ABSTRACT

This exploratory paper sets out to gain insight into evidence of “Contextual Marketing” in the small firm by exploring the phenomena of “authenticity” within cases drawn from a single sector and displaying similarity of firm type. Case research will allow “meaningful exploration of the characteristics of real life events” (Remenyi et al. 1998), and researchers insight into how small firms “go to market.” It will contribute to knowledge creation, and help explain and make meaning from the complex phenomena of small firms that tend to be loosely structured, non-hierarchical, often adopting an unorthodox/informal style of management.

INTRODUCTION

Statistics from the UK Department of Business Innovation and Skills, (July 2010) state that there were an estimated 4.81 million private sector enterprises in the UK at the start of 2008, an increase of 2.2 per cent. Furthermore, since the start of 2007 these enterprises employed an estimated 23.1 million people, and had an estimated combined annual turnover of £3,000 billion. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) together accounted for 99.9 per cent of all enterprises; 59.4 per cent of private sector employment and 50.1 per cent of private sector turnover. Employment in SMEs is estimated at 13.7 million, 2.1 per cent higher than in 2007 and turnover in SMEs is estimated at £1,500 billion, 4.2 per cent higher than 2007. Classification of an “enterprise” by the European Commission for Enterprise and Industry, (May 2003), states that it is “any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form.” Further categorisation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises consist of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have either an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. Categorisation by number of employees and turnover see small enterprises defined as “enterprises which employ fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 10 million euro.” Micro enterprises are thus defined as “enterprises which employ fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 2 million euro.”

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provide official figures for Wales, and state that “SMEs account for 99% of Welsh business stock and provide employment for well over half the private sector workforce,” (ONS, 2004). The ONS note, “with the gradual decline of heavy industry in Wales, the role of SMEs within the economy could not be more pronounced or more intrinsically important.” The Federation of Small Businesses agrees, “the success of Wales’ economy and its place within the wider world depends heavily on the health of these important businesses,” (FSB, 2007). In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) acknowledges the role in the Welsh economy of the food industry; accounting for the equivalent of 55,000 full time jobs in production and processing alone (WAG, June 2009). The Assembly Government’s Food and Market Development Division (FMDD Trade Development Programme works with Welsh food and drink manufacturing and processing businesses, offering a range of support to help them achieve business growth in the Welsh, UK and International marketplace, which include (FMDD, 2010):

- Supplier Development programmes to help businesses become more competitive and improve their sales and marketing skills;
- Meet the Buyer type introduction events;
- In Wales and overseas specialist export marketing advice;
• Food Festivals, Farmers Markets and consumer initiatives raising the profile of the Welsh food brand and creating opportunities for farmers and food and drink producers to meet their customers, and for consumers to try to buy locally produced products.
• Opportunities to exhibit under the “Wales the True Taste” brand at trade shows;

As part of the commitment to developing the sector, and to building awareness, the development programme includes The True Taste (Gwir Flas) Food and Drink Awards, launched in 2002, it rewards quality and excellence in Welsh food and drink. The “Wales the True Taste” brand described as, “natural, authentic, modern and pleasurable experience” is in line with contemporary trends in the market place. However, as it has been developed separately from the Wales Tourism brand, the Assembly Government acknowledges, “there is work to do to bring the brand messages closer together”. In 2009 WAG published its Food Tourism Action Plan, “Food and Drink for Wales”, acknowledging the importance of food to the tourism industry which has increased significantly within the last ten years. The availability of high quality, local food has become a key driver for many selecting a place to visit and “where can we eat well?” has become a defining question. Food products and dishes are also an expression of local cultures, and culinary tourism and agricultural tourism are vital elements of a destination’s cultural tourism offer. Within the context of the plan, food tourism defined as “any activity that promotes high quality, distinctive, local and sustainable food experience linked to a particular place.” The plan brings together the areas of agriculture, food processing, tourism destinations, the food service sector, food festivals and food retail outlets, including farmers’ markets in order to capitalise on the economic benefits of providing visitors with a unique, high quality and distinctive food cultural experience (WAG, 2009).

BACKGROUND
Marketing at the Entrepreneurship Interface
Discussions regarding what is, and what constitutes, the interface between Marketing and Entrepreneurship is much debated (see for example, Gruber, 2003; Hills and Hultman, 2006; Hills et al, 2007, Kraus et al, 2010). In January 2010, the debates continued at the Research Symposium of the University of Chicago, held at the College of Charleston, South Carolina, USA. Hansen and Eggers, (2010), reported the outcomes to the Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship. The report outlines four perspectives of the marketing/entrepreneurship interface that are shown in Table 1.0. The first perspective considered was historical; that is to say that the two areas share commonalities. The second considered the entrepreneurial issues that exist within a marketing research framework or through a marketing lens. The third considered the reverse of the second the issues of marketing within an entrepreneurial framework or entrepreneurship lens. The fourth perspective considered that it was neither perspective two nor three but the opposite of the first - that the subjects do not share commonalities but that it is indeed something else and is therefore “unique to the interface.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marketing and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Commonalities between both disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Entrepreneurship in marketing</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship issues framed in the field of marketing or viewed through a marketing theoretical lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marketing in entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Marketing issues framed in the field of entrepreneurship or viewed through an entrepreneurship theoretical lens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Unique interface concepts</td>
<td>Concepts that are distinct to the interface and evolve out of the combination of entrepreneurship and marketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0: Adapted from Hansen and Eggers, (2010)

