing consists of four main stages: (1) before 1990, marked by limited research into outside-in marketing; (2) early 1990s to early 2000s, when a solid foundation for its conceptualization emerged; (3) mid-2000s to early 2010s, featuring significant increases in outside-in marketing research and applications; and (4) mid-2010s to present, which has seen the stabilization of outside-in research and new directions.

1.3.1. Before 1990: limited research

In this earliest stage, the conceptualization of outside-in marketing remained vague; research predominantly focused on firm resources and internal organizational strength, reflective of an inside-out approach (Hardy, 1981). Although no clear consensus existed, we infer that an outside-in approach generally implied building an organizational capability to identify environmental opportunities and competitive threats, then develop relevant positioning strategies to achieve competitive advantages (Grönsnhaug & Falkenberg, 1989; Hovell, 1979). Some research emphasized objective assessments of the needs, demands, and perceptions of target customers as a first step in the marketing process (Hardy, 1981), but more emphasis centered on understanding competitive positions in the market.

1.3.2. Early 1990s to early 2000s: solid conceptual foundation

In seeking a solid foundation for the conceptualization of outside-in marketing, research shifted from an exclusive deployment of either outside-in or inside-out perspectives to an integration of both views. These studies proposed that creating competitive advantages required the integration of inside-out (e.g., focusing on internal resources and capabilities exclusive to the firm) and outside-in (e.g., focusing on the state of the external market and customer needs) activities, to avoid developing internal competencies that could be irrelevant to customers (Day, 1994; Jüttner & Wehrli, 1994). Moreover, the very concept of outside-in marketing was delineated with some specific components. For example, Day (1994) cited distinct elements, such as market

sensing, customer linking, channel bonding, and technology monitoring.¹ These outside-in capabilities facilitate firm responsiveness to market changes but also help the firm develop and use its inside-out capabilities (Di Benedetto & Song, 2003), understand customer requirements, and develop long-term customer relationships (Fahy & Hooley, 2002). Firms that cannot build outside-in marketing capabilities risk going out of business (Vaturi & Varianini, 2000).

1.3.3. Mid-2000s to early 2010s: significant increases in research and applications

As research matured from conceptualization to explication and application, outside-in marketing could be applied to various contexts (e.g., communications, sales, innovation), reflecting changes in business practice, such that firms increasingly came to value the outside-in orientation for their adaptive marketing processes, amid concomitant changes in markets and technologies (Day, 2011). In particular, customers empowered by the Internet and social media platforms made obtaining and processing market information even more important, so marketers started using information systems to gather insights on different touchpoints and then initiate timely, meaningful conversations with key stakeholders (Blesa & Ripolles, 2008; Kleindorfer, Wind, & Gunther, 2009). Scholars provided critical theoretical and managerial insights into the foundation of outside-in marketing and its outcomes (Day, 2011; Day & Moorman, 2010; Grönroos, 2011; Gulati, 2009). Although customers remained a core component of outside-in marketing, additional emphasis shifted to the complexity of delivering value to customers.

1.3.4. Mid-2010s to present: stabilization of research and new directions

Contemporary research extends the conceptualization of outside-in marketing to include nurturing and sustaining ecosystems of partners and relevant stakeholders through increased firm engagement (e.g., Henninger, Alevizou, & Oates, 2017; Mu, 2015; Mu et al., 2018). As innovation became more important to firm survival in dynamic markets, outside-in marketing firms began to engage more with customers and partners to develop propositions and cocreate value on collaboration platforms (Payne, Frow, & Eggert, 2017). With other external partners (e.g., educational institutions, suppliers), they also seek to convert interfirm links into intra-firm marketing capabilities (Yang et al., 2019). Firms integrate their outside-in and inside-out capabilities to develop and cocreate offerings (Gregory, Ngo, & Karavdic, 2019). Through the use of technology and big data, they develop content to strengthen customer–firm connections (Mathewson & Moran, 2016; Vollero, Schultz, & Siano, 2019), often using personalized communications (Epsilon, 2018). In turn, a current goal of outside-in marketing is to unlock customer-centric conversations by leveraging firms' knowledge of customers, adopting customers' language, and exploiting customers' resources.

1.3.5. Summary of insights

The increased volume and quality of market data from online channels, together with the rise of smart devices and social media, have encouraged the growth of outside-in marketing research and practice. They also have accelerated market competition, forcing firms to adopt outside-in marketing strategies, to listen to the market and respond to perceived opportunities and threats better than the competition. In addition, the availability of information has afforded more power to customers. As technology continues to evolve, ongoing and swift

¹ According to Day (1994), market sensing involves information processing activities that help organizations learn, identify, and predict market changes and find deficiencies. The information then can be used to form and maintain customer relationships through customer linking. Channel bonding involves connecting with partners, which can offer broader knowledge and help the business to assess its performance. Finally, through technology sensing, firms consistently monitor new technologies, especially in the information age.

Table 3
Evolution of outside-in marketing.

	Before 1990	Early 1990s to early 2000s	Mid-2000s to early 2010s	Mid-2010s to present
	Limited research	Solid foundation for conceptualization	Significant increases in research and applications	Stabilization of research with new directions
Customer-firm relationship	Information asymmetry; hierarchical power structures favored firms.	Reduced information asymmetry; customers' use of early information technologies enabled their voices to be heard by firms, though firms still hold much power.	Customers equipped with information and empowered by social media and the Internet; as customer power grows, firm-customer relationships become more balanced.	Significant information about customers and created by customers is available; active collaboration between customers and firms; value is cocreated and defined by both customers and firms.
Key trends and disruptions	Use of outside agencies in long-range planning; understanding competitors to create more competitive advantages.	Resource-based view; develop firm capabilities; commercialization of the Internet; development of web browsers; email and instant messaging gaining popularity.	Growth of Internet usage; emergence of Web, leading to interactive platforms and user-generated content; birth of social media platforms; birth of the "Internet of things."	Multichannel strategies; virtual relationships; business intelligence; large-scale data breaches; big data; artificial intelligence; digital transformation.
Key insights	Emphasis on competitive advantage/positioning based on differentiation or price leadership. Little emphasis on the outside-in approach. Some papers mention it, usually associated with using an outside agency in long-range planning (objective), in contrast with an inside-out view (subjective). Also, outside-in marketing suggests a focus on competitors and the market in general.	Outside-in marketing started receiving attention from academic researchers and practitioners, especially toward the end of 1990s. The conceptualization reflected its relation to marketing capabilities. Studies such as Day's (1994) provide a foundation for further outside-in marketing research and inform managers of the significant role of an outside-in perspective.	Outside-in marketing research turns from conceptualization to explication and application, trying to understand outside-in marketing in different areas. The massive amounts of data and information from interactive platforms can help facilitate knowledge of customers and the market.	Starting with customers and the market, outside-in marketing firms focus more on the value cocreation processes, which is particularly important because innovation is key to surviving in turbulent market conditions. In addition, outside-in marketing requires huge amounts of individual-level data, which can facilitate targeting and personalization, as enabled by the Internet and social media.
Illustrative papers	Hovell (1979), Hardy (1981), Grönskaug and Falkenberg (1989)	Day (1994), Jüttner and Wehrli (1994), Slater and Narver (1998), Fahy and Hooley (2002), Di Benedetto and Song (2003)	Celuch et al. (2002), Blesa and Ripolles (2008), Gulati (2009), Kleindorfer et al. (2009), Day & Moorman (2010), Day (2011), Grönroos (2011)	Mu (2015), Mathewson and Moran (2016), Henninger et al. (2017), Payne et al. (2017), Mu et al. (2018), Yang et al. (2019)
Main concepts	Competitor analysis; Market analysis	Outside-in capabilities	Outside-in capabilities; Adaptive marketing capabilities; Customer value	Outside-in capabilities; Adaptive marketing capabilities; Customer value; Value cocreation; Intra-firm marketing capability

