UNIVERSITY OF
STRATHCLYDE

Department of Marketing

Personal Legitimising; a substantive grounded theory in the context of small consultancy firms

Simon Haslam

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ABSTRACT

This thesis introduces the substantive grounded theory of personal legitimising. It has emerged from a study of small consulting firms.

Personal legitimising is about how individuals in organisations influence their work to take account of personal priorities and agendas. Colloquially, it can be described as consultants 'getting away with it'.

The theory introduces six behavioural categories. These are called 'opportunistic accommodating', 'sequential impressioning', 'voluntary championing', 'support mustering', 'pseudo endorsing' and 'retrospective justifying'. The first four are concerned with how individuals align personal and work agendas. The latter two report strategies that individuals use to defend their territory.

Personal legitimising makes the distinction between those strategies which contain 'implicit' legitimacy and those which are 'explicit' in nature. With implicit strategies, people are able to chose the direction of their endeavours without recourse to management. This freedom is afforded by them operating within the bounds of 'organisational tolerance'.

A comparison with literature in the substantive area of management consulting notes the presence of many of the ingredients of personal legitimising, but no theoretical explanation that links them together.

The theory has implications for practitioners regarding the consequences on organisational strategy of individual actions, creating an appealing working environment for people (consultants) who are readily employable elsewhere, and the management of

marketing. This is set in a context where knowledge based working is likely to account for an even greater proportion of enterprise in the future.

The study also suggests further research in the area of impression management, and helps illuminate the practicalities of grounded theory study.

PREFACE

Five years ago, in October 1994, I began a journey that would take me to the discovery of personal legitimising. I work as a management consultant and my interest in this area drew me into an exploratory research study. I embarked on this venture without clarity of research objective or design. Adherence to grounded theory principle was my talisman.

Personal legitimising is about how individuals incorporate their own priorities and agendas with those of their organisations; how they influence their working environment to their own advantage. Colloquially its been expressed as people 'getting away with it' or 'doing it their way'. Personal legitimising is offered as an emergent substantive grounded theory. Substantive means it has explanatory scope in the context from which it has been derived, small management consulting firms. As a grounded theory personal legitimising provides a conceptual explanation of empirically grounded behaviour.

Personal legitimising emerged as the core variable; it is the main concern of those at the centre of the study – individual management consultants. Personal legitimising is a family of strategies, six categories are apparent. It has two sub-core variables, 'aligning' and 'defending'. The former is about the bringing together of personal and organisation agendas. The latter deals with how one's choice of actions is defended.

The theory is the result of orthodox grounded theory method as taught by its co-founder Barney Glaser. My work involved the accepted processes of data generating, open coding, constant comparison, memo-writing, selective coding and theoretical sampling. In addition to these, I participated in grounded theory working groups at the University of Strathclyde, and delivered (and had published) papers on my work. I have written the thesis in the first person. This style more intimately conveys my journey of discovery

into grounded theory. It also accommodates my role as research instrument than a more conventional third person reportage.

I experienced the inherent ambiguities of grounded theory research. For a great deal of the project I was unclear on what the study was really about. In searching for the core variable I made several false starts as a result of my confusion, at times forcing the data.

To position the theory I compared it with existing literature in the substantive area. I called upon works from management consulting, professional services and knowledge intensive firms. I noted that elements of personal legitimising are represented in the data, although a similar empirically based, but conceptual explanation was not found. This helps the theory's claim of originality and validity. The literature review sensitised me to the difficulties of comparing the fruits of grounded theory study with other research. In particular, this recognised that a grounded theory is typically 'process' rather than 'structure' based; its explanatory powers are likely to cut across conventional academic disciplines; it outlines an integrated theory, but from the descriptive data; and the method embraces both origination and verification.

I believe my study helps further illuminate grounded theory for other researchers. More importantly, it introduces new research opportunities and should help inform practitioners. Personal legitimising has import in the areas of human resource management in the context of management consultancy, strategy and marketing management. It helps explain why systemised marketing management is troubled in this context. The human resources perspective recognises the challenge of creating appealing working environments for people who are readily employable elsewhere. This recognises that those organisations who are 'knowledge intensive' compete for staff as well as clients. An enlightened view may suggest an allowance of personally legitimised actions as a staff inducement. The strategy issue recognises that individuals'

actions have a consequential impact on organisation direction and competence. Such actions influence strategic momentum. Given that personal legitimising identifies strategies for which an individual need obtain no explicit permission, organisations could benefit from being wise to the processes and consequences of such influence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

The thesis comprises seven numerically designated chapters. Each contains sections representing the chapter's main themes. Some are broken down further into subsections to help structure the content. References shown in the text are listed in alphabetical order of author surname in the bibliography which follows chapter seven. Notes, indicated in the text by super-positioned numerals, appear at the end of each chapter.

FIGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis introduces the social process of Personal Legitimising. This is a
substantive theory which has emerged from my grounded theory study into the
marketing and business development practices of management consultants.

This introductory chapter explains the background to the development of the theory,
and the structure for the thesis document. It comprises five sections.

The first (1.1) explains the substantive grounded theory of personal legitimising.
This theory is the core of my thesis. The second section (1.2) introduces the research
context and the third (1.3), the research strategy. The fourth section (1.4) explains
how I believe this thesis contributes to knowledge. The fifth and final section (1.5)
outlines the structure of this document, helping the reader navigate along the course
of my arguments.

1.1   Introduction to Personal Legitimising

Personal legitimising is how people use and influence their working environment to suit themselves. It exists because people seek autonomy in their work.

Personal legitimising has been discovered from the context of management consulting. It is presented in its emergent form as a theoretical explanation of behaviour in that substantive area.

Personal legitimising has two sub-core variables, 'aligning' and 'defending'. Aligning involves processes that individuals use to bring their working domain into harmony with personal agendas. Defending encompasses processes individuals use to retain areas of activity they feel are legitimately theirs. Personal legitimising reveals a group of six behavioural strategies, each of which is a category of the theory. These follow.

Opportunist accommodating

Within opportunist accommodating the person sees an opportunity to integrate an element of their personal agenda with their work priorities. This happens on a piecemeal/opportunistic basis. People seem to exercise self indulgence within the bounds of freedom that their circumstances permits. They accommodate self indulgence within the tasks their organisation asks of them. Their actions seem to have little impact on their organisation's direction.

Sequential impressioning

Sequential impressioning involves a person's progressive shaping of their work environment in accordance with personal agendas. Providing people operate within

the remit of their role, the style and direction of their endeavours remains largely unchallenged. However, actions within sequential impressioning have a consequential impact on the organisation's strategy. The direction of the organisation becomes shaped by the undiscussed actions of those within. Data suggests this is the dominant form of personal legitimising.