The report suggests that in considering this fourth perspective, the combination of marketing and entrepreneurship, researchers should acknowledge the different perspectives that are talked about but are not expressed explicitly which may hold back on and negate the positioning of contributions to research. The authors report that during the summit discussion it was argued that, “all entrepreneurship involves marketing but not all marketing involves entrepreneurship.” The issue, of marketing becoming secondary, it was suggested was because marketing is used only implicitly, hence the need for researchers “to be more explicit in their use of marketing” suggesting that much research at the interface limited marketing foundations (Hansen and Eggers, 2010). Indeed, Morrish et al (2010) believe that “entrepreneurial marketing (EM) is not simply the nexus of marketing and entrepreneurship, but both wholly marketing and wholly entrepreneurship – both customer-centric and entrepreneur/innovation-centric.” Carson (2010) suggests that there needs to be a “return to the roots of
the interface by focusing on SME marketing, because SMEs represent at least 95 per cent of businesses.” His argument is based on the historical perspective that much of the interface research was focused on small business marketing and that entrepreneurship has “supplanted the small business origins”, suggesting that researchers should take the fourth perspective: a unique interface of concepts - and should consider small business or SME issues within the research framework or context of marketing. This has practical significance, as it is clear that the vast majority of business enterprise in the world are small businesses (European Commission, 2003; Small Business Administration, 2009; OECD, 2010) and as is Carson suggests “too big to ignore.”

In addition, Schwartz and Teach, (2010) state, “we still have much to learn about how we can help small businesses perform better within their specific industry,” but as Hansen and Eggers (2010) argue “much of this help is available through education, teaching, and the many texts written on the subject of marketing, but which do not help start-ups.” Carson et al (2002) concur stating, “small businesses do not understand our words because we talk in the language of academia; there is a need to develop theory that is relevant to small businesses, since they represent such a large portion of all enterprises.” Within this suggestion is the context of the small business as Schwartz and Teach (2010) note, “the interface varies by type of firm and that marketing and entrepreneurship constructs will have many factors that are represented in an n-dimensional space, not simply an intersection of marketing and entrepreneurship.” For some time research has alluded to the role of context, (see for example, Stokes 2000; Morris et al 2002; Miles and Darroch 2006). Most recently however the work of Deacon (2008) developing the work of Carson (2002; 2003) has helped draw conclusion to this debate by suggesting: “marketing is and always has been contextual.”

Marketing and the Small Firm

Deacon (2008) in summarising the aspects of SMEs contends, “a sharper focus now needs to be taken in order to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and operation of “marketing” in specific contexts – aspects of which are the foundations upon which decisions are made.” Further, he argues that the formulaic approach to marketing development is “somewhat at odds to the personal and social constructs of the owner/entrepreneurs” and agrees with Hultman (1999) who suggests a “freeing up” of the strategic planning approach imposed upon small firms needs to take place – or at least a “freeing up of the theories that underpin this view.” Mintzberg and Waters (1994:193) observed that: “Because the leader’s vision is personal, it can also be changed completely… since here the formulator is the implementer, step by step, that person can react quickly to feedback on past actions or to new opportunities or threats in the environment…thus formulate a vision. This definitely distinguishes the entrepreneurial strategy, from the planned one” (1994:193). There is agreement, however, that the growth of the small firm is only limited to the market awareness of the owner/entrepreneur of the firm (see for example, Joyce et al, 1996; Banfield et al, 1996; Hamon and Atherton 1998; Beaver and Ross 2000; Deacon and Spilsbury, 2004). This view is contended by Beaver and Prince (2004) who state, “the ability for a small firm to be “strategically aware” and make this awareness a capability of the firm is far more critical to shaping the competitive posture of the firm than having a written business plan.” Thus, a tension exists between the current “traditional” view that suggests a linear, sequential and structured approach rather than a more flexible, emorphic, effectual driven stance adopted by many small firms, (see for example, Sarasvathy, 2001; Sarasvathy and Simon, 2000; Read and Sarasvathy, 2005).

Bjerke and Hultman (2002) postulate that the development of a framework of understanding of the conditions within which small firms and entrepreneurial activity interface, is due to flexibility and speed of opportunity recognition. They argue only those firms with acute awareness of the market in which they operate will be able to maximise opportunity and thus marketing is the key determinant to growth (and fundamentally, survival). However, their view of “marketing” is of an organisational mechanism for the development of a co-operative and co-created differentiated and sustainable value proposition. Bjerke and Hultman state, “its role will be disintegrated and spread across all other functions,” (2002:250) an approach which, they posit, is the only way to ensure “outstanding customer value.” An argument also posited by Piercy (1992), who states, “customer value exists only on the customer’s terms and reflects the customer’s priorities and preferences” (1992:66). What is pertinent about this view is that it is a “value” as defined by the customer. Bjerke and Hultman (2002) however argue that the entrepreneur through his or her firm takes the leading role in creating customer value. They postulate their concept of a “constellation of co-creators of value” – a term used to describe a complex set of firms involved in the process of co-creating customer value. The main difference from the value chain is that it is not viewed as sequential, and that ties, links and relationships between cooperating firms may be anything from ad hoc structures lasting only for a while to formal long-lasting relationships; the relevant object is not the single focal firm but the group of actors or firms, which
together co-create value. Deacon (2008) states that “it is this pivotal view that defines true entrepreneurial marketing,” this is not just doing “existing” marketing differently – it acknowledges that it is a new form of activity, based upon a set of commercial competencies that places a social network capability at the centre of the firm. Therefore, the individual focal firm loses its meaning in preference to the “constellation” of co-creators of value. Bjerke and Hulman (2002) explicitly acknowledge the number of differences between their thesis compared with those of others in the field.