changes also arise in customer preferences and needs, demanding significant market understanding and innovation by firms that seek to match their product and service offerings to specific customer segments. Outside-in marketing accordingly has transitioned from understanding and delivering relevant value to customers to value cocreation with both customers and other external parties.

2. Synthesis of research findings on outside-in marketing

Using our definition of outside-in marketing, we next synthesize and discuss extant empirical marketing research, according to the major domains in which researchers have adopted an outside-in perspective, as detailed in Table 4: marketing communications, marketing strategy, product innovation, sales, and international marketing.

2.1. Marketing communications

Marketing communications, and especially integrated marketing communication (IMC) concepts, embrace inside-out perspectives in which customers are passive receivers and the firm is the sole creator of marketing contents. Yet as the Internet and social media spread, customers have come to define their interactions with firms (Šeric, Gil-Saura, & Ozretić-Došen, 2015; Valos, Haji Habibi, Casidy, Driesener, & Maplestone, 2016), actively seeking information and engaging only with content that suits them. Outside-in marketing firms gather market information to develop their marketing communications and better serve these customers (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017; Luxton, Reid, & Mavondo, 2015; Quinton, 2013), which leads to a type of outside-in IMC. To explain the value of messages for customers, Finne and Grönroos (2017, p. 446) define communication in use, which is an important concept for outside-in IMC, as “the customer’s integration and sense making of all messages from any source, firm-driven or stemming from other sources, the customer perceives as communication, forming value-in-use for him/her for a specific purpose.” The transition, from “telling and selling” to “listening and learning” (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017, p. 471), highlights outside-in IMC as customer-oriented, in that they involve both user-generated content and value cocreation.

This shift also requires a marketing information system that is designed specifically to gather information from different touchpoints, initiate meaningful conversations with customers and other key stakeholders, and provide insights into areas for improvement (Reid, Luxton, & Mavondo, 2005). A popular outside-in marketing practice uses big data to understand audiences across multiple platforms and identify information that would be relevant and useful for them. This knowledge then informs the content marketing strategy, which provides value for customers (Mathewson & Moran, 2016). Reinold and Tropp (2012) propose measuring IMC effectiveness with customer-oriented metrics, including media dimensions (e.g., involvement, recall of brand touchpoints) and content dimensions (e.g., content uniqueness, content recall). Furthermore, data from customers can be a feedback mechanism that helps firms identify the most effective content and make changes as needed. Then the firm’s outgoing and incoming messages both contribute to meaningful communications, which create value for both parties (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017). Outside-in marketing communications in turn can be central to determining firm performance (Luxton et al., 2015; van Diejen, Borah, Tellis, & Franses, 2019).

2.2. Marketing strategy

A true outside-in marketing view prompts firms to discover customer engagement methods to create value, instead of pushing customers to fit within their existing processes (Day, 1994). In essence, this approach involves a constant focus on customer-oriented value propositions, which requires different thinking across diverse areas, from culture to operational capabilities. Outside-in firms deliver superior

Table 4
Research insights into outside-in marketing.

References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
Marketing communications Reinold and Tropp (2012)	Customer-oriented measures	—	<p>IMC effectiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand touchpoint effectiveness Content effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMC concept involves four pillars: (1) Stakeholder centered: An outside-in perspective with a focus on customers (2) Content: Creating distinctive, relevant and consistent content via information technology for the customers. (3) Channels: Integration of all touch points that stakeholders visit. (4) Results: The key goal is to yield measurable outcomes for a company IMC effectiveness is measured via media dimensions (level of involvement and recall in relation to brand touch points) and brand content dimensions (level of content uniqueness and recall in relation to content). The relationships between customers' perceptions of IMC (e.g. perceived unified communications that focus on customers) and customer-based hotel brand equity (i.e. (1) brand image, (2) perceived quality, and (3) brand loyalty) are positive and significant. Advanced ICT perception moderates these relationships. Social media's characteristics are interactivity, the integration of communication into distribution channels, collaborative media, and information collection, which are important to outside-in IMC. Social media have an impact on traditional marketing communications frameworks in different ways: reach new audience, customer service platform, advocacy through word-of-mouth, consumer-generated messages (two way communications), listening, and behavioral measures. IMC requires the adoption of an outside-in approach, including the ability to gather market information and connect with customers. IMC has a significant impact on market-based performance and financial performance via campaign effectiveness. Firms who demonstrate an outside-in perspective through social listening can develop a competitive advantage. The growth rate of user-generated content is significantly related to stock returns. Specific marketing events such as new product development can lead to the volatility in user-generated content, which is linked to volatility in stock returns. The signs of spillover effects are subject to the valence of the user-generated content on Twitter.
Šerić et al. (2015)	Customer linking, technology monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Advanced ICT perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated marketing communications Advanced technology Brand equity, image, and loyalty Perceived quality 	
Valos et al. (2016)	Market sensing, customer linking, customer-oriented measurement	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic role of social media Marketing message - WOM organizational implementation - cross function coordination Behavioral measurement 	
Luxton et al. (2015)	Market sensing, customer linking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediator: campaign effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMC Brand performance (brand market; brand financial) 	
van Dieijen et al. (2019)	Market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth rates of volume of user-generated content Volatility of growth rates of volume of user-generated content Volatility of stock returns Stock returns 	
Marketing strategy Hooley et al. (1999)	Customer linking, market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside-in capabilities Spanning capabilities Inside-out capabilities Marketing culture Distinctiveness of competitive positioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of the outside-in capabilities (e.g., market sensing and customer bonding, on performance) or of spanning capabilities is greater than that of inside-out capabilities, such as the ability to achieve competitive advantages through cost leadership, superior internal information systems, and product design capability. Marketing culture or a market orientation appears more important than operational capabilities in explaining excellent performance.