Voluntary championing

This is where an individual seeks to dramatically re-align the direction and scope of their work. They seek permission to acquire new territory. This creates a step change in their freedom to operate. If successful, their area of legitimate activity changes, giving a broader arena for opportunistic accommodating and sequential impressioning.

Support mustering

Substantial shifts in the area of legitimate activity can be achieved through support mustering. This involves pulling together an influential group to 'change the rules' around which they and others operate. Whereas voluntary championing is primarily a singular activity, support mustering involves collusion with others, due to the magnitude of change.

This was the least frequent category of personal legitimising reflected in the study.

Pseudo endorsing

Pseudo endorsing involves situations where an individual agrees to support a direction or decision, then impedes its progress by withholding the resources necessary to accomplish the task. No approval is sought for the behaviour at the time of doing. It involves giving 'lip service' to an unrequited area of responsibility, to enable the pursuance of more appealing interests.

Retrospective Justifying

Retrospective justifying involves the 'after the event' justification of one's actions to colleagues. It happens when a person's behaviour is questioned and involves the response to such questions. The term 'justifying' is involved because an individual selects the most appropriate line and style of argument for the situation.

The theory is explained more fully in chapter five. This is preceded by chapter four, which describes the analysis and synthesis of data which led to personal legitimising.

1.2 Introduction to the research context

This section introduces the research context that led to the theory's discovery. I began my study in 1994. Explained below are my reasons for interest in this area, and the implications of this context on the substantive nature of the theory.

1.2.1 The management consulting sector

Personal legitimising emerged from a study based around a small UK firm of management consultants.

Prior to starting the study, I investigated the size and nature of the UK management consulting market. Key Note(1994: 148) reported that there were over 20,000 management consultancy enterprises in the UK in 1993. The data showed this had risen by 75% between 1989 and 1993. Keynote predicted that this sector would continue to grow. A breakdown of the UK management consultancy market is shown in figure one.

Figure one: 1993 breakdown of UK management consultancy market

UK Management Consultancy Enterprises (1993)		
Annual Turnover (£000)	Number of Enterprises	% of Total Enterprises
1 - 34	7,412	35.9
35 - 49	3,986	19.3
50 - 99	5,000	24.2
100 - 249	2,602	12.6
250 - 499	844	4.1
500 - 999	431	2.1
1,000 - 4,999	305	1.5
5,000+	77	0.4
Total	20,657	100.0

Source: KeyNote, 1994: 148

This data suggests a high degree of variation within this overall sector. Fifty five percent of management consultancy enterprises had an annual turnover below fifty thousand pounds sterling. These were more likely to be sole practitioners who view consulting as what may be described as a 'lifestyle'[1] occupation. An expedient route to a modest income. At the other end of the spectrum there is the zero point four percent of enterprises whose annual turnover exceeds five million pounds sterling per annum. These dominate the financial value of the sector. These firms include the more prominent names in the industry, and embrace the consulting arms of the major accounting practices.

The setting for my research is management consulting firms whose financial turnover suggests they provide a livelihood for others than the principal. They have an identity in their own right. However, they lack some of the characteristics of the bigger consulting firms. It is in this area that my experience lies, both as a member of, and consultant to, management consulting firms.

1.2.2 Why this area interests me

I was drawn to this area of study through my experience as a consultant.

I entered management consulting without a great theoretical insight into the sector. I gained experience as a founder of small consulting enterprises and as a director of a medium sized management consulting and training firm. This, coupled with my involvement as a supplier of services to management consulting clients, generated substantial practical insights during the four and a half years before I initiated this study. I enjoy consulting. I am fascinated by the practices and dynamics of that world. I witnessed the growth of the sector. All of this contributed to my enthusiasm for this area.

A second contributory factor was my reflection that marketing for a consulting enterprise seemed very different to that of other organisations. My role as a marketing consultant gave me first hand exposure to this. I became aware of the spontaneity and opportunism within the consulting arena compared to the more planned approaches used effectively by other sectors. I felt this distinction merited investigation. Finally, I was aware of the trend towards knowledge working and its growing importance across many types of organisation in management consultancy. I believed there might be parallels between this future direction and my own activities as a consultant.

My relationship with management consulting could not be described as dispassionate. However, such has implications on my approach to the study. This is examined more fully in chapter two, 'Pre-understanding' and chapter three, 'Research methodology'.

1.2.3 Characteristics of this context

Above I noted the range of enterprises embraced under the heading of management consulting. As a substantive theory, personal legitimising is contextually specific. Its context represents a fraction, rather than the entirety of management consulting.

Prior to the study I considered the characteristics that my specific research context exhibits. They were:

- consultants are likely to have the dual role of selling as well as delivering consultancy contracts;
- the firm and its staff have financial targets;
- remuneration is associated with an individual's income generation ability;

- consultants need to be proactive in their quest for work as their firms are unlikely to have the 'following wind' of a high brand profile;
- it is more likely that the founder(s) still practise in the firm which, combined with these firms being more intimate and less bureaucratic, means a greater likelihood of entrepreneurial and opportunistic behaviour;
- consultants have a large amount of scope in the nature of work they provide and for whom.

As the research progressed I began to understand the importance of these characteristics more clearly. Chapter six, 'Literature comparison', introduces information which helps refine contextual properties of this substantive theory. Chapter seven, "Findings and implications", considers the possible impact of this theory on this and related contexts.

1.3 Research strategy

This section introduces the grounded theory research strategy. It briefly outlines the principles behind the method and then explains my reasons for using it.

1.3.1 Adoption of grounded theory

Personal legitimising followed my application of orthodox grounded theory method. This involves the study starting with data generation and analysis, moving into theory synthesis, and finishing with a retrospective literature comparison. Barney Glaser, co-founder of grounded theory along with Anselm Strauss, summarises the method as follows.

"The grounded theory approach is a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area." Glaser (1992: 16)

Miles and Huberman (1994: 6) state, "grounded theory shares much with other qualitative oriented methodology. It is concerned with understanding the normal occurrences of everyday life. The researcher becomes the measurement device of the study and his or her preconceptions of that area need careful, deliberate handling. The aim is a holistic overview of a context through an empathetic understanding of the area in question."

Grounded theory is based upon the philosophical assumption that the world is socially organised and constructed. Put more colloquially, grounded theory seeks to discover the logic of people's lives, (Lowe 1996: 4). Andy Lowe (1996: 4) sees the grounded theorist's job as twofold. "First to discover which patterns of behaviour exist. Second how these processes of socialisation are sustained."