Theirs, they argue, are founded on acknowledgement of the culture and shared meaning of “reality” that are key determinants in developing sectoral understanding, enabling new processes to be developed that have yet to be fully understood and that informality is a key competitive strength. Deacon (2008) argues that as co-creators of our “world,” we are, not independent of it, but central to it, and it is the quality of the relationships within it, that will determine our success at navigating a path through complexity. Therefore, there is a need, he argues, to develop more accurate conceptual frameworks that reflect socio-commercial reality and suggests a contextual view that better reflects the “reality” of the marketing operation undertaken by small firms is investigated.

**Marketing authenticity**

Theorists have discussed at length, authenticity within post modern and contextual marketing terms, and how consumers determine the value of “authenticity” (see for example, Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Cova 1997; Brown 2001; Brownlie 2007; Nancarrow and Nancarrow 2007, Beverland 2009). They note that authenticity is often subjective and is likely to be based upon value judgments derived from experience and deeply rooted in one’s cultural, value and belief system. Often members of a niche group (customers and/or businesses) “may distinguish themselves from the masses through an emphasis on authenticity” (Nancarrow and Nancarrow, 2007). However, “in the post modern world there is no need for this authenticity to have real heritage as it can be invented” (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). Gilmore and Pine (2007) suggest that businesses must understand what it means to “render authenticity” in their consumer offerings and outreach, and they must learn to manage the process of, and excel at, rendering authenticity and behaving authentically. Their framework is based upon “five economic offerings,” or genres of authenticity (see Table 1.1). They suggest explicit actions, such as the use of appropriate words in descriptions of products to emphasise their state or provenance, natural authenticity. The implied elements of real and unreal, to elicit suggestions explicit actions, such as the use of appropriate words in descriptions of products to emphasise their state or provenance, natural authenticity. The implied elements of real and unreal, to elicit suggestions explicit actions, such as the use of appropriate words in descriptions of products to emphasise their state or provenance, natural authenticity. The implied elements of real and unreal, to elicit suggestions explicit actions, such as the use of appropriate words in descriptions of products to emphasise their state or provenance, natural authenticity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre of authenticity (economic offering)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Commodities – natural authenticity;</strong></td>
<td>people perceive as authentic that which exists in its natural state in or of the earth, remaining untouched by human hands; not artificial or synthetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Goods – original authenticity; or imitation.</strong></td>
<td>people tend to perceive as authentic that which possesses originality in design, being the first of its kind, never before seen by human eyes; not a copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Services – exceptional authenticity;</strong></td>
<td>people tend to perceive as authentic that which is done exceptionally well, executed individually and extraordinarily by someone demonstrating human care; not unfeelingly or disingenuously performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Experiences – referential authenticity;</strong></td>
<td>people tend to perceive as authentic that which refers to some other context, drawing inspiration from human history, and tapping into our shared memories and longings; not derivative or trivial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Transformations – influential authenticity;</strong></td>
<td>people tend to perceive as authentic that which exerts influence on other entities calling human beings to a higher goal and providing a foretaste of a better way; not inconsequential or without meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1: Adapted from Gilmore and Pine (2007)

However, the development of “rendering authenticity” that Gilmore and Pine posit, is very much one from a corporate perspective, and not that of a small firm. It is built upon the company vision, mission and values, in line with whichever offering(s) are identified. The outcome of such “rendering” will be the authenticity of that company as perceived by their customers. The challenge for the company however, is finding their way through the complexities of the theory, which suggests, “colliding the five genres with the Real/Fake matrix” (2010:97) to find a “foundational polarity,” from which authenticity can be rendered. Therefore, their theory takes a scientific approach that is reductionist and
does not allow for the impact of turbulence in the macro, notwithstanding the microenvironments, in which the company exists. In addition, philosophically, there is a tension between the ontological, nature of “being”/nature of the world with that of the phenomenological, the immediate phenomena of human experience, such as thinking and feeling (Carson et al., 2001). This they state would result in a polarity of authenticity whereby “it all is fake (in being), but it can be so real (to me)” (Gilmore and Pine, 2010). They conclude that “you (the company) need to find your own way through this polarity to where your customers find your offerings to be so real to them” and only after this will the company “gain a true understanding of the new discipline of rendering authenticity.”

