The Effects of Prior Impressions of a Firm's Ethics on the Success of a Cause-Related Marketing Campaign: Do the Good Look Better While the Bad Look Worse?

Michal Strahilevitz

SUMMARY. This research examines the effect of the initial perception of the ethical nature of a firm on the effects of that firm participating in a cause-related marketing campaign. In two studies, the effects of a cause-related marketing campaign are examined for companies perceived as ethical, unethical and ethically neutral. It is found that firms initially perceived as ethical are least likely to be seen as having ulterior motives for running a cause-related marketing campaign, whereas firms initially perceived as unethical are most likely to be suspected of having ulterior motives. However, it is also found that firms perceived as ethically neutral gained the most from a cause-related marketing campaign

Michal Strahilevitz, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Marketing, University of Arizona, Tucson, 320 McClelland Hall, Marketing Department, Eller School of Business, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ 85719.

The author would like to thank the editors of the *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing* for inviting her to submit a paper for this special volume. She would also like to thank Jamie Kern for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[Haworth co-indexing entry note]: "The Effects of Prior Impressions of a Firm's Ethics on the Success of a Cause-Related Marketing Campaign: Do the Good Look Better While the Bad Look Worse?" Strahilevitz, Michal. Co-published simultaneously in *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* (Best Business Books, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 11, No. 1, 2003, pp. 77-92; and: *Nonprofit and Business Sector Collaboration: Social Enterprises, Cause-Related Marketing, Sponsorships, and Other Corporate-Nonprofit Dealings* (ed: Walter W. Wymer, Jr. and Sridhar Samu) Best Business Books, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 2003, pp. 77-92. Single or multiple copies of this article are available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service [1-800-HAWORTH, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST). E-mail address: getinfo@ haworthpressinc.com].

in terms of improvements to their image. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Cause-related marketing, corporate image, perceived ethics

I will never forget the horrible fire that occurred in the Berkeley hills when I was a doctoral student at U.C. Berkeley. Many of my friends lost their homes and all their belongings. Much of the Berkeley campus seemed to be in mourning. People were collecting clothes, blankets, money, and anything else that could help those that had suddenly become homeless overnight.

It was during the week right after the fire that I found myself passing a street musician on the way to a seminar. He played well and I was running early, so I decided to sit and listen for a while. At some point, I was no longer running early, so I reached into my purse to leave him some change before heading off to class. I was about to place two quarters in his guitar case when I noticed there was a sign in front of it that read, "half the money I collect today will be contributed to a fund to help victims of the fire." Somehow, the combination of good music and helping the homeless struck a chord in me. I put the two quarters back in my purse and dug into my wallet for a five dollar bill. I put that five dollar bill in his guitar case and hurried off to class.

It was only later that day when I had a chance to think about the potential marketing implications of what had happened. That sign had caused my tip to the musician to increase by 900%. Furthermore, by promising to give half his revenues to a good cause, the street musician had just increased his net (after donation) revenues from me from $.50 to $2.50. Obviously, I felt good about paying for the good music and making the donation to victims of the fire. My guess is that he also derived satisfaction from helping to raise money for a worthy cause. I later wondered if he had not ended up collecting more than twice as much money with that sign as he would have without such a sign. Could it be that his "charitable" efforts might also prove profitable for him? Unfortunately, I never got a chance to ask that street musician all the questions I had. However, I realized then and there that I had just come up with a set of research questions that were truly intriguing to me: Can donations to charity be used to increase profits? If so, under what conditions will this method be most effective?

Years have passed since that experience and I am pleased to report that many scholars, including myself, have since made important progress in addressing such questions with regards to cause-related marketing. However, there are still many intriguing factors left to be explored regarding the variables that should be considered in deciding if and how to use charity as a purchase incentive. In this paper, I will discuss some of the important findings that have been reported to date. More importantly, I will address a question that came up two years ago when I told this story to a colleague. The colleague had asked me if I had not trusted this musician, would I have been so generous with my tip to him? This question can also be translated to the world of cause-related marketing. Is the perceived ethics of a firm, prior to becoming involved in a cause-related marketing campaign, going to influence the effectiveness of that campaign? The main goal of this paper is to begin to address this question. Although the research presented here offers new insights into the role of a firm's perceived ethics prior to a campaign, it also leaves many interesting questions unanswered. This allows me to address my second goal, which is to suggest directions for future work and hopefully encourage more scholars to become involved in studying this fascinating area.