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Table 4 (continued)

References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
Celuch et al. (2002)	Value creation, market sensing (information attainment), customer linking	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market orientation Learning orientation Organizational capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers' sense making of their environment has a positive influence on competitive strategy decisions. Market orientation includes the (a) value delivery to customers, (b) utilization of customer information, (c) utilization of competitor information, (d) a focus on customer needs, (e) ability to predict reactions of competitors, and (f) interfunctional coordination. Managers who perceive their firm as more market oriented demonstrate greater marketing, global, and product/service capabilities than those who perceive their firms as less market oriented. There are four main strategic types of firms: prospector, analyzer, defender, and reactor. Prospectors have the greatest relative inside-out capabilities and information technology capabilities; reactors have the greatest relative outside-in capabilities and marketing capabilities, followed by defenders.
Di Benedetto and Song (2003)	Customer linking, market sensing, partner bonding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Classification of strategic type (prospector, analyzer, defender, or reactor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside-in capabilities Inside-out capabilities Marketing capabilities Information technology capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive marketing in a recession is an outside-in behavior because it refers to the firm's view of the recession as an opportunity, and formulation and implementation of responses to take advantage of the perceived opportunity created in the external environment. A higher level of a strategic emphasis on marketing, a stronger entrepreneurial culture, and a higher level of slack resources lead to a greater level of proactive marketing during a recession, whereas the severity of the recession has a negative effect on proactive marketing responses.
Srinivasan et al. (2005)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderators: Availability of slack resources, severity of recession 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive marketing Business performance Strategic emphasis on marketing Entrepreneurial culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive marketing responses help firms develop superior performance, even in the time of a downturn. There is a weak relationship between outside-in marketing capabilities and market orientation and the performance measures in Finland, Germany and Australia. Firm innovation orientation and inside-out capabilities have stronger impacts on financial performance in every country in the sample.
Jaakkola et al. (2010)	Market sensing, customer linking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Country characteristics (engineering country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market orientation Outside-in capabilities Inside-out capabilities Innovation orientation Market performance Financial performance Sustainable competitive advantage Customer orientation Market intelligence Marketing channel Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer orientation and market intelligence are two key elements of marketing orientations. They are important success factors for small firms, though the relevant expertise that the firms have in relation to these elements is not at the same level as their importance. Customer and competitor information needs to be more systematically collected, actively circulated, and used to inform firms' strategic responses. In a new business venture, marketing should use an outside-in view In an open marketing function, resources from firms and customers are directly integrated, engaging actors outside of the company in its operations. The development of the initial business relationships of a new venture involves two managerial tasks: (1) relate the firm to the existing networks and (2) support effective interaction in initial relationships between the firm and its customers.
Reijonen and Komppula (2010)	Market sensing (market intelligence), customer linking (orientation), channel bonding	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial relationship development Open marketing function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer orientation and market intelligence are two key elements of marketing orientations. They are important success factors for small firms, though the relevant expertise that the firms have in relation to these elements is not at the same level as their importance. Customer and competitor information needs to be more systematically collected, actively circulated, and used to inform firms' strategic responses. In a new business venture, marketing should use an outside-in view In an open marketing function, resources from firms and customers are directly integrated, engaging actors outside of the company in its operations. The development of the initial business relationships of a new venture involves two managerial tasks: (1) relate the firm to the existing networks and (2) support effective interaction in initial relationships between the firm and its customers.
La Rocca et al. (2013)	Customer linking	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial relationship development Open marketing function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer orientation and market intelligence are two key elements of marketing orientations. They are important success factors for small firms, though the relevant expertise that the firms have in relation to these elements is not at the same level as their importance. Customer and competitor information needs to be more systematically collected, actively circulated, and used to inform firms' strategic responses. In a new business venture, marketing should use an outside-in view In an open marketing function, resources from firms and customers are directly integrated, engaging actors outside of the company in its operations. The development of the initial business relationships of a new venture involves two managerial tasks: (1) relate the firm to the existing networks and (2) support effective interaction in initial relationships between the firm and its customers.

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References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
Mu et al. (2018)	Market sensing, customer linking, partner bonding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediators: inside-out marketing capability, strategic flexibility Moderators: transformational leadership, employee proactivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside-in marketing Capability Firm performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside-out marketing capability and strategic flexibility mediate the positive effect of outside-in marketing capability on firm performance. Outside-in marketing capability enables the firm to improve its inside-out marketing capability and flexibility in distributing resources, which results in a performance advantage. Human resource factors enhance the influence of outside-in marketing capability on firm performance. Firms that take an outside-in perspective, beginning from the external environment and growing strong relationships with their suppliers, can create effective marketing capability. External interfirm relationship can be converted into intra-firm capability through information sharing, addressing the gap between marketing capability and the active external environment.
Yang et al. (2019)	Market sensing, partner bonding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediators: supplier information sharing, supplier flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buyer-supplier relational strength Buyer's marketing capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market knowledge competence is one of the outside-in capabilities that links NPD to the external market environment. Market knowledge competence includes learning about customers and competitors, and the marketing-R&D interface. Each process of market knowledge competence has a significant positive effect on new product outcomes, such as market performance and competitive advantage. Marketing information covers customers, competitors, intermediaries, and broader factors from external environment, such as technology and regulatory influences. The complementarity in resource inputs and outputs between partners and the nature of competitiveness have an impact on the mechanism by which marketing information gets integrated into the collaborative NPD process. A strong market orientation enables a complementarity of marketing exploitation and marketing exploration strategies, leading to better new product financial performance over time. Firms having low levels of market orientation and high levels of both exploration and exploitation strategies show a considerable decrease in new product financial performance. Market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, and learning orientation are main determinants of innovativeness, which has a positive effect on business performance. Market orientation has the most significant direct effect on business performance, compared to the effect of entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation and innovativeness. Market orientation has a strong impact on innovativeness when market turbulence is high but not when it is low. Market knowledge generation is considered an outside-in process. Knowledge integration mechanisms mediate the positive relationships between (1) market knowledge specificity and product innovation performance, and (2) cross-functional collaboration and product innovation performance. The effect of market knowledge depth on product innovation is partially mediated by knowledge integration mechanisms. Market knowledge breadth directly influences product innovation performance. Knowledge integration mechanisms negatively moderate the effect of market knowledge depth and cross-functional collaboration on product innovation.
Product innovation Li and Cavusgil (1999)	Market knowledge competence (market sensing)	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning about customers Learning about competitors Marketing-R&D interface New product market performance New product competitive advantage 	
Perks (2000)	Partner bonding, market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing information and exchange mechanisms 	
Kyriakopoulos and Moorman (2004)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Market orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing exploration Marketing exploitation New product financial performance 	
Hult et al. (2004)	Market intelligence (market sensing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Market turbulence Mediator: Innovativeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market orientation Entrepreneurial orientation Learning orientation Business performance 	
De Luca and Atuahene-Gima (2007)	Market knowledge competence (market sensing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator/mediator: Knowledge integration mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market knowledge dimensions (breadth, depth, tactness, specificity) Cross-functional collaboration Firm performance 	

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Table 4 (continued)