Beverland (2009) however, concentrates on the aspects authenticity in the development, execution and communication of a firm’s brand. In his text “the Seven Habits of Iconic Brands – Building Brand Authenticity,” he discusses authenticity in relation to marketers’ management and development of brand over time and through marketing practices. Table 1.3 provides an overview of the seven habits, which has, at its core, ten themes that are to be the basis of the firm story and is used by the firm wishing to build brand authenticity. The remaining six habits “feed” the brand story and elicit aspects of the activity and its methods (artisan amateurs), firm provenance (sticking to your roots); the love of the activity (loving the doing) and closeness to the customer (market immersion). The final two habits centre around the relationship with the immediate external and internal communities: being at one with the community and indoctrinating the staff into the cult of the brand, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Habit”</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Storytelling</strong></td>
<td>Often generated by consumers and society over time; as the brand matures, new stories emerge and old ones decline or are challenged by brand historians and other traditional models of brand management. Beverland (2009) identifies 10 consistent themes from his research (pp29-61).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ** Appearing as artisanal amateurs**</td>
<td>Authentic brands are founded and run by artesian amateurs who celebrate their lack of professionalism, the role of luck and chance in their success, and even go so far as to focus on their failures. The activities that often set the standard for quality, lends them a powerful aura of authenticity (pp63-83).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Sticking to your roots</strong></td>
<td>A brand’s roots provide the basis for storytelling and emotional connection, and commitment to one’s roots enhances their sincerity. The firm remains relevant by maintaining direct engagement in core activities, continued family involvement in the business, commitments to place, and means of production, while slowly embracing new practices that enhance the quality of output (pp85-102).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Loving the doing</strong></td>
<td>The driver or motivation of authentic brands is “not the customer, fame, money or feelings of duty” – it’s simply the love of their craft, providing great service, growing businesses or producing great products. Being able to identify directly with individuals who love their craft helps customers reconnect with the pre-industrial skilled-artisan tradition (pp103-120).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Market immersion</strong></td>
<td>Derived from the intuition of the artist and drawn from data absorbed by staff deeply immersed in the marketplace, authentic brands are influenced by consumer trends and lifestyles. The data used is gained in situ and is representative of the consumer comment and experience (pp121-139).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Being at one with community</strong></td>
<td>Authentic brands play up their relationship to nation, region, industry, cultures, as the people behind these brands care deeply about communities and therefore sensitively immerse themselves in them. Authentic brands may operate globally but they never forget the local (pp141-157).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Indoctrinating staff into the cult of the brand</strong></td>
<td>Authentic brands take care of employees’ welfare, taking leadership positions on important workplace policies, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, and encouraging employees to question, challenge and innovate. Authentic brands provide the bias for shared storytelling, understanding and respect by using the stories of their staff as a conversation piece. (pp159-174).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3: Adapted from Beverland, (2010)

While, Beverland acknowledges that the processes exhibited, “represents an open, pluralistic, emergent process, as opposed to the rigidly planned and managed process of most brand strategies” (p61), he, (as does Gilmore and Pine) concentrates on the self-construction of authenticity as perceived by the customer. Both of these views also make the assumption that not only are the firms knowledgeable regarding marketing practice but have the resources and capabilities to construct, implement and measure a purposeful strategic marketing plan which can be deployed by the firms (vast) marketing
resource. This approach being carried out through a deterministic building, measuring and managing of brand equity, suggesting that they actively engage in planned strategy and tactical marketing communications development, is uncommon. As Carson et al. (2001, p.6) argue: “SMEs do not conform to the conventional marketing characteristics of the marketing textbook theories.” Furthermore, Morrish, et al (2010) concur stating “many of the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing (EM) are derived from how an SME’s limited resources have often constrained ability to engage effectively in administrative marketing (AM). Therefore, the aim of this study will seek to explore and define marketing in context and specifically: The marketing authenticity of owner/entrepreneurs of small firms: Case evidence from Welsh (UK) SME food and drink producers and retailers.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