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING

The tactic of companies linking the purchases of their products with donations to charity is often referred to as "cause-related marketing." Cause-related marketing has been described as a versatile marketing tool capable of accomplishing a wide range of marketing objectives (Varadajan and Menon 1988). Total spending on cause-related marketing in the United States alone exceeds $1 billion annually (Smith and Stodghill 1994, Tate 1995) and such efforts at linking sales to charitable donations continue to grow in popularity (Hanft 2001). The fact that each year thousands of marketers use charitable donations to promote their products demonstrates that many companies consider cause-related marketing to be a valuable marketing tool (Strahilevitz 1999).

Yet, the benefits of such campaigns are not always obvious, and they can vary depending the nature of the product or service being promoted (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), the specific charity chosen (Lafferty

1996), the perceived quality of the product being promoted (Folkes and Kamins 1999), the size of the donation (Holmes and Kilbane 1993, Dahl and Lavack 1995, Strahilevitz 1999), the interaction between donation size and product type (Strahilevitz 1999) and the way that the cause-related marketing plan is communicated to the target market. In this paper I investigate another factor, which is whether the initial perception of a firm's ethics might also influence the effectiveness of a cause-related marketing campaign.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Some of the benefits to using charitable donations as purchase incentives include improving the image of and attitude towards the sponsoring firm (Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992, Brown and Dacin 1997, Berger, Cunningham and Kozinets 1996, Creyer and Ross 1996), differentiating a brand from its competitors (Murphy 1997, Brown and Dacin 1997, Berger, Cunningham and Kozinets 1996) and potentially increasing short term sales (Sen and Morwitz 1996, Murphy 1997, Strahilevitz and Myers 1998, Strahilevitz 1999). In addition to appealing to customers, cause-related campaigns can improve a company's image with other important constituencies such as employees and investors (Aldrich 2001). However, not all cause-related campaigns are equally effective in all these ways, and some cause-related marketing campaigns may be completely ineffective.

THE EFFECT OF THE NATURE OF THE PRODUCT

The nature of the product being promoted can influence how effective a cause-related marketing campaign might be (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). More specifically, charity incentives have been found to be more effective in generating short terms sales with products perceived as pleasure-oriented and frivolous than with products perceived as goal-oriented and practical. The explanation given for this effect is based on a wide body of prior research which has shown that experiencing either pleasure (Isen, Shalker, Clark, and Karp 1978, Cunningham 1979) or guilt (Baummann, Cialdini and Kenrick 1981, Ghingold 1981) can significantly affect an individual's willingness to engage in charitable behavior. Since hedonic products tend to evoke more pleasure and guilt than utilitarian products, it follows that charity incentives should be most effective with pleasure-oriented products. This phenomenon is referred to as affect-based complementarity because the emotions generated by hedonic products appear to complement the feelings generated from contributing to charity (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

However, the tactic of linking donations to sales of hedonic products is not without its social critics. In a recent article on cause-related marketing in *Worth* (2001), writer Adam Hanft writes "Cause marketing is transforming the very nature of acquisition: It has become a mechanism to both indulge and do good, a new kind of heroic hedonism. Through this conflation of giving and getting, marketers have found a devise for sanctioning away any remaining guilt over the need to own stuff."