References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
Coviello and Joseph (2012)	Market sensing, customer linking, partner bonding	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NPD activities ● Customer participation roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NPD process associated with major innovation success involves five activities: (1) opportunity identification, (2) customer-based funding, (3) development and testing, and (4) broader commercialization, all of which can be reinforced by (5) ongoing feedback. ● These activities closely link to one another and iterate through NPD. ● There are ten customer roles, related to these different activities. ● Successful innovators engage with customers in all five activities, and customers participate in seven to eight of the ten roles. ● External learning through the supply chain has a moderating effect on the relationship between internal deliberate learning mechanisms and value innovation ability. ● The availability of external knowledge flows (from customers and suppliers) increases the need for recognition capacity and the effectiveness of deliberate learning mechanisms to foster recognition of opportunities. ● The moderating effect on assimilation mechanisms is considerably stronger: in the case of high levels of information from customers versus from suppliers. ● Incorporating user-driven innovation and cocreation, crowdsourcing is a form of outside-in collaboration. ● The implementation of crowdsourcing operations affects existing business model components and requires adapting the marketing function. As such, there is a need to build an open business model based on crowdsourcing. ● Crowdsourcing creates a win-win situation, enabling value creation for not only firms but also customers. ● There could be two unfavorable consumer responses to crowdsourcing practices: feelings of exploitation and being cheated, with potential negative influences on the outcomes of crowdsourcing. ● Marketing capability from an outside-in perspective contributes to the improvement of NPD performance (relative sales, relative market share, relative return on investment). ● Marketing capability enables firms to understand the marketplace and accurately predict market movements in relation to exploiting the resources and exploring new opportunities in product innovation, which ultimately improve firm performance. ● Organizational structure is a necessary condition for outside-in marketing capability to generate favorable effects. ● Absorptive capacity fully mediates the effect of the depth of external knowledge search on innovation performance and business performance of the company. ● Outside-in learning requires not only acquisition of external knowledge but also development of absorptive capacity, which involves the ability to identify, assimilate, and apply externally held knowledge into the firm's intelligence base and innovation processes.
Berghman et al. (2012)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderators: Information provision by customers, information provision by suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mechanisms for recognition, assimilation and exploitation (inside-out) ● Value innovation ability 	
Djelassi and Decoopman (2013)	Value creation, customer linking, market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crowdsourcing ('outside-in' collaboration) 	
Mu (2015)	Market sensing, customer engaging, partner bonding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mediators: Exploitation, exploration ● Moderators: Decentralization, customer-based structure, interfunctional integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing capability ● NPD performance 	
Ferreras-Méndez et al. (2015)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mediator: Absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External knowledge search ● Innovation and business performance 	

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Table 4 (continued)

References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
Sales Davis and Mentzer (2007)	Market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sales forecasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sales forecasting plays an important role linking internal decision making to factors in the external environment, which can potentially affect firm performance. ● Sales forecasting capability includes information logistics such as information processes, which refer to organizational practices of information generation and dissemination. It is also based on both outside-in and inside-out analyses. ● Information generation involves the ability to ascertain and obtain access to relevant internal sources of information, for example, sales forecasts, and external sources of information, such as market scanning for emerging trends and collection of customer and competitor information from the sales force. ● Interdisciplinary information processes allow the development of the firm's ability to engage in insightful and predictive market sensing and strategize a common response to the identified opportunities or threats. ● Intra-organizational coordination, among sales, marketing, and other departments, enables firms to develop superior sensing capability. ● It can be facilitated by organizational culture, integrated vision, and aligned processes and resources. ● Competitive intelligence refers to the collection of information about relevant players and conditions within a competitive environment, for example, information about customers, competitors, suppliers, and related technologies. ● A salesperson's outside-in competitive intelligence behaviors mediate the effect of product knowledge on sales performance, which is also moderated by the salesperson's sales force automation uses. ● Sales can play a key role in the initial stages of new product development through outside-in activities directing at customer engagement in NPD. ● The outside-in role of sales is especially essential for the effectiveness of the solution for customers in business markets. ● The outside-in function of sales involves a capability to interact, which means salespeople should be able to put themselves in customers' shoes, have more flexibility in opening and closing issue framing as well as more resilience in going through constant adaptations. ● Learning effort reflects an outside-in process that enables salespeople to anticipate market changes and select an appropriate response. ● There are synergistic relationships among goal monitoring, learning effort, and commitment to service quality. ● Investments in team social capital facilitate the market-driven sales capabilities required for excellent performance. ● Transactive memory systems can strengthen the effect of learning effort and commitment to service quality on performance.
Hughes et al. (2012)	Market sensing	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing-sales interface ● Market sensing capability 	
Mariadoss et al. (2014)	Market knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mediator: Competitive intelligence behaviors ● Moderator: Sales force automation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Product knowledge ● Sales performance 	
La Rocca et al. (2016)	Market sensing, customer linking, partner bonding	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer involvement ● New solution (product) development process ● Outside-in role of sales 	
Bachrach et al. (2017)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mediators: Learning effort (outside-in), team goal monitoring (inside-out), commitment to service quality (spanning) ● Moderator: Transactive memory systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investments in team social capital ● Selling performance 	

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Table 4 (continued)

References	Relevant outside-in concepts	Mediator/Moderator	Key themes/Constructs	Key findings
International marketing Zhou et al. (2012)	Customer linking (customer relationship management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderators: International commitment, international market type (developed vs. emerging market) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing capabilities International growth Timing of international market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early foreign market entry improves marketing capabilities of young ventures (i.e., customer relationship management, product development management, supply chain management), which ultimately result in international growth. Marketing capabilities are stronger when there is a greater level of commitment to foreign markets. The effect of marketing capabilities on international growth is more significant among firms targeting developed markets than among those targeting developing ones. Architectural export marketing capabilities refer to the processes by which an exporting firm acquires information regarding its market and draw on the knowledge to determine a suitable marketing strategy.
Morgan et al. (2012)	Market sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediators: Internal and external strategy implementation effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architectural export marketing capabilities (outside-in) Specialized marketing capabilities (inside-out) Export venture financial performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both architectural export marketing capabilities and specialized marketing capabilities are positively related to internal strategy implementation effectiveness but their relationships with external strategy implementation effectiveness are insignificant. Architectural marketing capabilities and specialized marketing capabilities directly contribute to export venture financial performance.
Ripollés and Blesa (2012)	Market sensing, customer linking	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing capabilities International performance Commitment entry mode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A firm with stronger marketing capabilities (inside-out and outside-in) has a higher likelihood of selecting entry modes that requires greater resource commitment in foreign markets. Both firms' marketing capabilities and higher commitment entry modes positively influence the firms' international performance.
Kayabasi and Mtetwa (2016)	Market orientation, customer linking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediators: Marketing effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export market orientation Export performance Marketing capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing capabilities involve the capability to process information in relation to (1) competitors and customers (outside-in capabilities) and (2) market segmentation, target market selection, prices and integrated marketing activities (inside-out capabilities). Export market orientation is the key to improving marketing capabilities. Both marketing capabilities and export market orientation contribute to marketing effectiveness, which ultimately results in export performance.

value by using market information to understand customer needs, anticipate competitor responses, and coordinate internal activities to define suitable responses (Celuch, Kasouf, & Peruvemba, 2002; Hooley et al., 1999). Firms then can develop strong relationships with customers and suppliers, which significantly contribute to their performance (Lee, Sridhar, Henderson, & Palmatier, 2015; Reijonen & Komppula, 2010; Yang et al., 2019).