The methodology and research design chosen for this study is a mixed method design within the parameters of an interpretivist approach and the data generated through the instruments of face-to-face in depth “responsive” interviews (Rubin and Rubin 2005), and ethnographic participant - observer observation (Remenyi et al., 1998). A multiple case study approach was taken, using semi-structured interviews and narrative as a key focus to explore the findings. The units of analysis within this study were selected through from their inclusion in the Welsh Food and Drink Producers and Wholesalers Directory, Issue 6, (Oct 2009) and published by Welsh Assembly Government. All units were first contacted by telephone with meetings subsequently being arranged. The main author carried out the interviews and observations over a period of several weeks. The interviews took place on the businesses premises, often outside (yards; outbuildings) or within a designated office area or on one occasion in the interviewees living room. The units of analysis were all the owner/entrepreneurs of the business and all interviews, were with permission, recorded and transcribed. The generated data was analysed using a reflexive iterative process (Crabtree and Miller 1999:15); Gummesson (2003) refers to this cycle as the “hermeneutic” spiral. The interviews were analysed by identifying themes, which were then compared to the issues identified in the review of background literature. The process reaching a conclusion when a sensible, valid meaning has been reached and as such when “saturation” of the data occurs. Table 1.4 provides an overview of the units of analysis and their businesses. It offers a categorisation of the business or “firm type,” a description of the activity and an indication of its age in its current form. In addition, there is a description of the make up of the firm or who is involved in the business. Lastly, the location of the firm and a description of the type of premises are offered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Firm type</th>
<th>Age of business in current form and description of activity</th>
<th>Make up of the firm</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judith Vineyard</td>
<td>Age: 9 years Grow grapes and retail wine and mead. Established in 1979.</td>
<td>1-3 includes spouse and family members.</td>
<td>Rural, domestic premises (small farm) Wales/England border (Monmouthshire).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Cheese products</td>
<td>Age: 3 years Manufacture niche and customisable cheese and dairy products. Established in 1987.</td>
<td>Board members include father, daughter and son. A total of 105 employees.</td>
<td>Situated in office units on the edge of a market town with a manufacturing unit in a neighbouring valley (Monmouthshire).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis &amp; Sue Ice cream maker</td>
<td>Age: 9 months Produce and retail ice cream, tubs, cones and blocks. Established in 1996.</td>
<td>2-5 (up to 65 during busy periods).</td>
<td>Semi-rural village setting, domestic premises (small farm) (Newport).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Micro brewery (a)</td>
<td>Age: 3 years Produce and retail bottled and casked beers. Established over 7 years.</td>
<td>2-4 including his spouse, with occasional help from his father and a “silent” business partner.</td>
<td>Rural, domestic premises (small farm) on the Wales/England border - Monmouthshire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Micro</td>
<td>Age: 5 years 7 includes his spouse</td>
<td>Brewing unit on an</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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From Table 1.4, it is observed that four out of the six businesses are located within the border county of Monmouthshire, which is known in Wales and the UK as a prominent food tourism destination. The remaining businesses are in nearby counties (in Wales). Most businesses are situated in rural or semi-rural locations with only one business (microbrewery (b)) located on an industrial park. Furthermore, four of the six businesses are run from the owner/entrepreneurs domestic premises and all owner/entrepreneurs have had some previous business experience, either having previously run their own business or had been involved managing in a small firm. The make up of the firms were all, without exception, based upon a family or co-partner concern, with all firms having either, both partners; siblings; or in one case a parent and siblings on the board of directors. The age of the businesses less than 10 years trading, is an interesting aspect of the study. In two of the cases, the current activity and offering by the businesses were a re-establishment, either albeit a more relevant offering or re-invention of that which existed under a previous owner (vineyard and microbrewery (a)). The remaining businesses were in, or had been through, a process of re-evaluation in order to achieve the next stage of growth or exploit a recognised business opportunity. In these cases, younger family members were driving this. A parent had established these firms’ origins and some of these businesses had been in existence more than 20 years.

ANALYSIS

The generated data was analysed using a reflexive iterative process (Crabtree and Miller 1999:15); Gummesson (2003) refers to this cycle as the “hermeneutic” spiral. The data was analysed in this way to elicit themes and sub-themes, which were then compared to the issues identified in the review of background literature. The process reaching a conclusion when a sensible, valid meaning has been reached and as such when “saturation” of the data occurs. Table 1.5 illustrates the themes and sub-components identified within the data generated, the given definitions and the key areas of literature and domains of research are also identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme and sub-components</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Research concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. I’m doing this because I have to... | A starting point for the beginning or continuation that are referenced to a point in time, a place, an opportunity, necessity/need or a personal ambition/aspiration. It can involve (and often does) others such as family, friends and “fans”. | Marketing authenticity
Entrepreneurial marketing
SME and entrepreneurship |
| Family / heritage and legacy | | |
| Necessity | | |
| Storytelling | | |
| 2. It’s all about me | Self-taught, managed and developed – no external decision making in the quality of the end product, unless taken from external experts to add validity and credibility to what they do. | Marketing authenticity
Entrepreneurial marketing
SME and entrepreneurship
Tribal marketing
Effectuation |
| Creativity and lifestyle “envy” | | |
| Artisan amateurs – learning and loving the doing | | |
| Validity by “experts” | | |
| 3. It is what it is... | Transparency is paramount – nothing to hide, so nothing is | Marketing authenticity
SME and entrepreneurship |
| Does and is what it says | | |
**Table 1.5: themes and defined and research domain(s) identified**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme and sub-components</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Research concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>on the label</td>
<td>hidden.</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Unusual and niche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. “Us” and “them”
− Anti (super) marketing
− Not piling them high nor selling them cheap

| “Us” can be the entrepreneur and/or the “people (you)” and can include the artisan collective versus “them” – the supermarkets. | Entrepreneurial marketing | SME and entrepreneurship |
| Tribe marketing |

5. **Take it to those that know**
− Experts in their field
− Advocates
− Location and place

| Gaining recognition through awards and acknowledgement by the (artisan) community, but also those others in the community that appreciate the product and have influence on credibility in the eyes of “people” (general public). | Entrepreneurial marketing | SME and entrepreneurship |
| Tribal marketing |
| Effectuation |

6. **Let them find us**
− Story providing
− Our own way of doing
− Location and place

| Providing the chance of discovery for the discerning through serendipity, chance, or via those advocates and experts that are already “in the know.” | Entrepreneurial marketing | SME and entrepreneurship |
| Tribal marketing |
| Effectuation |

7. **I don’t want to grow up (yet!...;maybe?never!)**
− Resources
− Aspiration/motivation and lifestyle choice
− Control, risk and reward

| This business is serious fun – I want to keep it that way, no one will tell me what to do, unless… | SME and entrepreneurship |
| Entrepreneurial marketing |
| Effectuation (medium to high risk) |