THE ROLE OF PRODUCT QUALITY

Product quality may also influence the effectiveness of a cause-related marketing campaign. Folkes and Kamins (1999) found that the effect of a firm engaging in pro-social behavior depends on the perceived quality of the products being promoted. In particular, the authors found that superior product attributes enhance attitudes towards ethically behaving firms more than toward unethically behaving firms. However, when product quality was seen as inferior, the firm's ethical behavior had less of an effect. In addition, Folkes and Kamins found that attitudes towards superior products varied depending on whether a firm was simply not involved in unethical behavior (e.g., not using child labor) or whether the firm was active in prosocial behavior (e.g., helping victims of child labor abuse).

THE PERCEIVED ETHICAL NATURE OF THE FIRM

Drumwright (1996) has pointed out that one factor that can influence the effectiveness of a given campaign is whether consumers perceive the cause-related marketing relationship to be beneficial or exploitative of the charity. In the current paper, I examine whether the effectiveness of a cause-related marketing campaign is affected by the initial perceived ethics of the company involved (i.e., is this perceived as a "ethical," "unethical," or "neutral" firm to begin with). The research investigates how the initial impression of a company influences whether a cause-related marketing campaign is viewed with admiration or suspicion, as well as how the initial impression affects the degree to which a firm's image will be improved by a cause-related marketing campaign.

Folkes and Kamins (1999) have made an interesting connection between how firms are judged as a function of their actions and how individuals are judged by their actions. Hamilton and Sherman (1996) suggest that organized groups, like individuals, are often perceived as having dispositional qualities or characteristics, and thus organizations, like people, are often perceived as being "good" or "bad." Several scholars have demonstrated the role of brand personalities and people's relationships with them in how companies are perceived by consumers (Aaker 1997, Fournier 1998, Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). All this suggests that prior research on how individuals are judged as a function of their ethical behavior is likely to be helpful in predicting how organizations will be judged as a function of their ethical behavior.

In judging individuals, research has shown that information about ethical and unethical actions have an asymmetrical influence on attitudes towards individuals, such that bad deeds detract from attitudes more than good deeds enhance them (Reeder & Brewer 1979, Skowronksi & Carlston 1987a). Skowronski and Carlston (1987b) point out that immoral acts are seen as stronger indicators of one's true nature than moral ones, because even immoral people will occasionally perform moral acts (e.g., the mafia hit man who is good to his children) or refrain from immoral acts (e.g., the thief who does not rob every house he enters).

One of the questions to be investigated in this research is whether the effect of a company participating in a cause-related marketing campaign (a good deed) will be evaluated differently as a function of the firm's perceived ethics before the campaign. More specifically, I examine whether the motives ascribed to having a cause-related marketing campaign are affected by the perceived ethics of the firm prior to the campaign. I also examine whether a company being perceived as ethical or unethical prior to a cause-related marketing campaign can affect how much that company's image will improve from participating in that campaign.

HYPOTHESES

Prior work suggesting individuals often judge organizations in the same way they judge people (Hamilton and Sherman 1996) is the foundation of the three hypotheses presented here. The first hypothesis is based on prior work documenting that unethical and ethical behavior have an asymmetrical influence on attitudes, such that unethical behavior has a stronger effect on how individuals are judged by others. This is attributed to the fact that negative information is weighted more heavily than positive information in judgments of individuals (Reeder and Brewer 1979, Skowronksi and Carlston 1987). In addition, in judging the ethics of individuals, we often look both at the actions they are currently taking and at actions they have previously taken. We tend to trust the motives of those that we consider "good" or "ethical." We also tend to suspect the motives of those that we consider "bad" or "unethical." This advances the following hypothesis:

> (H1) The more ethical a firm is perceived to be initially, the more likely it is to be judged as having altruistic motives for getting involved in a cause-related marketing campaign. The less ethical a firm is perceived to be initially, the more likely it is to be judged as having ulterior motives for getting involved in a cause-related marketing campaign.