Layder (1993:39) sees grounded theory characterised by a higher order of theoretical insight. "It is concerned neither with description pure and simple nor a theoretical description." Indeed, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 160) suggest the major difference between grounded theory and other approaches to qualitative research is its emphasis on theory development. The result of a grounded theory study is an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses (Glaser 1998: 3) which provides a theoretical explanation of behaviours evidenced by the action and inclination of people rather than preconceived frameworks.

1.3.2   Why the method interests me

My acquaintance with grounded theory coincided with the start of this research. Grounded theory's ability to create an explanation of behaviour beyond a simple description of what people are doing led me select this method very early in the project. However, my affinity with grounded theory is more deeply rooted. Since 1989 I have worked as a management consultant, specialising in marketing for small firms. Prior to this I worked in marketing and business development positions in manufacturing organisations. In both roles I have appreciated the difference in how marketing happens in organisations and some of the marketing procedures asserted in textbooks, for example the difference between marketing planning theory and practice. My professional concern of helping people and organisations develop has conditioned me to the importance of context in the creation of effective strategies. My inclination is towards building from ground up rather than the superimposition of an external theoretical construct. Chapter three, 'Research methodology', expands on my justification for grounded theory.

As explanatory research, the direction of activity became more focused as the study progressed and personal legitimising emerged as the core variable. Many times I was

unable to make sense of my data. Similarly there were times when my research direction was tangential to the final theory. This, and how I dealt with and managed these periods of confusion, is also shown in chapter three.

1.4 How I believe this research contributes to knowledge

I offer the theory of personal legitimising for consideration in accordance with the three parameters of originality, research methodology, and relevance. I believe personal legitimising's strongest contributions are in the areas of originality and relevance.

Personal legitimising provides original insight into the behaviour of those within the research context. It gives a label, descriptions, and identifies categories of behaviour and an integrated conceptual explanation of the data. It accounts for what is intimated to varying degrees in the literature under the headings of management consulting, relationship marketing, and issue selling. Chapter six is a comparison between personal legitimising and literature in the substantive and related areas.

Personal legitimising has a relevance to primarily two communities, researchers and practitioners. To the research community if provides a platform for its generation into a formal theory of behaviour. This recognises that all formal grounded theory starts with a substantive theory (Layder 1993: 43). It also prompts further investigation into its categories and its grounding in other substantive areas. The synthesis of the data took this study along routes which had to be left undeveloped as they fell outwith the scope of this thesis.

To the practitioner personal legitimising presents insight into the more effective management of individuals within an organisation. It also sheds light onto the corporate activities of marketing management and strategy development by bringing influence and constraints on such to the notice of practitioners. Though explained from the position of this subset of management consulting, the practitioner audience will note implications on other knowledge workers. Personal legitimising resonates with the readers of papers and the conference participants and interviews with whom

I have shared its development, suggesting an application of its ideas beyond this initial research context.

All grounded theory could be argued as methodologically original. It is a method which, once adopted, requires adaptation to the particular research project. This study is based on the competent application of grounded theory technique, though it does not purport to represent a significant step forwards. The use of journal articles and conference papers as part of the process might introduce a degree of novelty. The use of grounded theory in this particular subset of management consulting may also be an original use of the method. Academics with methodological interest and researchers may value the insights into the practical use of grounded theory that the discovery of personal legitimising has enabled.

1.5   Structure of the thesis

The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the main aspects of this research project. It has outlined the grounded theory of personal legitimising, making clear this is a substantive theory in an emergent state. It has revealed research context and method, together with my interest in both. By now readers will have begun to assimilate a picture of what lies ahead.

The next part, chapter two, is devoted to pre-understanding. Within grounded theory the researcher aims to "remove intellectual baggage and have no pre-conceived ideas about what the research might find". (Parry 1998: 93). This explains what I believed my pre-conceptions were and how I attempted to manage them in the research process.

Chapter three, 'Research methodology', builds on from the earlier introduction to research strategy. It explains how I applied the rudiments of grounded theory. It describes my research activities and direction. It concludes by reflecting on my experience of this, my first grounded theory research project.

In the subsequent chapter, chapter four, 'Analysis and synthesis of data', attention moves from research method towards context. It provides insight into the fruits of my application of grounded theory technique. It outlines the open codes which resulted from the fracturing of data. The chapter then moves to describe the directions the synthesis of these codes into more conceptual explanations took. The chapter concludes by leading into the grounded theory of personal legitimising.

In chapter five a full explanation of the categories, properties and other characteristics of personal legitimising is offered. It draws upon indicators from

theoretical memos to help understanding. This represents the result of the grounded theory research element in this study.

Chapter six is the retrospective literature comparison. In keeping with the convention of grounded theory research, the literature review follows the disclosure of the empirically based theory. The purpose of the literature comparison is to examine any relationship between the new theory and that documented in the literature. Its aim is to position rather than justify the study's insight. As a substantive theory, the literature review is concerned with work in the substantive area in question.

Finally, chapter seven, 'Findings and implications' discusses the learning from and possible consequences of this project. It approaches the theory's originality by summarising the results of the literature comparison. It examines the implication of the theory on practitioner and research audiences. To finish it reflects on the insight into grounded theory method afforded by this research opportunity.

Notes:

[1] Management consultant, author and broadcaster David Hall uses the term "lifestyle business" to describe an enterprise whose primary motive is a means of income generation to fund the principal's livelihood. Such enterprises are usually small, often single person ventures.

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2   PRE-UNDERSTANDING

This chapter explains my point of departure in the research; my pre-understanding. It does this in five parts.

The first (2.1) introduces the concept of pre-understanding and describes its relevance to inductive work and this grounded theory study. The second (2.2) outlines the original research proposition around which my pre-understanding was focused. The third (2.3) describes my exposure to the context under study, thus giving the roots to my pre-understanding. The fourth section (2.4) explains my pre-understanding at the point of departure during the research. The fifth and final section (2.5) comments on my use of pre-understanding and considers how I would approach this issue in future research.

2.1   The concept of pre-understanding

This section is concerned with the concept of pre-understanding. As Evert Gummesson (1991: 12) explains,

"the concept of pre-understanding refers to people's insights into a specific problem and social environment before they start a research problem or consulting assignment".

This section addresses the importance of pre-understanding in grounded theory study. It explains what pre-understanding entails and how it might be handled in research of this nature.

2.1.1   Importance of pre-understanding

The importance of pre-understanding stems from the researcher's role as a research instrument in grounded theory study. In particular, the method's dependence on the parsimonious handling of original data. Glaser states,

"a researcher can have sociological interest which yields a research problem and then looks for a substantive area or population with which to study it. But this is not grounded theory. It is a preconceived forcing of the data."