**COMMENTARY**

The interviewees were initially asked, “Tell me about your business” – to this, most responded by starting their story at the inception of the businesses, or at least when the interviewee’s involvement began. If the interviewee asked for clarification such as “what do you want to know?” the interviewer provided one of a range of purposeful open-ended responses, such as, “what do you do (in your business)? How you do it? Or how do you get business?” The resultant analysis with themes and sub-components are provided below with extracts of relevant points, to illustrate. It is evident that there are indeed commonalities that can be aligned with those aspects of authenticity conceptualised by Beverland (2009) and Gilmore and Pine (2007) and those drawn from the data analysed. For instance: the existence of a “story”- (Beverland, 2009) based around the firm, its history, heritage and the people or “actors” and shares commonalities with the first theme:

**Theme 1 - I’m doing this because I have to…**

The Family / heritage and legacy - Throughout all of the interviews there was a strong theme of “carrying on” with a business which had already been established in some form and therefore had some historical reference in time; with some more recent than others. It was evident in that for some the motivation was emotional as well as inspirational but always economic.

“My step-father had been growing apples for 40 years and had big commercial contracts; he became ill … left me his notebook… a 5 day course and the rest I taught myself” (Ben). He continues “you’ve got to have a passion - my step-father passed away…something he set up as a bit of fun and to me and my older brother a sense of loyalty…to keep things going”.

“We sold so much of everyone else’s beer in the pubs; it made sense to make some ourselves” (Nick)

Out of necessity – It was clear that for some it was driven by an economic need but also an aspiration and lifestyle choice.

“We wanted a farm not a vineyard, it’s very labour intensive; vineyards are hard work. But it was the year of BSE (in cattle) and farmers were being told to diversify and it seemed an option to do something with” (Judith)
“I knew that I wanted to do something with food…I spent 2 years looking for a place, when I was offered this place by the previous owner, of whom I was a customer” (Ben)

_Storytelling_ – In all instances, the interviewees relished the stories that they were able to recall in reminiscing or recalling start up scenarios and everyday trials and tribulations.

“My father was sent to the local village market to buy a cow but he returned with 6 of them… there’s only so much milk one family can drink… so my mother started making cottage cheese in the kitchen – it started to win awards at fairs and shows – that’s when we thought that there could be something more to this” (Mel)

“A family friend told us that if you’re in ice cream then you only have to work 6 months of the year… when the local Italian family offered us their recipe we jumped at the chance… (laughs)…well, the benefit of hindsight! (Lewis and Sue)

Similarly aspects of the artisan nature of creativity and loving the doing (Beverland, 2009) are exhibited in the second of the study’s themes:

**Theme 2 - It’s all about me**

_Creativity and lifestyle “envy”_ – having the luxury of choosing to live a certain way of life and producing a product that has an element of creative freedom was paramount for all of the owner/entrepreneurs. This can include aspects of the blending of the grapes or apples for wine or cider; hops, malt and barley for ale or cream and flavourings for ice cream or cheese. In addition to the credibility, they gain from producing award-winning products.

“It is more or less 7 days a week … it’s a lifestyle – but a very nice lifestyle (Judith)

_Artisan amateurs_ — this illustrates how the learning and loving of the doing “as long as there’s a creative element I’m happy… that’s the fun bit – whatever you put in, something comes out the end, such as the beer itself, the way you package it, the way you promote yourself, the perceived value” (Nick), which he states comes from him and his team.

_Validity by “experts”_ – these experts did not necessarily have to be recognised in their field but could also be the consumer gathering.

“If they like the cheap stuff then they (people) don’t know anything about ice cream – we have people coming from London to take home supplies” (Lewis and Sue)

“I quite like the small pub ones (awards)… you’re there tasting with all the crowd… it’s funny what a cider expert likes../ I tend to disagree (with)… I have to go with the customers” (Ben)

Furthermore, Gilmore & Pines’, (2007) genres of natural and exceptional authenticity are present in the third theme of the study:

**Theme 3 - It is what it is…**

_Does and is what it says on the label_ – although not explicitly discussed there was evidence of transparency in what they did and how they did it, there was an element of openness, honesty and a relaxed attitude to people asking them to see what they do, what they used and seeing for themselves the origins of the product. This could also be perceived as a way of adding value to the whole product experience – customers initially experience the product while visiting a (for example) pub/restaurant, follow the signs to the producer, tour the facilities, taste the product and make a purchase.

“There’s no additives, its 100% apple juice” (Ben); “it’s Welsh wine produced from welsh grown grapes” (Judith); “it’s Italian ice cream… full fat… none of this aerated nonsense” (Lewis)

_Unusual and niche_ – emphasises the uniqueness of what they do and differentiates their offering and the experience of the customer interaction.
“We’re not commodity, we’re customised… the fact that we can do short, specific and tailored runs of products… that’s very much our business” (Mel)

“Yes, we do tours of the vineyard… that is quite unusual… you wouldn’t get that in France; we’ve even started to get hen parties!” (Judith); “We do tours of the brewery and we can do lunches, workshops and customised evening events – my wife does those” (Ed)

**Theme 4 - “Us” and “them”**

*Anti (super) marketing* – There was a real feeling of animosity against the large supermarkets and in particular Tesco. However, the only chain supermarket that did not come in for criticism was Waitrose; which could be because of it’s business model (part of the John Lewis partnership) and also it being perceived as high end, and a reputation for promoting local and artisan products – such as HRH Prince of Wales’ own Duchy Originals brand.