For new business ventures, which often lack the skills, resources, and experience needed to interact with initial customers, outside-in marketing strategies become even more crucial (La Rocca, Ford, & Snehota, 2013). For example, open marketing functions allow customers to engage in firm operations and directly integrate their resources with the firm's, which can help a new business overcome the challenges of newness. Outside-in marketing also is effective in turbulent market conditions, in that it helps firms proactively respond and seize market opportunities (Srinivasan, Rangaswamy, & Lilien, 2005).

Extant marketing strategy literature prioritizes marketing capabilities, or the firm's ability to use its resources to create competitive advantages (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Market-oriented firms exhibit stronger marketing capabilities than their counterparts (Celuch et al., 2002), signaling how outside-in marketing can facilitate the identification, application, and development of firm capabilities, as well as their complementarity. Three main types of market-driven capabilities are critical to firm success: inside-out (internal emphasis), outside-in (external emphasis), and spanning² (Day, 1994). Outside-in capabilities establish a foundation for firms to update their inside-out capabilities and achieve flexible resource allocations and management, which promote competitive advantages (Mu et al., 2018). The effect of outside-in capabilities on firm performance depends on contextual factors though, such as the firm's strategy and country characteristics (Jaakkola, Möller, Parvinen, Evanschitzky, & Mühlbacher, 2010).

2.3. Product innovation

Outside-in firms constantly engage in innovation to match the needs of their target audiences, on the basis of their ability to respond quickly to market changes. Then they enjoy long-term growth (Day, 2011). Extant research indicates that a market orientation strongly determines firm innovativeness and new product development (NPD) performance (Saeed, Yousafzai, Paladino, & De Luca, 2015), especially in dynamic markets marked by rapid changes in customer preferences, buyer entries/exits, and emerging needs and wants. In such markets, outside-in marketing enables firms to leverage their knowledge of customers and competitors and interfunctional cooperation, to support the development of innovative products or concepts (De Luca & Atuahene-Gima, 2007; Hult, Hurley, & Knight, 2004).

Successful NDP begins with a recognition of an opportunity, outside the organization, so customers, competitors, intermediaries, and broader environmental factors all represent critical sources of information (Berghman et al., 2012; Mohr & Sarin, 2009). With outside-in marketing capabilities, firms can obtain market intelligence and accurately predict market movements related to exploiting resources and exploring new product innovation opportunities, so their performance ultimately improves (Li & Cavusgil, 1999; Mu, 2015). Learning from outside the organization involves both the acquisition of external knowledge and the development of absorptive capacity, or an ability to sense, integrate, and transfer external new knowledge to the organization's knowledge platform and innovation capability (Ferras-Méndez, Newell, Fernández-Mesa, & Alegre, 2015; Martín-de Castro, 2015). That is, outside-in firms actively seek innovative sources of

² Inside-out capabilities imply improved manufacturing processes, cost efficiencies, and greater competitiveness. Outside-in capabilities suggest the ability to address opportunities and threats in the external environment. Spanning capabilities integrate inside-out and outside-in capabilities (Day, 1994).

information while also searching for novel methods to obtain and analyze other information.

As a collaborative process, outside-in NPD demands complementarity in resource inputs and outputs, among business partners or between firms and customers (Perks, 2000). Rather than adopting internally oriented stage gate processes, successful innovators engage with customers throughout the design and development processes, consistent with an outside-in perspective on NPD (Mohr & Sarin, 2009). These customers can be sources of latent needs, request particular innovations, codevelop concepts, and provide ongoing feedback (Coviello & Joseph, 2012). For example, crowdsourcing is a form of outside-in collaboration that generates benefits and creates value for both customers and firms (Djelassi & Decoopman, 2013). An outside-in approach to NPD requires an open business model and strong marketing orientation to generate the desired outcomes (Kyriakopoulos & Moorman, 2004).

2.4. Sales

Sales might be inside-out or outside-in (La Rocca, Moscatelli, Perna, & Snehota, 2016). The inside-out function entails communicating an offer to customers and helping them choose the most suitable option (Gilliam & Flaherty, 2015). In the early stages of a product's life cycle, sales also encourage new solutions to buyers' operational problems, which may require adaptations to the offering, according to customer needs (Terho, Eggert, Haas, & Ulaga, 2015). The inside-out function tends to be more prominent when the offerings are clearly stipulated, and the target customers and their needs are thoroughly understood.

In contrast, sales activities are more outside-in when they require capabilities to interact with customers, step into customers' shoes and identify their issues, and achieve flexibility and resilience in the offering (modification and adaptation) process (La Rocca et al., 2016). Such outside-in approaches to sales can enhance the effectiveness of solutions for users (Haas, Snehota, & Corsaro, 2012). To facilitate a firm's market sensing, outside-in approaches to sales pursue customer-related capabilities (Cron, Baldauf, Leigh, & Grossenbacher, 2014), including salespeople's learning efforts that enable them to anticipate market changes and select appropriate responses, because they already have gathered competitive intelligence (Bachrach et al., 2017). This type of intelligence comprises information about various parties and relevant circumstances, such as competitors, customers, suppliers, and technologies (Mariadoss, Milewicz, Lee, & Sahaym, 2014). To generate this information, the firm needs access to critical internal and external sources (e.g., environmental scanning for market trends), which can be facilitated by sales-related technologies such as sales force automation (Davis & Mentzer, 2007). These outside-in features also increase firms' sales forecasting capabilities, with links between internal decision making and external environmental factors, which in turn improve sales performance. The effective development of outside-in sales capabilities also requires interdisciplinary information processes and intra-organizational coordination, as might be promoted by the organizational culture, an integrated vision, and aligned processes and resources (Hughes, Le Bon, & Malshe, 2012).

2.5. International marketing

International markets represent complex propositions that require transformations to traditional functions and new capabilities. Key factors are the choices of appropriate international markets to enter, through appropriate entry modes. As an outside-in approach, architectural export marketing capabilities refer to processes by which exporting firms acquire information about export venture markets and use it to determine suitable strategies (Morgan, Katsikeas, & Vorhies, 2012). A firm that can systematically sense markets and explore new possibilities is more likely to succeed (Moini, 1995). In addition, a firm with stronger outside-in marketing capabilities is better positioned to choose

appropriate entry modes, even if they require more resource commitments (e.g., subsidiaries, acquisitions), which affects its international performance (Ripollés & Blesa, 2012).