That is not to say that pre-understanding is purely an interference in investigatory work. It, with appropriate use, represents another data source. As Glaser and Strauss explain (1967: 252), the researcher is able to "cultivate crucial insights during his research (and from his research), but from his own personal experiences prior to, or outside it".

2.1.2 Dimensions to pre-understanding

Above, I noted that pre-understanding involves the insights a researcher possesses before he or she embarks on an investigation. It represents a point of departure. This could be compared with the concept of understanding which is the insights gained during a research programme. Pre-understanding is an input and understanding an output.

There are three dimensions to pre-understanding that I believe relevant.

The first relates to the distinction between experiences and theoretical outlook. Habitat and our interactions with it provide reference points and experiences which influence how we might perceive similar or related situations in the future. Our insight here is contextually derived. It is the accumulation of micro-involvements. In addition to this, our insight might be influenced by our dominant view of the world. For example, a feminist and a Marxist may draw different interpretations of the same incident. It is easy to envisage the pitfalls of researchers gathering information and only applying their favoured theoretical framework as a means of explaining the data. Layder (1993: 53) explains that one of grounded theory's appeals is that it "moves away from the idea that 'producing' theory is something of a sacrosanct activity reserved only for those who have been initiated into the mysteries of some 'master' framework or perspective". Grounded theorists need to consider their pre-understanding at a theoretical and an incident level.

Second, is the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge. Altheide and Johnson (1998: 300) explain that tacit knowledge is what people take for granted and leave unexplained in specific contexts. It is the unconscious manifestation of their experience. They suggest the essential attribute of tacit knowledge is what it contributes to a person's definition of a situation. An individual is aware of his or

her explicit knowledge. They readily see its influence on a situation. The point is that it may be easier for a researcher to account for his or her explicit rather than tacit knowledge. Unless one is aware of the phenomenon, one might blissfully ignore the impact of tacit knowledge as a component of pre-understanding. Yet such would clearly be to the detriment of the research endeavour.

Third is the recognition that pre-understanding develops. It changes as the research project progresses. Gummesson (1991: 62) refers to the "hermeneutic spiral" as a representation of how, as research progresses, the researcher sees the 'understanding' from one phase of the research becoming the 'pre-understanding' for the next. The development of pre-understanding is continual. The part of this chapter devoted to the statement of my pre-understanding shows the nature of this, the moment this research task was started. It is a snapshot at a moment in time, much in the same way that a balance sheet reflects an organisation's finances at a particular instant.

2.1.3 Handling pre-understanding

The influence of the researcher's own experience on research findings is illustrated by Burgess (1984: 89). Pre-understanding cannot be ignored, the issue is how it is accommodated during the research. It may be considered 'honesty of the researcher' as the biggest obstacle in grounded theory. Honesty means avoiding projection of meaning onto data. Pre-understanding, on one hand provides an accelerated start. On the other it provides a mind set to blinker ability to truly capture the essence of a situation.

Debate exists on the extent to which a researcher might conduct grounded theory in a manner free from bias and prejudice (see Henwood and Pidgeon 1992: 105). It is hard though to imagine research of any form being conducted by anyone without an interest in the particular situation. Mills (1959: 195) even suggests the converse.

"The most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community ... do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other."

Mills and Huberman (1994: 38) suggest that researchers should be both experienced and multi-disciplined in order to undertake sound qualitative investigation; experienced in order to be acquainted with handling of personal bias; multi-disciplined to avoid "'plastering' a ready made explanation or phenomenon that could be construed in more interesting ways". This relates to the earlier comment on a researcher's theoretical perspective, this time broadening it to take account of functional aspects (for example, marketing, operations management). Sadly, a researcher is able to do little about his or her experience and background on the eve of a study.

Some researchers claim the ability to isolate (or 'bracket') their biases. I found that difficult, but the following are suggested as ways of helping cope with pre-understanding.

First, to be aware of it. The ability to recognise and appreciate pre-understanding will enhance a researcher's ability to approach data more prudently.

Second, to write it down. The act of consigning pre-understanding to paper helps remind the researcher of his or her point of departure. It may also help those interested in the research output to understand the researcher's perspective more clearly.

Third, to be sensitive to data that is vague and open to various interpretations. This can be handled by asking supplementary questions about the data to help define the

intended meaning, seeking confirmation of it from other sources and by theoretical sampling later in the investigation.

Fourth, to accommodate pre-understanding as data. To recognise either as opinion or conjecture in theoretical memos. By involving it in the grounded theory process it can be considered more objectively. To treat it in the same manner as any other data involves the researcher in exploring the nature of the pre-understanding, seeking contextual conditions and linkages with other data within an emerging theory. The application of constant comparison and other grounded theory principles helps the researcher make pre-understanding account for itself.

My research centres on a context with which I have a great deal of experience. This is one of the reasons I devote a chapter to pre-understanding. The following section shows the intended direction of my research at the time I embarked on the research project. This illuminates the research context. The next two sections describe my contextual exposure and pre-understanding respectively.

2.2 The original research idea for the study

This was my original research idea.

My research will study how (such) management consultancy firms develop business.

This statement dates from 30th March 1995 and was taken from a working paper I produced outlining the research design of my pilot study. The word 'such' refers to the category of management consulting described in section 1.2.

The research started with broad scope. It set parameters for the context and intimated an interest in the mechanics of business generation. As with grounded theory, I was not in a position to be more definite or accurate at this stage. Although grounded theory is not purely an inductive methodology, its tenet is the emergence of an, as yet unrecognised, explanation of social behaviour from a strategic setting. The expanse of this particular strategic setting gave me the task of considering my opinions and perceptions of the many dimensions therein. I needed to reflect on my views on research method, marketing and business development, the selling of professional services, the behaviour of smaller firms, the behaviour of corporate clients and the mechanics of management consultancy. I had experience in, and opinions on all of these. The next section summarises this contextual exposure to help give an appreciation of the roots to my pre-understanding.

2.3   My contextual exposure

This section describes the roots of my pre-understanding.

Since 1989 I have worked as a management consultant. This has involved three different contexts. First, setting up a four person marketing consultancy focusing on providing guidance for small and medium sized enterprises in the north east of England. Second, as marketing director of a UK based consultancy and training firm employing eighty people. This concentrated on the development of enterprise and small firms in the UK. Third, as principal of my own small consultancy and training venture which provides marketing and business development guidance to small firms, public sector bodies, and charitable ventures primarily in the UK.

Within these, I believe five factors shaped my views and approaches to understanding organisational behaviour.

First is close association with entrepreneurs, both as clients and business associates. I moved into management consultancy from the momentum and frustration of corporate life. I experienced first hand, and for the first time, the bias for action, considered risk taking, and the high locus of control of entrepreneurial behaviour.