Yet perceptions of the motivation of a firm for getting involved in a cause-related marketing campaign may not be the only factor of concern to a firm. Disconfirmation theory (Oliver and Swan, 1989) predicts that expectations are set and form the reference point to which outcomes are compared to determine satisfaction or disatisfaction. If expectations are realized (e.g., a firm perceived as ethical helps a good cause) positive confirmation occurs. However, if expectations are exceeded (e.g., a firm perceived as neutral or unethical supports a good cause), positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to an even higher level of satisfaction. In addition, firms already perceived as highly ethical have less room for improvement in terms of their perceived ethics. Thus, a cause-related marketing campaign should have a stronger positive effect on the image of a firm with a neutral image or unethical image to begin with than on a firm that is already perceived as highly ethical. This advances the following hypothesis:

> (H2) Firms that are initially perceived as highly ethical will benefit less in terms of improvements to their image as the result of a cause-related marketing campaign than will firms initially perceived as either neutral or unethical.

However, in comparing ethical firms to unethical firms, the fact that negative information is weighted more heavily than positive information (Reeder and Brewer 1979, Skowronksi and Carlston 1987a) works in the opposite direction of the fact that firms that are already perceived as ethical have less room for improvement and less of a chance to positively surprise consumers with their ethical behavior (Oliver and Swan 1989). Thus, it is unclear whether unethical or ethical firms will benefit more from a cause-related marketing campaign in terms of improvements to their image. However, firms perceived as ethically neutral have neither negative information that can be heavily weighted, nor do they have such a positive image that there is almost no room for improvement. Thus, it follows that firms perceived as neutral may benefit most from a cause-related marketing campaign in terms of improvements to their image. More formally:

> (H3) Firms that are initially perceived as unethical will benefit less in terms of improvements to their image as the result of a cause-related marketing campaign than will firms initially perceived as neutral in terms of their ethics.

Combined, H2 and H3 suggest that neutral firms will improve their image most as the result of participating in a cause related marketing campaign. All three hypotheses were tested in two experiments.

STUDY 1

Method

Subjects were 76 undergraduate business students at a public university. Each subject was assigned to one of three conditions in a single-factor between-subject design. Depending on the condition to which they were assigned, subjects were given a description of one of three conditions of a shoe company that was depicted as either extremely ethical (employing the homeless mothers, encouraging volunteer work among employees, surpassing all environmental standards), ethically neutral (nothing ethical or unethical, meets basic environmental standards) or extremely unethical (uses child labor, underpays employees, fails to meet basic environmental standards). Regardless of the condition to which they were assigned, subjects were told that the company they had just read about had decided to run a cause-related marketing campaign contributing 5% of the profits from the sale of their shoes to charity. Within each condition, half the subjects were told the money would go to underprivileged kids and half were told that it would go to helping protect endangered wildlife. This was to make sure that the results obtained were not specific to the charity used.

Regardless of the condition to which they were assigned, subjects were asked to rate the motives of the company for participating in the campaign using a 5 point scale. The scale ranged from -2 (motivated only by ulterior motives), to 2 (motivated only by altruistic motives), with 0 indicating that the company was equally motivated by ulterior motives and altruistic motives. On the bottom of the scale it was explained that examples of ulterior motives would be a desire to increase sales or to improve the company's own image. It was also explained that examples of altruistic motives would be a genuine desire to contribute to the cause or to make the world a better place. Subjects were next given another scale and asked to rate how the cause-related campaign would affect their perceptions of the firm in terms of its ethics on a 5 point scale that ranged from -2 (the firm would seem much less ethical than before), to 2 (the firm would seem much more ethical than before).

Results

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for the significance of these differences at the aggregate level. The dependent variable was the rating on the altruism/self-interest scale. Because there was no effect for which of the two charities were used, the results are aggregated here for purposes of analysis. H1 had predicted that firms likely to be perceived as unethical to begin with would be more likely to be judged as having selfish motives for carrying out a cause-related marketing campaign. As predicted, the ethical firm was seen as the most altruistic in its motives, with an average rating of 0.56. The neutral firm was perceived as less altruistic with a mean rating of 0.04. Finally, the unethical firm was the only one judged as having the relatively selfish motives, with a mean of -0.65. The overall difference among the three conditions was significant ($F(2, 73) = 6.12$, $p < .005$). I also tested whether the differences were significant between the various pairs of conditions. In comparing the neutral firm to the ethical firm, the difference was in the predicted direction, but not significant ($F = 2.02$, $p < .20$). However, in comparing the neutral firm to the unethical firm, the difference was both in the predicted direction and significant ($F = 4.02$, $p < .05$). Finally, in comparing the ethical to the unethical firm, the difference was also significant ($F = 12.77$, $p <$