When asked, “what is special about Waitrose?” Ben replies: “meant to be the best… it has the best products but you pay for it… people also take you more seriously”

*Not piling them high nor selling them cheap* – most see this as a “selling out” to commercialisation and a compromise on quality, plus a loss of control regarding their business practices and lifestyle.

“I like to think that our cider is the top end of the market quality wise and I don’t want to expand it too quickly” referring to not actively pursuing a supermarket that would dictate production, delivery quotas and timings and impose severe penalties for non-compliance (Ben).

Nick: “they devalue the product remember when Stella [Artois] (Belgian lager brand) used to be known for being “reassuringly expensive” now they (Tescos) sell it so cheap it’s become known as the “wife beater!”

“It would be too expensive, people wouldn’t pay the price it would cost to produce, plus we would have to compromise on quality” (Lewis and Sue)

**Theme 5 - Take it to those that know**

*An expert in their field* – the validation and recognition by others “in the know” is of utmost importance. The winning of the first award is paramount in the psychology of the owner/entrepreneurs self-assessment of their progress and alignment with other producers in their sector.

“If you win something (in this case a “Decanter” – an international wine award) then you know you’re okay – it all helps, anyone who knows about wine will know what that means” (Judith)

“Anything you can win with prestige… that makes people love us” (Nick)

“We won a silver award the first time we took our ice cream to the awards … when an Italian ice cream maker comes up to you and says that you’re the best you believe it” (Lewis)

*Advocates* – the advocates discussed in this context, are well known influencers, (celebrity chefs, food critics and local businesses) whose reputation goes beyond the immediate vicinity and locale of their business.

“If you’ve got Matt Tebutt (local gastro pub owner) talking on the TV about your product it all helps…” he continues… “yeah we actively went around about 40 pubs, but a lot of them are owned by breweries – but the independents said they’d give it ago, so now we do about 20 pubs and restaurants and gastro pubs, and that’s gone very very well” (Ben)

*Location and place* – the “clustering” of destination pubs, restaurants, craft and historic sites in the area offers additional routes to market, assisted by like-minded small business owners:

“A lot of the cottage firms that are around here, they’ll put a couple of bottles in a presentation pack and people taste it, like it, go online and order more” (Ben)

“It does help that we have so many gastro pubs with celebrity chefs in this area…” (Ben)
Theme 6 - Let them find us
Story providing – this aspect illustrated the need by owner/entrepreneur to be “discovered” by people and thereby in turn co creating value in providing a story of discovery;

“We’re at the exclusive end of craft (premium product/price); not easily available, you’ve got to look to find us” (Nick)

“We’re unusual and unique… people are interested in the unique experience of something (not often) seen in the UK…it’s just not done to walk around a vineyard in France” (Judith)

Our own way of doing… the meaning of marketing in this context seemed to mean and express a set of activities, intentions and use of financial resource:

“All our business is by referral (from existing customers) we attend trade shows but it’s more about being seen than getting more business” (Mel)

“We’re clear about what we want to do… if there are gaps we want to fill we decide… customers might offer inspiration for names, but we never use them” (Nick)

Location and place – this aspect was about proximity to other known tourist or visitor areas and added to the story-providing element of discovery:

“We’re definitely a tourist business, being so close to the Abbey (Tintern) and the view from the top of the vineyard is spectacular” (Judith)

“It does help that we have so many gastro pubs with celebrity chefs in this area…and the Abergavenny Food Festival, (and other food/drink festivals) that draws people in too” (Ben)

Theme 7 - I don’t want to grow up (yet... maybe? never!)
When asked where they saw the future of the business, most were reluctant to move away from what they were already doing, or the way that they are doing it. This was perceived as issues of control, risk, loss of enjoyment, creativity and profitability. It was also a reflection of the involvement of key actors.

Resources – this mainly focussed on the finances and time restraints of the business:

“We’re starting to do more online and pushing it into magazines (food and drink) but y’know under the current climate we don’t want to expand too soon…we don’t know what’s around the corner …we want to re-invest back into the business; only me (Ben) working in the business I do everything”

Aspiration/motivation and lifestyle choice – this focused on the maintenance of lifestyle, but also reflected the aspiration to get better at what they do while still maintaining their “smallness.”

“We want to carry out doing what we’re doing building the business... but obviously not too big that we’re not craft anymore – we want the clarity of brewing awesome beer” (Nick)

Control, risk and reward – when discussing new business opportunities or possible future opportunities, interviewees were measured about the impact on existing business.