Second is what could be described as the 'marketing gulf'. This relates to the gap that at that time, I believe, existed between formal understanding of marketing and the practicalities of marketing for smaller firms. For example, earlier I made the distinction between the theory and practice of marketing management. This manifested itself in two ways. First is for our consultancy approach to be based around what we learned from other smaller firms. It was not written in the marketing textbooks.

Second, this prompted us to initiate and fund an academic study into the business development practices of successful smaller firms. This leads onto the third factor.

Third is the power and excitement of well executed inductive research. Working with the Small Business Centre at Durham University Business School we conducted an action research study of thirty 'role model' small and medium sized enterprises over eighteen months. The data synthesis and theoretical conceptualisation processes had similarities with my understanding of a grounded theory approach, although I did not know this at the time. I experienced the revelation of the unforeseen, and the receptivity of the audience when they saw their own behaviour and processes articulated by their findings. The research became the foundation of a book, a TV series and several development programmes for advisers and bank managers working with smaller firms.[1]

Fourth is an extension of the above, namely the power of association. I experienced the credibility gained through the association with Durham University Business School, producing a book, and working with the BBC on a TV series. On reflection I was experiencing some of the dimensions of credentialising.

Fifth, and finally, is the messiness of strategic management within smaller firms. Working as a director of a consulting firm, I experienced strong organisational growth in a context of haphazard governance.

Having outlined my contextual exposure, the following section builds on from this and records my pre-understanding at the start of the study.

2.4 My pre-understanding

In March 1995 I wrote down my pre-understanding. This is shown below. I prepared this in advance of my fully coming to terms with the breadth and role of pre-understanding as described in section 2.1. However, it reflects the orientation I believed I possessed at the start of the project.

- Small – (UK) Government classification of an SME (small and medium sized enterprise) is under 250 employees. My belief is that a small business is a behavioural issue rather than a grading of employment size. The small firm is an extension of the individual's personality and its primary objective is not necessarily one of wealth creation.

- Network - I believe that one's network of contacts is critical to the success of the professional services firm. I also believe that effective networks are time dependent, meaning there is a gestation period of over two years before a network contact can be expected to provide significant advantages.

- Push or Plan - Behind the use of intangible assets is a belief that practitioners are pushed into taking opportunities by external events, rather than planning to create them. This centres around the inertia of an established comfort zone of business owners and how external forces undermine it.

- Branding - I believe anything is capable of being effectively branded, and the concept of expertly assigning a 'personality' to a branded offering elicits a greater than rational positive response from human beings. Within the consultancy arena this includes publishing books (Professor Kevan Scholes, joint author of 'Exploring corporate strategy' described this as the "reverence

of the written word")[2], creating special events (e.g. conferences) and packaging training materials as a sales tool for winning consultancy clients.

- Reputation by Association - I believe it is easy for a consultancy firm to create a 'position' in a market through the techniques of reputation by association. This includes links with 'gurus', academic institutions and media channels.

- Companies are their clients - The ultimate reflection of a firm's position is its client base, and as a consequence of inactivity with intangible assets a consultancy firm's position will be driven by the demands and profile of its client base.

- Know How - As an intangible asset, the aspect of know how I believe falls below the aspect of networks (know who) and reputation (known for), as a marketing tool.

- Marketing - I believe that marketing is central to the performance of organisations. However, marketing's own rapid development as a discipline has rendered it too multi-faceted to be a meaningful label on its own. My interest is in an activity which might be deemed a sub-set of marketing but also could be housed within organisational development and strategic management arenas.

- Research - My bias is for research that provides answers. I am influenced by my work as a consultant where clients' objectives are directly linked to methodologies and budgets. Here I am embarking on a journey of far greater rigour and uncertainty than experience to date has offered.

I have reproduced this unedited. The above is what I believed I knew about the research area and my biases thereof. One of my reasons for documenting the pre-understanding was to give me a reference point to reflect upon as my research progressed. The next section offers a critique on my use of pre-understanding in this study.

2.5 Comments on the use of pre-understanding

I make several observations regarding my pre-understanding.

The first relates to the Johari Window model of human insight.[3] The approach distinguishes between information an individual is aware that he or she possesses and that which is unapparent to oneself. (Luft 1961: 6) I documented only what I believed I knew. With hindsight I suspect I wasn't particularly thorough. It is perhaps inadequate. As the research progressed, I became aware of other reference points or anchors for the research data from my own experience. I believe this would have existed whether I had tried more diligently to state my pre-understanding. However, the process of writing down and referring back to my pre-understanding drew this to my attention.

I also recognise I set down pre-understanding around the believed research question. Section 2.4 relates to the original research ideas of studying how management consultancy firms develop business. My study is about personal legitimising. This destination was a revelation. The articulation of pre-understanding around an unanticipated area of interest must be difficult to achieve. The above points lead to the use of a researcher's unwritten pre-understanding as perhaps the significant issue.

I experienced a shift from understanding to pre-understanding as the research progressed. My final pre-understanding is documented in chapter five which explains the grounded theory of personal legitimising together with chapter seven which considers its implications and reflects on this study's findings. This represents my point of departure for my next project. It shows my initial framing of the research agenda.

Different researchers will make different interpretations. The individual is the research instrument. Grounded theory does not after all have to meet with the requirement of replication. It aims for a general theoretical level which has tremendous applicability; replication being for evidentiary studies around hypotheses. I attempted to be honest through the overt statement of my source of data as I developed theoretical memos. This included my experience (which I could illuminate by examples and stories) or conjecture based on my instinct. Naturally this must be done with parsimony. The constant comparison process within grounded theory is a self correcting mechanism on theory generation. Pre-understanding needs to be treated like other data, and subject to the same process. It has no right to short cuts. Failure to do this leaves grounded theory abused as a disguise for prejudices and experiences. The next chapter outlines the method and analytical rules I applied in theory generation.

I reflect on whether it was valuable to me to write down my pre-understanding prior to commencing this particular piece of research. My view is yes it was, but not to the degree I believed it would. The discipline of attempting to treat pre-understanding consciously helped me focus on its importance. Without having taken this step I would have been unlikely to have commented on its use as I have. Yet, in practice much of the pre-understanding I called on in the generation of the theory came from the re-kindling of my subconscious. I don't believe my theory has been made richer by my recording of pre-understanding. Where the research needs to be particularly scrupulous is in the handling of pre-understanding stimulated by other research data. In other words, the awakening from the subconscious or the transfer from memory to the forefront of the mind.