.001). These results strongly support the first hypothesis, which predicts that firms that are perceived as less ethical run a higher risk of having their cause-related marketing campaign ascribed to selfish motives.

The second and third hypotheses dealt with the relationship between the perceived ethical nature of a firm and the effect of a cause-related marketing campaign on improvements in the firm's image. Again, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for the significance of these differences at the aggregate level. For the ethical firm, the improvement was relatively small at 0.60. For the ethically neutral firm the improvement was relatively high at 1.28. Finally, for the unethical firm the improvement was somewhere in between at 0.88. The overall difference among the three conditions was significant ($F(2, 73) = 5.36$, $p < .01$). I also tested whether the differences were significant between the various pairs of conditions. As predicted by H2, comparing the neutral firm to the ethical firm, the neutral firm benefited more than the ethical one ($F = 9.55$ $p < .005$). In comparing the neutral firm to the unethical firm, as predicted by H3, the unethical firm benefited significantly less than the neutral firm in terms of an improvement to its image ($F = 4.50$, $p < .05$). Interestingly, in comparing the ethical firm to the unethical firm, although the unethical firm appeared to benefit slightly more, the difference was not significant ($F = 1.66$, $p < .20$). These results support the second and third hypotheses and suggest that the firms that have no strong ethical identity (either positive or negative) may have the most to gain from participating in a cause-related marketing campaign.

STUDY 2

Method

Study 2 was identical to study 1 except that instead of using descriptions of companies as either ethical or unethical, well known companies were pretested to come up with those that were already perceived as either very ethical, very unethical, or ethically neutral. Thirty undergraduate students, who had not participated in study 1 and who would not be participating in study 2, were given a list of 12 well known companies, several of which seemed they would be likely to be perceived as either highly ethical or unethical, and asked to classify them as on a scale of -3 to 3, with 3 being highly ethical and -3 being highly unethical. In addition, one well-known product for each company was listed and pretest participants were asked to rate that product relative to its competition on a scale with −2 representing very low quality and 2 representing very high quality. The company that had the lowest score was chosen for the unethical company for study 2. This company was Phillip Morris, which had a mean score of −2.4. The ethical company chosen in the pretest was Ben and Jerry's, which had a mean ethics score of 2.2. The company chosen as neutral was Timex, which was classified as a 0 (neutral) by the majority of the subjects and had a mean rating of −.07. All three of the companies chosen for study 2 were also judged to have products perceived to be of high quality relative to their competition within their product category (all three firms scored above "1" on a 5 point scale where "–2" is very low quality and "2" is very high quality). Companies perceived to make high quality products (relative to their competition) were chosen to avoid creating a confound with the effect of product quality, which has been shown to affect how ethical and unethical behavior by companies are judged (see Folkes and Kamins 1999).

Subjects in study 2 were 97 undergraduates who had not participated in either the pretest or the first study. Similar to the first study, they were each assigned to one of three conditions. In the unethical condition, Phillip Morris was described as having a campaign linked to Marlboro cigarettes. In the ethical condition, Ben and Jerry's was described as having a campaign linked to the sale of their pint-sized ice cream. In the neutral condition, Timex was described as having a campaign linked to the sale of their sports watches.

For each condition, subjects were told that 5% of the profit from the products for the months of December and January would be donated to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America. This charity was chosen because a prior pretest had found this to be a cause that almost all students considered worthy of support and that no students found offensive. The cause was also chosen because it was not particularly related to cigarettes, watches or ice cream.