Successful international marketers also address and adapt to disruptive forces, due to rapid changes around the firm and markets, which they can achieve by adopting an outside-in perspective. Firms with an outside-in approach often enter foreign markets early and demonstrate commitment to those markets (Zhou, Wu, & Barnes, 2012). International marketing is a two-way channel for adaptive behaviors that enable the firm to create value through connections with global customers and other actors (Blesa & Ripollés, 2008). Supported by an export market orientation (Kayabasi & Mtetwa, 2016), outside-in marketing capabilities can establish knowledge of customers, competitors, and the market, which facilitates product development and adaptation and supports sophisticated applications of key marketing elements to create targeted solutions (Blesa & Ripollés, 2008). Recent developments in digital media and information technologies fuel the idea that engagement and connectedness should extend beyond getting to know the consumer or collaborating, to achieve cocreation (Cavusgil & Cavusgil, 2012). Social networking sites and real-time interactions also provide vehicles for interacting with customers and identifying insights, such that firms can develop better ideas and faster solutions and thereby gain market advantages. Partnerships between manufacturers and distributors in international marketing channels also can lead to greater success (Moini, 1995). Thus, outside-in marketing capabilities should contribute to international growth and export performance, though the magnitude of these effects depends on the characteristics of the targeted markets (Zhou et al., 2012).

2.6. Summary of insights

The two areas that have been the most popular focus of outside-in marketing research have been marketing strategy and innovation. Market sensing is the most dominant element of outside-in marketing; it appears in nearly every empirical study. However, only limited research has addressed customer-oriented measures and value cocreation. Common outcomes of outside-in marketing include performance and product innovation success, though all these effects likely vary in different market conditions.

3. Emerging theory of outside-in marketing

Integrating the key insights from our review, we develop a theory of outside-in marketing that comprises four tenets, reflecting its benefits: (1) faster sensing and responses to changes in markets and customers, (2) more effective segmentation and targeting, (3) better product and service innovations, and (4) more knowledgeable and committed employees. In so doing, we synthesize extant research but also elucidate how these selected, relevant theoretical perspectives contribute to the body of knowledge related to outside-in marketing. Then to illustrate the essence of each tenet, we offer mini-case examples (Table 5).

3.1. Faster sensing and responses to changes in markets and customers

Building the ability to master and exploit change is central to business survival and success in the digital age (Lee & Day, 2019). In a stable market, decision-making processes can be linear and routinized; firms rely on existing knowledge to formulate strategy. In a dynamic market, firms instead face rapid and nonlinear changes, blurry market boundaries, unclear success models, and ambiguous market players (e.g., buyers, suppliers, competitors), so they must anticipate and respond to external changes (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Outside-in marketing then grows even more important, because the diverse markets are governed by complex rules and conditions, involving multiple parties. For example, online retailing involves multiple layers of interaction among multiple parties (e.g., suppliers, retailers, customers,

governments, platform providers), all of which constitute the market and exert influences on one another. Through outside-in marketing, retailers can gain instant intelligence from various parties and stay relevant in the market, by accurately predicting market movements, addressing challenges and threats, and exploring new opportunities, as exemplified in Amazon's transition from merely an online bookstore to a retailer and manufacturer of the Kindle ebook reader, reflecting its recognition of changes to customers' reading preferences and technological advances. This entry then became a stepping stone for Amazon to innovate and produce more consumer devices such as Fire tablets, Fire TVs, and Echo smart speakers together with Alexa, a virtual assistant, which have been a significant success (Lyons, 2009; Nicas, Weise, & Isaac, 2019; Slywotzky & Weber, 2011).

Outside-in marketing requires significant data from customers and the market, beyond just transactional data, to establish customer knowledge. The proliferation of customer information in digital channels accordingly has initiated big data and analytics efforts to obtain detailed, real-time customer knowledge and formulate dynamic marketing strategies (Erevelles, Fukawa, & Swayne, 2016). Big data can be leveraged to gain access to new knowledge, map changing patterns, and personalize offerings to orchestrate strategies for serving customers (Amankwah-Amoah & Adomako, 2019).

Translating data into meaningful knowledge also requires significant investments to access new technologies and improve internal capabilities and resources to serve the market. Firms thus incur additional short-term costs when adopting outside-in approaches (Lee, Sridhar, & Palmatier, 2017; Shah, Rust, Parasuraman, Staelin, & Day, 2006). According to an industry report, big data investments reached \$65 billion in 2018 and are likely to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of approximately 14% (SNS Telecom and IT, 2018). Virtually every *Fortune* 1000 firm is increasing its big data and intelligence-related investments; 91.7% of them suggest such investments are required to remain agile and competitive (New Vantage Partners, 2019). As such:

Tenet 1 (market sensing and responses). Outside-in marketing improves the firm's speed and ability to adapt to changing customer needs in dynamic markets but also adds to its short-term costs, such as those needed to access sophisticated market research to generate insights and restructure internal systems to activate those insights.

P1. The positive effects of outside-in marketing on firm performance are lower in well-developed, stable markets in which customers' needs and wants change slowly but higher in new, more volatile markets.

P2. Outside-in marketing generates economic benefits over the long term while increasing short-term costs, due to demand for market insights and the need to activate those insights.

3.2. More effective segmentation and targeting

Outside-in firms' deep understanding of their customers' needs can enhance their ability to use and apply behavioral profiles (e.g., personal interests from social network profiles, responses to marketing stimuli from sentiment analysis, media consumption from digital footprints, purchase history from loyalty programs). On the basis of market intelligence, with real-time updates across channels, journey contexts, and touchpoints, outside-in marketing firms can use the richest set of user data possible to identify high-value micro-segments and create detailed, accurate personas of target segments. The resulting micro-segmentation can layer hundreds or even thousands of potential connections to identify more fine-grained clusters of individuals on the basis of multiple characteristics, attributes, and conditions. This granular categorization in turn can lead to highly personalized experiences that compel customers to action. BlueKai, a leading online data aggregator, helps clients sort consumers into 30,000 market segments using a variety of behavioral and financial data, drawn from various

Table 5
Outside-in marketing research agenda: tenets and propositions.