Notes:

[1] The so-called 'Hallmarks' research emerged as a paper written by Dinah Bennett, entitled 'Customer Commitment – the Recipe for Success', published in Small Business and Small Business Development, R. Welford (Ed), European Business Press, 1991. The findings provided the foundation for 'Hallmarks for Successful Business' by David Hall, published by Management Books 2000 in 1992, and the BBC TV's 'Winning' series of programmes aimed at managers within UK small and medium sized enterprises. I was involved in this and the resultant development programmes offered by Durham University Business School for business advisers and practitioners.

[2] This quote comes from a meeting between Kevan Scholes and myself in 1993. He was reflecting on the success of his book 'Exploring Corporate Strategy' and the impact it has had on his career. At that time Professor Scholes was head of the Business School at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK.

[3] The Johari Window was created by Joe Luft and Harry Ingram in 1955. It illustrates relationships between people in terms of self. Offered as a four box grid, it distinguishes between that which is 'known' and 'not known' to self, with that which is 'known' and 'not known' to others. It is primarily used in training and counselling.

3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology. It explains the activities that formed the research project and the reasons for choosing to conduct the study in this way. It is divided into three sections.

The first (3.1) deals with research design. This outlines the activities within the study. It provides an overall description of the process, gives the primary and secondary data sources from which personal legitimising has emerged, and describes how I obtained access. The second (3.2) explains the procedures I adopted during the research together with how I adapted and applied the elements of grounded theory in this study. The third (3.3) justifies my use of grounded theory. It also contains a critique of my application of grounded theory.

3.1 Research design

This section describes the design of the study. It is divided into five subsections. The first outlines the purpose of the research. The second documents the sequence of activities in the study as its research chronology. The third explains how I derived access to the research context. The fourth documents the research activities and data generating work I undertook. The fifth and final explains how the research design evolved as the study progressed.

3.1.1 Purpose of the research

As stated in the previous chapter, the original purpose of the research was to study how smaller management consulting firms developed their business.

This was a loose definition intended to provide an initial contextual boundary to research. The nature of a resultant grounded theory is rarely predictable. The research setting provides a location for the emergent theory and its transition to consciousness. Lowes' (1998) illumination of the remodelling of relationships post merger, drawn from a banking context, and Simmon's (1993) client cultivation techniques revealed from a study of a milk delivery service pay testament to this.

This initial purpose served to help initiate my research activity, but I allowed the project to move forwards without feeling the need to continually reorientate back to this.

3.1.2 Research chronology

This section charts the nature and sequence of activities in the study. The purpose of including this is to provide an anchor around which to expand on the particular approaches I elected to follow. Figure two below shows the research chronology.

Figure two: Research chronology for this grounded theory study showing the significant activities.

Activity	Description	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	Decision to research management consulting						
2	Research method familiarisation						
3	Decision to use grounded theory						
4	Active participation' with consulting firm						
5	Documentation of pre-understanding						
6	Negotiated access for pilot						
7	Pilot study field work						
8	Extension of access						
9	Coding/sorting/writing - pilot study						
10	Doctoral colloquium paper						
11	Grounded theory seminar - Dublin						
12	First awareness of 'personal legitimising'						
13	Academy of Marketing 'personal legitimising' paper						
14	Decision to involve 'clients'						
15	Negotiated access to clients						
16	Clients' field work						
17	Coding/sorting/writing - consultants' perspective						
18	Marketing/Entrepreneurship paper						
19	Grounded theory study group formed						
20	Coding/sorting/writing - clients' perspective						
21	Customer Research Academy paper						
22	Annual review meeting						
23	Grounded theory workshop - Brussels						
24	Re-coding of data						
25	Selective coding, 'personal preferencing'						
26	Awareness of 'implicit' legitimacy						
27	Theoretical sampling/coding/writing personal legitimising						
28	Organisational tolerance' recognised						
29	Awareness of categories within personal legitimising						
30	Literature comparison						
31	Grounded theory workshop - Paris						
32	Writing thesis						

The overall research design follows orthodox grounded theory as advocated by Glaser. This starts with an outline area of interest and moves through the setting down of pre-understanding to fieldwork. The analysis and synthesis of data governs the direction and duration of data generation. The middle of the chronology shows the stages in the data generation, analysis and synthesis activity. Only after a theoretical explanation of the data has developed, is a literature search undertaken. The literature search is comparative. Its purpose is to position the resultant grounded theory within existing academic insight.

In addition to this use of grounded theory, there are three methodological distinctions which influenced the design of the research. These are writing journal articles and conference papers, attending and participating in grounded theory events, and membership of a grounded theory studies group.

The following subsections expand on the above. They look at the context from which the theory emerged, how I worked in the context to generate data, and the research practices I adopted within the grounded theory framework.

3.1.3   Research context and access

This section explains the context from which the theory was derived, and how I negotiated access.

The initial setting for this study is a UK based management consultancy firm. This firm is a medium size enterprise within the UK management consultancy sector. The firm is privately owned, employs around twenty five people, and has two locations, London and Bristol. It was established in the early nineteen eighties. As well as providing management consultancy support to clients, it has associated and separately branded ventures in executive outplacement, executive recruitment and, more recently, publishing. The firm's consultancy specialism is organisational psychology and behavioural sciences. Its client base is national and international 'bluechip' private sector organisations and government departments.

The main attraction of this firm to me was that it is primarily a consultancy business rather than an offshoot of an accountancy practice. It wins its work as a result of its own endeavour and competence rather than as a result of introductions from an audit base. It is not a 'bolt on' service of a more powerful commercial enterprise. I saw it as more in control of its own direction.

I believe the route by which I was able to negotiate access was a major contributor to the quality of data I was able to generate. During late 1994 I was engaged by the Business Link in Bristol in the South West of England[1] to provide a marketing skills workshop series for fifteen small and medium sized enterprises in the Bristol area. One of the participants on the programme was the chairman (and owner) of the consultancy firm.

My first interaction with the chairman took place in November 1994 and involved a phone conversation between the two of us following his note of interest in the marketing skills workshops, stimulated by the Business Link's promotion. We had a frank discussion during which I was able to talk about my own experiences in helping build a consultancy firm and how the firm of which I was marketing director had benefited from profile resulting from publishing a book and a business programme on BBC television.

The consultancy firm became a client. The chairman attended three of my workshops and I visited his firm's Bristol and London offices. I began to assimilate and document information on his firm's marketing processes.