Results

As in study 1, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for the significance of these differences at the aggregate level. The dependent variable was the rating on the same altruism/self-interest scale that had been used in the first study. The first hypothesis predicted that the more unethical a firm is judged to be, the more likely it will be perceived as having selfish motives for carrying out a cause-related marketing campaign. As predicted, the ethical firm (Ben and Jerry's) was seen as the most altruistic in its motives, with an average rating of 0.69. The neutral firm (Timex) was perceived as less altruistic with a mean rating of –0.06. Finally, the unethical firm (Phillip Morris) was judged as having the most selfish motives with a mean of −1.06. The overall difference among the three conditions was significant ($F(2, 94) = 18.03, p < .001$).

It was also relevant to test whether the differences were significant between the various pairs of conditions. In comparing the neutral firm to the ethical firm, the difference was in the predicted direction and significant ($F = 5.46$ $p < .05$). Similarly, in comparing the neutral firm to the unethical firm, the difference was also significant and in the direction predicted ($F = 5.69, p < .05$). Finally, as the first hypothesis would predict, the difference between the ethical and unethical firm was both significant and in the predicted direction (F = 42.94, p < .001). As in study 1, study 2 confirmed that companies perceived as unethical to begin with run a higher risk of having their cause-related marketing campaign ascribed to selfish motives.

As in the first study, to test the second hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine how a cause-related campaign would affect improvements (or lack thereof) to a company's image as the result of a cause-related marketing campaign. For the unethical firm, the improvement was 0.813. For the ethically neutral firm the improvement in image was greater at 1.15. Finally, for the ethical firm the improvement was 0.75. Although, as predicted, the firm perceived as ethically neutral gained the most in terms of improvements to its image, the overall difference among the three conditions was not significant ($F(2, 94) = 2.01, p < .15$). It was also important to test whether the differences were significant between the various pairs of conditions. In comparing the ethical firm to the neutral firm, the difference was also only marginally significant, although in the predicted direction ($F = 3.73, p < .06$), thus supporting H2. In comparing the neutral firm to the unethical firm, the difference was marginally significant in the direction predicted ($F = 3.01, p < .10$), thus supporting H3. In comparing the ethical and unethical firms, the difference was not significant ($F = 0.07, p < .80$). As in study 1, the firm that appeared to benefit the most from the campaign was the one that had been judged ethically neutral to begin with.

Discussion

This research shed new light on factors that might affect the results of a cause-related marketing campaign. The findings reported here suggest that firms should first try to sense how they are perceived in terms of ethics by their target market. They should then ask if their goal is to be perceived as altruistic and caring or simply to improve their current image. One of the more interesting findings here was that firms perceived as ethical are least likely to be seen as having selfish motives for running a cause-related marketing campaign. Yet, in terms of improving their image, ethical firms and unethical firms gained significantly less than neutral firms from participating in a cause-related marketing campaign. This suggests that companies that have a strong image as either ethical or unethical may have less to gain from being involved in cause-related marketing campaigns than companies that are not perceived as particularly ethical or unethical.

Limitations and Future Research

While the work presented here addresses important questions regarding the role of perceptions of a firm's ethics prior to a cause-related marketing campaign on the possible effects of such a campaign, it was not without its limitations. First of all, only student subjects were used and it is possible that different results might be obtained using a non-student sample. Furthermore, no measures were taken to rule out alternative explanations for the results observed. In addition, in the case of support for H2, measures of improvements in a company's image as the result of a cause-related marketing campaign did not involve pre-campaign and post-campaign measures. Thus, it is not clear if the reason that neutral firms benefited most is that they started at a lower point than firms perceived as highly ethical to begin with, or that perhaps some other phenomenon was driving the effect observed. Fortunately, all of these limitations provide opportunities for future research addressing these weaknesses.