Tenets	Propositions	Business example
<p>Faster sensing and responses to changes in markets and customers</p> <p>Tenet 1: Outside-in marketing improves the firm's speed and ability to adapt to changing customer needs in dynamic markets but also adds to its short-term costs, such as those needed to access sophisticated market research to generate insights and restructure internal systems to activate those insights.</p>	<p>P1: The positive effects of outside-in marketing on firm performance are lower in well-developed, stable markets in which customers' needs and wants change slowly but higher in new, more volatile markets.</p> <p>P2: Outside-in marketing generates economic benefits over the long term while increasing short-term costs, due to demand for market insights and the need to activate those insights.</p>	<p>Amazon is a technology company that specialises in e-commerce, web services, digital streaming, and smart devices. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos emphasizes the role of "working backward from the customer," noting that "We start with the customer and we work backward. We learn whatever skills we need to service the customer. We build whatever technology we need to service the customer" (Lyons, 2009, p. 86). Founded as an online bookstore, Amazon originally operated in the online retailing market, a fast changing and dynamic environment. Being able to sense the new trends in the external market with more time-poor and on-the-go customers, Amazon realised the potential of e-readers, a device that could change how people read books by offering convenience and wireless connectivity. Despite being an online bookstore without any technology to produce a hardware device, Amazon team worked relentlessly and invested significantly in this project to build an e-reader for the U.S. market (Slywotzky & Weber, 2011). In 2007, Amazon launched the Kindle e-readers which were a significant success. In an interview in 2017, Kevin Keith, Amazon's general manager of devices, estimated that Amazon had sold "tens of millions" Kindle devices (Goode, 2017). The success of Kindle also kicked off Amazon's expansion into consumer devices such as tablets (i.e. Fire) in 2011, television streamers (i.e. Fire TV) and smart speakers (i.e. Echo) in 2014. In order to further improve customer experience and address the opportunities in "ambient computing platform" (Mossberg, 2017), Amazon introduced Amazon's Alexa, a virtual assistant, in 2014 and it has been included in various voice-controlled devices across different markets in the world since then. The team at Amazon has continuously refined Alexa over time such as adapting her voice to be more emotive and lifelike, and developing a deep learning model for Alexa to comprehend customers' tone and inflection (Amazon, 2019). Amazon has been named one of the four most influential technology companies (together with Apple, Google, and Facebook) (Nicas et al., 2019).</p>
<p>More effective segmentation and targeting</p> <p>Tenet 2: Outside-in marketing increases the effectiveness of segmentation and targeting through content marketing.</p>	<p>P3: Outside-in marketing has a positive impact on the effectiveness of micro segmentation.</p> <p>P4: Outside-in marketing has a positive impact on the effectiveness of targeted marketing communications.</p>	<p>HubSpot, a developer and marketer of marketing, sales and service software, is an example of excellence in content marketing. The audience for HubSpot's software is small businesses, in which market it faces significant competition from firms such as Marketo, InfusionSoft and Wishpond. Its content marketing is designed according to the customer journey. Using data, HubSpot can identify visitors as new or current customers and personalize the experience. For example, its blog provides new readers with content designed to educate them about problems and potential solutions, including the basics of social media and email marketing, along with search engine optimization and pay-per-click issues. When readers reach the end of each post, they can sign up to get a content upgrade, specifically tailored to their interests, such as white papers, ebooks, infographics, webinars, user guides or video courses, pertaining to social media, sales, marketing, news and trends, or software. Within each topic area, many more fine-grained discussions can address any specific concern. For example, a search for the term "landing page" in HubSpot's blog returns hundreds of results, most in the form of resource posts, such as "What is a Landing Page and Why Should You Care?" and "19 of the Best Landing Page Design Examples You Need to See in 2019." Each blog post has a relevant call to action, such as signing up to download the guide "How to Optimise Landing Pages for Lead Generation." With customers' permission, HubSpot can direct them to other channels too, such as email and webinars with even more personalized information and offers. HubSpot's blog attracts more than 1 million page views per month (Buckley, 2014). Its successful content marketing has contributed significantly to HubSpot's growth, from \$255,000 in revenues in 2007 to \$513.0 million in 2018 (Hubspot, 2019).</p>
<p>Better product and service innovations</p> <p>Tenet 3: Outside-in marketing enables effective service and product innovation through the use of market insights that inform the development of its own capabilities, as well as intra-firm capabilities.</p>	<p>P5: Outside-in marketing enhances the positive relationship between product development and innovation success.</p> <p>P6: Mismanagement of outside-in collaboration can lead to value co-destruction.</p>	<p>Procter & Gamble (P&G), the multinational consumer goods corporation, launched its Connect + Develop platform to allow outside parties, including individuals, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies, to share innovative ideas and offer solutions to current problems. The platform provides information customers' top needs and expectations, and P&G management directly evaluates user submissions and decides on potential partnerships. The platform has helped the company innovate various products, with enhanced levels of innovation (Bughin, 2014), such as Olay Regenerist, Swiffer Dusters, and the Crest SpinBrush. Five years after the platform was created, over 35% of P&G's new products had features derived from outside P&G, from just 15% in 2000; through Connect + Develop, P&G improved their R&D productivity by almost 60%, and doubled the innovation success rate, whereas R&D investment as a percentage of sales reduced from 4.8% in 2000 to 3.4% in 2006 (Huston & Sakkab, 2006). However, P&G still faces the long-term challenge of managing hundreds or thousands of relationships with individual customers/inventors and engaging other small technology providers, such as universities and private R&D labs that are external to the company and might not share the same objectives and vision (Rufat-Latre et al., 2010).</p>

(continued on next page)

Table 5 (continued)

Tenets	Propositions	Business example
<p>More knowledgeable and committed employees Tenet 4: Outside-in marketing involves flows of knowledge from the outside to the inside of the firm, through employees, such that it requires input and commitment of resources in the value creation process.</p>	<p>P7: The effect of outside-in marketing on performance is strengthened by employees' learning effort.</p>	<p>Founded in 1983, Intuit is a developer and provider of financial, accounting, and tax preparation software, including TurboTax, QuickBooks, Mint, and Turbo and related services for consumers, self-employed people, and small businesses. With more than 9000 employees and over 50 million customers worldwide, the company had a revenue of \$6 billion in fiscal year 2018 (Slack, 2019). Its success can be attributed to its employees' effort to learn from customers and improve themselves. The company supports a "follow-me-home" approach in which a few employees visit where a customer lives or works (with permission) to watch them using Intuit products. Intuit employees conduct approximately 10,000 h of visits annually (Colvin, 2017), which provide unique insights that cannot be easily revealed from a data stream and increase customer intimacy. In addition, the company hold a series of Design for Delight forums, joined by over 1000 employees each, during which they listened to success stories and experts' speeches, in an effort to encourage them to change their approaches to customers (Martin, 2011). Furthermore, as part of employee performance reviews, every month, the top 400 staff share their plans for an innovation that can result in a customer benefit (Lockwood & Papke, 2017). Recently, Intuit adopted Slack, a project collaboration tool, to facilitate seamless communications and information exchanges across the organization, which improved problem solving and the flow of knowledge among individual employees and teams (Slack, 2019).</p>

sources, such as browsing behavior, credit card records, and online purchases (Rosen, 2012). Example micro-segments include, "Hawaii-vacation-seeking price-sensitive Democrat" and "baseball-loving safety-net senior oenophile" (France & Ghose, 2019, p. 16). With their specific product needs, the segments can be targeted effectively with personalized offers and communications.

The clear benefit of micro-segmentation is that firms create more relevant messages and offers to break through the clutter, engage customers, and generate desired responses. Customers often feel overwhelmed by the abundance of firm-initiated information and interactions, but an outside-in approach can help cultivate well-personalized, useful communications that appeal to prospective customers and delight current ones. Such efforts are reflected in the definition of content marketing, as "creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome" (Holliman & Rowley, 2014, p. 285).

Contents on digital platforms (e.g., white papers, web podcasts, blogs) and in the physical environment (e.g., conferences) also can help firms learn to speak the language of their customers and thereby target potential buyers with personalized, appealing content (Mathewson & Moran, 2016). With its specific target audiences in mind, HubSpot designs content in accordance with customer journeys, from problem recognition to purchase to retention, shared through blogs, landing pages, social media, and email marketing. Its strategically placed calls to action match readers' interests at those points and move customers through the marketing funnel (Buckley, 2014). By leveraging data, HubSpot is able to identify onsite visitors and personalize their experiences, issue calls to action for new visitors, and reengage existing customers, such as by encouraging them to try new tools in the HubSpot suite, instead of directing them to ebooks or free tools, as it would for new customers. In line with this example, we propose:

Tenet 2 (segmentation and targeting). Outside-in marketing increases the effectiveness of segmentation and targeting through content marketing.