On the 4th of April 1995, after the marketing skills programme had finished, I phoned the chairman to ask for his help in preliminary research with my PhD, explaining that in return for access to his colleague's time I would work on any project for his organisation that he considered suitable. By this time we had established a good working relationship. The firm was establishing a new publishing venture and wanted someone to investigate the feasibility of attracting venture capital. I explained my links with venture capitalists and he agreed to discuss my proposition with his fellow managers and directors. I contacted him later in that week and he gave me 'agreement in principle' and invited me to make a presentation to his

management team at their Bristol office on 10th April 1995. My presentation was the final agenda item at that month's management meeting. The purpose of the meeting to the firm was for the other directors and consultants to 'vet' me as someone with whom they would be prepared to be associated. The meeting was positive and I was granted access to the firm and its staff.

The original agreement was that the firm would help me gain insights as a pilot study. This study would take a total time of about two weeks and involve me spending time at the Bristol and London offices, observing the style and nature of work, reading relevant materials and reports, talking to the consultants and administration support staff on an informal and formal basis. My intention was to use this experience as a springboard to then develop a grounded theory through working with other management consultancy firms.

The firm is regularly approached by research students through its links with a major UK business school, but declines requests for access. I believe I was successful for four reasons. First I had established a good working relationship with the firm's chairman and majority shareholder through my marketing consultancy work with the firm. Second, I believe they were both interested in the idea of grounded theory research and saw it as 'non threatening'. By this I mean it did not involve an up-front request for specific and intimate material. My intention was 'to hang around a workplace and find out what's going on'.. Third, my request coincided with the firm's interest in venture capital, the scope for reciprocity was clear. Fourth, my request was for only two weeks of involvement to enable me to get my research underway, not viewed as a major or potentially major inconvenience to them.

I had established access to facilitate the start of my study. Later, this chapter explains how I developed my access as the direction of the research evolved. The next

subsection outlines the research interventions I applied in the discovery of the core variable.

3.1.4 Research activities

This notes the main sources of data used in the study.

The following three tables note the face to face interviews and meetings which formed the basis for data creation. The research included 41 interviews involving 27 people from 10 organisations. Figure three below shows the date of interaction, the occasion, the duration of the interaction, the number of the person and firm in the study, whether the interview was taped or not, and the activity stage in the research project (this relates to Figure two, research chronology, shown earlier).

Figure three : Summary of interview and meeting interactions in this study

Date	Occasion	Duration (minutes)	Person (number)	Firm (number)	Taped	Activity
1/12/94	Joint participation in marketing workshop	150	1	1	N	4
19/1/95	Joint participation in marketing workshop	390	1	1	N	4
8/2/95	Consultancy meeting on site	120	1	1	N	4
29/3/95	Member of audience in a presentation on firm	40	1	1	N	4
10/4/95	Meeting with consultancy firm management team	30	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1	N	5
10/4/95	Meeting to discuss venture capital	30	1, 2	1	N	5
10/4/95	Interview with director of subsidiary	35	6	1	N	5
10/4/95	Interview with admin. manager	15	4	1	N	5
10/4/95	Interview with company accountant	40	7	1	N	5
20/4/95	Interview with senior consultant	40	8	1	N	5
20/4/95	Interview with director of subsidiary	35	6	1	N	5

20/4/95	Interview with director of subsidiary	60	9	1	N	5
20/4/95	Lunch meeting	90	9, 10	1	N	5
20/4/95	Interview with administrator	20	11	1	N	5
20/4/95	Interview with administrator	30	12	1	N	5
24/4/95	Meeting to discuss firm's marketing	55	1, 10	1	N	5
24/4/95	Interview with senior consultant	55	13	1	N	5
24/4/95	Interview with chairman	60	1	1	N	5
24/4/95	Lunch meeting with chairman	95	1	1	N	5
26/4/95	Interview with administrator	35	5	1	N	5
26/4/95	Interview with administrator	15	14	1	N	5
26/4/95	Interview with administrator	20	15	1	N	5
26/4/95	Interview with dtp specialist	25	16	1	N	5
2/5/95	Interview with managing director	45	2	1	Y	6
2/5/95	Interview with senior consultant	40	3	1	Y	6
19/5/95	Meeting to discuss venture capital	40	1, 17	1	N	5
19/5/95	Interview with director of subsidiary	50	17	1	Y	6
28/8/95	Interview with marketing executive	35	10	1	Y	6
16/10/95	Interview with senior consultant	45	18	1	Y	6
4/12/95	Interview with chairman	45	1	1	Y	6
4/12/95	Lunch and business development meeting with chairman	135	1	1	N	6
9/8/96	Interview with client	40	19	2	Y	14
12/8/96	Interview with client	45	20	3	Y	14
13/8/96	Interview with client	45	21	4	Y	14
28/896	Interview with client	35	22	5	Y	14
18/8/97	Interview with director of design consultancy	40	23	6	Y	25

29/1/98	Interview with director of design consultancy	15	24	7	N	25
23/6/98	Interview with marketing manager of consultancy	40	25	8	N	25
29/7/98	Interview with senior consultant	65	26	9	N	25
29/7/98	Lunch meeting with chairman	75	1	1	N	25
12/10/98	Interview and lunch with senior consultant	80	27	10	N	25

Figure four, below, records the number of times each person was interviewed in the study. The 'person number' relates to figure three above. The key shows the abbreviations I used to identify that person in the data analysis and synthesis. These abbreviations are carried through to chapter four and five of this thesis, which include excerpts from the data.

Figure four : Interviewees involved in the study

Person number	Position	Key	Times interviewed
1	Chairman of main consulting firm	CK	13
2	Managing partner of main consulting firm	BB	3
3	Consultant within main consulting firm	DMc	2
4	Senior administrator in main consulting firm	TS	2
5	Administrator in main consulting firm	Ja	2
6	Director of subsidiary of main consulting firm	T	3
7	Accountant within main consulting firm	C	1
8	Director of subsidiary of main consulting firm	DH	1
9	Director of subsidiary of main consulting firm	KGL	2
10	Marketing executive of main consulting firm	JS	3
11	Administrator in main consulting firm	Ji	1
12	Administrator in main consulting firm	Sa	1
13	Consultant in main consulting firm	N	1
14	Administrator in main consulting firm	CL	1
15	Administrator in main consulting firm	St	1
16	Administrator in main consulting firm	Am	1
17	Managing director of subsidiary within main consulting firm	SB	2
18	Senior consultant with main consulting firm	MG	1
19	Company secretary of public sector client organisation	JSt	1
20	Management development manager of private sector client organisation	JE	1
21	Human resource director of private sector client organisation	PS	1

22	Management development manager of private sector client organisation	JSh	1
23	Partner in design consultancy	RH	1
24	Managing director of design consultancy	St	1
25	Marketing manager of management and technical consulting firm	CM	1
26	Senior consultant with a management consulting firm	MM	1
27	Director of a qualitative research consultancy	WH	1

Figure five below summarises the firms involved in the study. The firm number relates to the similarly titled column in figure three. The table demonstrates the high involvement of the initial firm in the study. With 32 interviews, their support for this research was higher than originally negotiated.