In addition, many important questions remain unanswered. For example, both non-profit and for-profit organizations need to be concerned with the effect that a cause-related marketing campaign will have on their image. It would be interesting to see how the perceived ethics of the marketer might affect consumers' judgments of the non-profit organizations that choose to team up with them. It might also be interesting to see if there might be an interaction between the perceived ethics of a firm and the type of charity they choose to support in their cause-related marketing campaign. For example, if a firm that makes cigarettes were to consider linking sales of their products to donations to the American Lung Association, they would likely be judged more harshly than if they supported a cause unrelated to any negative side effects associated with their product. On the other hand, a company that sells books might gain the most from supporting a cause that is related to the positive effects of their product, such as a literacy fund or an organization that provides free books to underprivileged children. Other factors such as the perceived quality of the products being marketed (see Folkes and Kamins 1999), the size of the donation (see Holmes and Kilbane 1993, Dahl and Lavack 1995, Strahilevitz 1999), and the hedonic nature of the products being marketed (see Strahilevitz and Myers 1998) could also interact with the perceived ethics of the firm that existed prior to a cause-related marketing campaign.

It is also worth noting that the initial image that a firm has is probably not the only factor that will affect how the motives of a cause-related marketing campaign are judged. Other influencing factors could be the size of the donation or whether the relationship between a given charity and marketer are long lasting or simply short term. There is great variation in both the size of donation made (ranging from 100% of profits to less than 0.01% of profits) and the duration of commitment made in such campaigns. For example, companies such as Patagonia, the Body Shop and Ben and Jerry's consistently give a significant portion of their income to several charities. Such companies are likely to be judged quite differently from those that contribute only incremental amounts or get involved with cause-related marketing only during certain promotional periods. Barone, Miyazaki and Taylor (2000) suggest that perceived commitment to a cause might also be affected by whether the company's employees are encouraged to get involved by programs such as paid release time for volunteering or donation drives within the company. Further research as to how these factors might interact with a firm's initial image could be of great interest to marketers.

It would also be valuable to take a closer look at the mediating factors that might have affected the results presented in this paper. To illustrate, in future research, one could ask subjects to give explanations as to why they judged companies as they did. These explanations could be analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon I have observed here. Finally, this paper focused on how consumers' perceptions are affected by a cause-related campaign. Yet it has been noted that employees and investors might also prefer to be associated with a firm that they consider ethical and/or that contributes to society by supporting good causes. Future research could examine how cause-related marketing campaigns affect the morale of employees and perhaps even shareholders.

REFERENCES

Aaker, Jennifer L. (1997), "Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), 347.

Aldrich, Nelson W., Jr (2001), "The New Power Giving: Corporate Donations Are on the Rise as Charitable Aspirations Among the New Money Crowd," *Worth*, (December/January), 104.

Barone, Michael J., Anthony D. Miyazaki and Kimberly A. Taylor (2000), "The Influence of Cause-Related Marketing on Consumer Choice: Does One Good Turn Deserve Another?" *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (2), 248-262.

Baumann, D.J., R.B. Cialdini and D.T. Kenrick (1981), "Altruism as Hedonism: Helping and Self-gratification as Equivalent Responses," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40 (June), 1039-1046.

Berger, Ida E., Peggy H. Cunningham and Robert V. Kozinets (1996), "The Processing of Cause-related Marketing Claims: Cues, Biases or Motivators?" *1996 AMA Summer Educators Conference: Enhancing Knowledge Development in Marketing*, 7, Cornelia Dröge and Roger Calantone, eds. Chicago; American Marketing Association, 71-72.

Brown, Thomas J. and Peter A. Dacin (1997), "The Company and the Product: Corporate Associations and Consumer Product Responses," *Journal of Marketing*, 61 (January), 68-84.

Creyer, Elizabeth H. and William T. Ross, Jr (1996), "The Impact of Corporate Behavior on Perceived Product Value," *Marketing Letters*, 7 (2), 173-185.

Cunningham, M.R. (1979), "Weather, Mood, and Helping Behavior: Quasi-experiments with the Sunshine Samaritan," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1947-1958.