P3. Outside-in marketing has a positive impact on the effectiveness of micro-segmentation.

P4. Outside-in marketing has a positive impact on the effectiveness of targeted marketing communications.

3.3. Better product and service innovations

To explore novel ways to satisfy customers' needs, outside-in marketing firms maintain an interactive dialog with customers and other stakeholders across NPD, development, and delivery stages. Interactive dialogs can involve other actors, such as suppliers, and generate various knowledge flows (Ballantyne, 2004), all of which can encourage new intra- and interfirm capabilities, especially for innovations that require more than the firm's own resources. This process creates value by and for all parties, in the form of new, customized, co-produced offerings (Ballantyne, 2004), which facilitates innovative success.

Furthermore, outside-in marketing supports the "last mile of analytics," which refers to the gap between analytical output and actual consumer behavior, achieved by working with customers (Barlow, 2015; Brahm, 2017). For example, on collaboration platforms, such as Procter & Gamble's Connect+Develop, DeWalt's Insight Community, IKEA's "Co-Create IKEA," Starbucks' "My Starbucks Idea," and DHL's Innovation Centers, customers and other relevant parties exchange product ideas and feedback and define key features they prefer (Agafitei & Avasilcai, 2015; Bughin, 2014; Rufat-Latre, Muller, & Jones, 2010). An outside-in collaboration process unlocks value more rapidly, by delivering highly desirable innovations to customers in a timely manner.

When an outside-in collaboration process is mismanaged though,

the experience can evoke strongly negative reactions, such as negative word of mouth or boycotts (Gebauer, Füller, & Pezzeri, 2013; Tóth, Peters, Pressey, & Johnston, 2018). Collaboration requires customers to invest personal resources, such as knowledge and time, and they might perceive a lack of fairness or feel exploited if the firm fails to recognize their effort sufficiently. Negative reactions also occur when customers misunderstand the firm's intention; value even can be codestroyed if the associated resources are accidentally or intentionally misused (Plé & Cáceres, 2010). Henkel, the German consumer goods manufacturer, launched a competition to create a new label for its dishwasher detergent brand Pril. It provided a design toolkit, but customers who perceived the competition as an attempt to freeloading creative ideas and generate publicity started misusing the toolkit to make labels with humorous, raunchy designs and slogans, which swiftly attracted the majority of votes. Henkel then amended the terms and conditions of the competition and altered the selection process, which made customers feel deceived and angry; the resulting negative backlash against both the contest and the brand was intense (Breithut, 2011). In this case, value was codestroyed, with detrimental effects on the firm's reputation and performance (Chowdhury, Gruber, & Zolkiewski, 2016). Therefore, outside-in marketing firms must be sure to engage stakeholders, especially customers, in decision making on collaboration platforms while preventing any potential conflicts and maintaining clear, mutual understanding.

Tenet 3 (innovation). Outside-in marketing enables effective service and product innovation through the use of market insights that inform the development of its own capabilities, as well as intra-firm capabilities.

P5. Outside-in marketing enhances the positive relationship between product development and innovation success.

P6. Mismanagement of outside-in collaboration can lead to value codestruction.

3.4. More knowledgeable and committed employees

Achieving outside-in marketing requires staff who are committed to understanding customers, sharing their feedback, and making necessary, ongoing changes. Outside-in competitive intelligence behaviors by employees can enable organizations to “connect the processes that define the other organizational capabilities to the external environment” (Day, 1994, p. 41) and thereby enhance organizational performance (Mariadoss et al., 2014). In particular, frontline staff can contribute to customer experiences and interactions, so it is critical that they are committed to engaging in continuous improvement and learning processes to benefit customers (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). Salesperson learning effort involves activities such as listening to customers and actively improving sales-related skills and knowledge (Bell, Mengüç, & Widing, 2010); in turn, salespeople can discover customers' needs, anticipate market requirements, and learn how to address those needs (Bachrach et al., 2017).

Outside-in marketing also requires the effective transfer of market intelligence across functions. For example, sales force automation software helps salespeople record customer insights, search for details, and aggregate organizational-level intellectual capital (Mariadoss et al., 2014). Bridgestone used the Resco mobile customer relationship management solution to help its tire sales forces access customer databases, update customer information, and analyze customer data while working remotely (Resco, 2017). Effective market sensing is inherently an iterative process that combines human domain expertise with advanced technology, such as machine learning techniques (Mohr & Hürtgen, 2017). The amalgamation of human predictions with novel or unexpected patterns uncovered by machines represents an ideal approach to data augmentation. Outside-in marketing firms are well positioned to achieve this ideal, because they collect data from various

sources and also have staff who continuously listen to customers and markets to improve firm-level knowledge and performance.

Tenet 4 (employee). Outside-in marketing involves flows of knowledge from the outside to the inside of the firm, through employees, such that it requires input and commitment of resources in the value creation process.

P7. The effect of outside-in marketing on performance is strengthened by employees' learning effort.

4. Conclusion

Outside-in organizations take their customers' perspectives, to understand how to serve them. This effort is particularly critical in dynamic markets, in which technology enables firms to keep track of their customers' behaviours and attitudes and connect with them at any time or in any place. Our review of extent research reveals four basic components of outside-in marketing: (1) listening to customers and the market, (2) leveraging data for customer segmentation and profiling, (3) cocreating value through relationship development with customers and external partners, and (4) linking customer-oriented measures to firm performance. This article provides new insights into outside-in marketing, by using a multidimensional approach and analyzing prior marketing research from three perspectives—the evolution of outside-in marketing, prior empirical research, and practical business insights—all of which inform the development of an evolving theory of outside-in marketing.

Each perspective offers unique insights. For example, by considering the evolution of the field, we determine that the availability of customer data, especially on the Internet, and advances in information technology have shifted the focus, from an inside-out perspective to the recognition that outside-in marketing is a vital success factor, achieved through collaboration and value cocreation. Empirical research that has examined outside-in marketing across different marketing domains further suggests that the primary motivation for adopting an outside-in marketing perspective in many contexts is the basis it offers for bringing customers into central focus for the business, with positive impacts for its performance and growth. The third perspective, on business practices, also reveals some obstacles to embracing and sustaining outside-in marketing, including an emphasis on short-term goals or failure to invest in necessary sensing mechanisms or act on the resulting insights.

To amalgamate existing knowledge, dispersed across diverse conceptual, business practices, and empirical domains, we present an evolving theory of outside-in marketing with four tenets and seven corresponding propositions. Briefly, we demonstrate the increasing importance of outside-in marketing, due to its impact on firm performance and innovation, which strongly determines and explains the applicability and breadth of this topic. We anticipate that outside-in marketing will continue to evolve as the market and customers change and present more challenges to the firms that adopt it, including the need to manage collaborations and balance the tension between short-term investments and long-term profitability. We hope this research provides some direction for continued studies that work to corroborate our evolving theory and generate even more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of outside-in marketing approaches.

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