“Growing the business to serve supermarkets … it devalues the product… but also control… I don’t want it. I don’t want to be a busy fool. I’d rather carry on … doing positive business” (Nick)

“we’re a very flat organisation – this is the first time we’ve appointed a non-executive director to help us with this new opportunity” (Mel)

SUMMARY
An analysis of the data suggests that there are aspects of marketing authenticity as espoused by Gilmore and Pine, (2007) and Beverland (2009). However, there is also evidence of small firms marketing exhibited by their reluctance to engage in what they see as marketing or in their language “advertising” which they state is “not worthwhile.” There are forms of administrative marketing (AM)
communications being used: websites, and use of promotional channels for example festivals, fairs and shows, as well as establishing a brand identity. This is not in any way formalised, purposeful, nor measured, however. This is put down to a lack of resource, time, money and only one “full time” member of staff - the owner/entrepreneur. Of most interest is the individual owner/entrepreneurs views on the future; for the most part the “future” has been considered but was seemingly without goals or objectives. Plans were very much based upon an innate desire by the individual owner/entrepreneur to “carry on doing what I do” but maybe on a slightly larger scale nothing that would affect enjoyment of the business or threaten their profits, or lifestyle. The way in which they carry out the operation and practice of their business and the means required to do so, is by utilising the resources at hand (internally and externally) and exemplifies effectuation (as opposed to causal logic). As Dew, et al, (2009) identify they... use prior knowledge and experience as well as learning by doing, to make their way through the complexities and challenges that they face day to day while also conscious of making the most of, within reason what comes next.” Dew, et al, (2009) posit that “entrepreneurial experts frame decisions using an “effectual” logic. That is, they identify more potential markets, focus more on building the venture as a whole, pay less attention to predictive information, worry more about making do with resources on hand to invest only what they could afford to lose, and emphasize stitching together networks of partnerships.”

In this research, this suggests that the owner/entrepreneurs use immediate networks or communities to leverage the resources internally to their organisation and externally. Using information and feedback from these networks, they make decisions based on an “affordable loss context,” decisions that are sometimes rational and often emotional that provide therefore evidence of risk evaluation and consideration.

This is opposite to new entrepreneurs as Dew, et al, (2009) explain, “while novices use a “predictive frame” and tend to “go by the textbook.” Causal logic being based upon the premise that better predictions lead to better control over outcomes; effectual logic argues that to the extent that each stakeholder controls pieces of the environment and values genuine novelty in outcomes, investments in prediction are redundant.”

This also suggests that the owner/entrepreneurs in this research, take a dual stance, seeing themselves as autonomous individuals in their business but also involved and influenced by a wider social community (ies). In this duality, the owner/entrepreneur is both “entrepreneur and consumer” (Deacon, 2008) and therefore mirrors the consumers need to “seek something more than a consumptive experience” (Cova, 1997). They are instead seeking a shared emotive experience in order to “become individual and differentiated from others” while also seeking the re-creation of social links. Willmott and Nelson (2005) refer to these as “communities of interest” or “communities of practice” (CoI, CoP).

Cova (1997) however refers to these as “tribal communities” of shared values, interest and passion. However, in this study the owner/entrepreneurs all appear to be, acting and engaging with several tribes simultaneously - consumers, family/friends and other owner/entrepreneurs. They do this through everyday business practice and everyday life. For example, owner/entrepreneurs, experts and local businesses, for whom the entrepreneur looks to for confirmation of good practice and quality, are the “entrepreneurial tribe”. The social network of family and friends the local community, and close fellow entrepreneurs and customers are the “social tribe.” Finally, the “consumer tribe”, those engaged with through the selling of their products. This combination of “tribal” engagement and effectuation assists in the consideration and evaluation of risk, and decision making, for example:

- **Low risk** – in the immediate vicinity, little outlay, tried and tested using - entrepreneur and social tribe network as a route to market, for example engagement in community events, and co created opportunities exist with local businesses selling similar or complementary products which is further underpinned by the tourism offering.
- **Medium risk** – local and further afield, festivals, fairs and awards, finance and time resource is invested, but once tried and tested is used to establish and maintain confidence and market sensing derived from the participant tribe(s).
- **High risk** – the consideration of the “the future” and possibility of next stage of growth; higher production and/or engagement with new customers with more complex systems, for example supermarkets is discussed within the closer members of the social (family and friends) tribe. This exploratory research suggests therefore, that authenticity in a marketing context may be something other than that of the “self constructed reality” of the consumer. The study suggests that the owner/entrepreneur has his or her own “self-constructed reality” which is different and does not always coincide with the realities of others, for example, customers.

The way in which the owner/entrepreneurs’ authenticity or Entrepreneurial Authenticity (EA) is manifested is not only in the how, and why, they promote their product(s) in the way that they do, but includes their engagement with three identified social networks (CoP/CoI or tribes). This engagement
informs guides and assists in the decision making of the business, which appears to be in essence, entrepreneurial effectuation. The meta narrative of the language used in context by the owner/entrepreneurs suggests that this is used to establish the level(s) of risk involved in any given opportunity that has been identified and/or presented. Therefore, further investigation is required of the concept of “Entrepreneurial Authenticity (EA)” which, it is suggested, sits within the fourth perspective proposed by Hansen and Eggers, (2010). It is a concept that is distinct to the interface, evolves out of the combination of entrepreneurship and marketing, and is subsequently a component of contextual marketing, as espoused by Deacon (2008).

REFERENCES


Beverland, M. B. (2009), Building Brand Authenticity, 7 Habits of Iconic Brands, Palgrave MacMillan