Dahl, Darren W. and Anne M. Lavack (1995), "Cause-Related Marketing: Impact of Size of Cause-Related Promotion on Consumer Perceptions and Participation," *1995 AMA Winter Educators Conference: Marketing Theory and Applications*, 6, David W. Stewart and Naufel J. Vilcassim, eds. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 476-481.

Drumwright, Minette E. (1996), "Company Advertising with a Social Dimension: The Role of Noneconomic Criteria," *Journal of Marketing*, 60 (October), 71-87.

Folkes, Valerie S. and Michael A. Kamins (1999), "Effects of Information About Firms' Ethical and Unethical Actions on Consumers' Attitudes," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, (March), 243-259.

Fournier, Susan (1998), "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), 343-373.

Ghingold, Morry (1981), "Guilt Arousing Communications: An Unexplored Variable," K. Monroe (Ed.), *Advances in Consumer Research*, 8, 442-448.

Hamilton, D.L. and S.J. Sherman (1996), "Perceiving Persons and Groups," *Psychological Review*, 103, 336-355.

Hanft, Adam (2001), "And Profits to Boot: Cause Marketing Has Mushroomed Into One of the Most Visible Forms of Corporate Philanthropy, Involving Every Major Corporation. That is a Problem," *Worth*, (December/January), 112-113.

Holmes, John H. and Christopher J. Kilbane (1993), "Selected Effects of Price and Charitable Donations," *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 1 (4), 67-83.

Isen, A.M., T.E. Shalker, M. Clark and L. Karp (1978), "Affect, Accessibility of Material in Memory and Behavior: A Cognitive Loop?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 1-12.

Lafferty, Barbara A. (1996), "Cause-Related Marketing: Does Cause Make a Difference in Consumers' Attitudes and Purchase Intentions Toward the Product?" working paper, Department of Marketing, Florida State University.

Muniz, Albert M., Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guinn (2001), "Brand Community," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (4), 412-432.

Murphy, I. P. (1997), "Pillsbury Proves Charity, Marketing Begins at Home," *Marketing News*, (February 17), 16.

Oliver, Richard L. and John E. Swan (1989), "Equity and Disconfirmation Perceptions as Influences on Merchant and Product Satisfaction," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (December), 372-383.

Reeder, G. and M. Brewer (1979), "A Schematic Model of Dispositional Attribution in Interpersonal Perception," *Psychological Review*, 86, 61-79.

Ross, John K. III, Larry T. Patterson, and Mary Ann Stutts (1992), "Consumer Perceptions of Organizations that use Cause-Related Marketing," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 20 (1), 93-97.

Sen, Sankar and Vicki G. Morwitz (1996), "Consumer Reactions to a Provider's Position on Social Issues: The Effect of Varying Frames of Reference," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 5 (1), 27-48.

Skowronski, J.J. and D.E. Carlston (1987a), "Social Judgment and Social Memory: The Role of Cue Diagnosticity in Negativity, and Extremity Biases in Impression Formation: A Review of Explanations," *Psychological Bulletin*, 105, 131-142.

Skowronski, J.J. and D.E. Carlston (1987b), "Social Judgment and Social Memory: The Role of Cue Diagnosticity in Negativity, Positivity and Extremity Biases," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 689-699.

Smith, Geoffrey and Ron Stodghill II (1994), "Are Good Causes Good Marketing?" *BusinessWeek*, (March 21), 64-66.

Strahilevitz, Michal (1999), "The Effects of Product Type and Donation Magnitude on Willingness to Pay More for a Charity-Linked Brand," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, (March), 215-241.

Strahilevitz, Michal and John G. Myers (1998), "Donations to Charity as Purchase Incentives: How Well They Work May Depend on What You Are Trying to Sell," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), 434-446.

Tate, Nancy T. (1995), "And Now a Word From Our Sponsor," *American Demographics*, (June), 46.

Varadarajan, P. Rajan and Anil Menon (1988), "Cause-Related Marketing: A Coalignment of Marketing Strategy and Corporate Philanthropy," *Journal of Marketing*, 52 (July), 58-74.