Figure five : Organisations participating in this study

Firm	Description	Times interviewed
1	Main management consulting firm involved in study	32
2	Public sector client of main consulting firm	1
3	Private sector client of main consulting firm	1
4	Private sector client of main consulting firm	1
5	Private sector client of main consulting firm	1
6	Design consultancy	1
7	Design consultancy	1
8	Management and technical consulting firm	1
9	Management consulting firm	1
10	Qualitative research consultancy	1

The face to face interviews noted above provided the majority of data in the study. Additional data was generated from four sources.

First, through participant observation. This involved spending time with and helping the main consulting firm in the project. Second, written correspondence and telephone conversations with people interviewed. The purpose of these was primarily to arrange face to face meetings and ask additional questions following meetings. On occasions, I used these methods to keep in contact with a view to maintaining access. Third, reading reports and materials produced by interviewees.

This included promotional literature and marketing plan documents. Fourth, additional data from other consultants. This involved insights and examples offered by other consultants with whom I discussed the progress of my study. Data from all these four sources was coded and integrated within the comparison and memoing process, together with the fruits of the interviews.

3.1.5 Evolution and conduct of research activity

Having outlined the research activity, this describes how the research activities evolved over the project duration. Key to this is how access was maintained and valuable contributions obtained.

I view the research activity as five 'clusters' of work. The direction along which the investigation evolved and the clusters of work were a function of the degree of access I felt able to secure and outcomes of data analysis.

Active participation with consulting firm

First field work involved the management consulting firm with whom I negotiated access for the pilot study, but took place before 'official access'. It involved talking to and meeting with the chairman of the consultancy firm on the marketing workshop series. I have labelled this 'active participation'. He participated in three workshops at which he discussed his firm's approach to marketing. During the workshop series he made a formal presentation on his firm's marketing approaches to the other participants. In addition, we had a two hour consultancy meeting at his London office. I took field notes over this period, primarily to help me conduct my work as a paid adviser to his firm. I was then able to use this as source material in the grounded theory generation.

Formal 'pilot study'

This second part was the agreed 'pilot study' with the consultancy firm. This involved five days presence in the firm's offices during April 1995, three in Bristol and two in London. During this time I had fourteen interviews with various members of the firm's staff. These lasted between fifteen and ninety five minutes. None of these discussions was taped as I felt that I had not built up the degree of intimacy that I believed necessary for an interviewee to be frank in a formally recorded discussion.

I also participated in four company meetings, three on venture capital and one future marketing and PR activities. I reviewed marketing and business planning documents which were referred to during the course of the interviews. On my visits to the London office I had informal lunches with members of the firm in local restaurants. These proved particularly revealing in terms of the firm's culture and 'real' approach to the management of its business.

I had desk space in their premises to augment and review field notes between the discussions and meetings. In parallel with this activity I undertook research into venture capital by making and meeting appropriate contacts in various parts of the UK. I built up my field notes as the research progressed and made my first steps into coding and writing theoretical memos.

Extension of access

I negotiated further access with the consulting firm as a next step. My request to the firm was based on me not being able to speak to some of the senior staff to the degree I wished during the pilot study period and my offering to come back to discuss with them what I believe I had learned.

Permission was granted. I arranged and conducted six taped one to one interviews with the members of the consultancy firm. With one exception, these were people who had already contributed. The opportunity existed for me to begin to ask questions around the ideas I had formed from the initial coding and comparison.

The interviews took place at the firm's premises in accordance with the availability of the interviewees. Interviews typically lasted forty five minutes, and apart from the pre and post interview 'warm up' and 'cool down' dialogue the content was taped with the permission of the interviewees. The first interview took place in May 1995 and the final one in December 1995. After each interview I added to my field notes with my observations, and transcribed the interview text. I was then able to code the content and apply the grounded theory principals of comparison and memo writing. After each interview I drew a diagram which attempted to show the relationship between the issues and codes which were starting to emerge. As the series of interviews progressed I was able to move towards further theoretical sampling. The time between interviews enabled me to return to earlier data and codes and synthesise findings around the main themes of interest. For the last two interviews I used a summary diagram embracing my grounded theory research to date as a focus to the discussions.

My involvement with the firm had lengthened to over twelve months. I believe I would have been unsuccessful in securing such access at an initial request. I saw my work up to this point as a completion of my initial study. Through my original commercial involvement with the firm and the ability to extend the access of the pilot study, I had built an extensive platform of data. I next devoted time to the analysis and synthesis of this data. It was seven months before I sought more insight from external sources.

Client interviews

My original intention was to use this consultancy firm as a pilot study and then look to involve other similar firms to enrich my development of a theory. I had begun to identify likely candidates.

However, my supervisor and I discussed the merits of involving clients of consultants in the study. This would enable me to gain perspectives on the firms marketing approaches from the recipients of marketing effort. The more valuable perspective was likely to come from clients of the consulting firm that I worked with in the pilot study. I had already developed a good insight into the nature of their business and, through grounded theory analysis, formed impressions about their marketing agenda.

In April 1996 I telephoned the firm's chairman and asked permission to interview a small sample (four was agreed) of his firm's clients. The reciprocation in this instance would be me providing the firm with feedback from the clients on its performance, i.e. conducting an informal customer perception study. The firm agreed, and I received contact details in three UK based plcs and one government owned enterprise on 4th June 1996.[2] The firm's consultants also contacted their clients directly and informed them that I was undertaking the research and asked for their co-operation. I arranged and conducted the four interviews during August 1996.

Each interview took place at the client's premises, and each was taped with the clients' permission. In addition to the transcripts I made my own field notes to supplement the data. Spacing between the interviews enabled me to code, compare, write memos, and become progressively more focused.

The output of this stage was 'client' perspective on the marketing approaches of management consultants in this context. I arrived at a cross roads in the development of a grounded theory. I had generated data from two perspectives, supplier and

client. Each was able to illuminate the behaviour of the other. I needed to choose the perspective I felt more appropriate for my study. I accomplished this by developing both lines of investigation in parallel. I explain this in the next chapter. This, and subsequent selective coding work directed my research away from the generation of more data from the field, with the exception of three theoretical sampling interviews, for twenty months.

Theoretical sampling interviews

As awareness of the core variable grew, the research activity moved towards theoretical sampling. The purpose of this was to generate data to define the emergent categories and characteristics of the theory, and substantiate their presence through saturation.

Theoretical sampling involved returning to some of the original interviewees. My most regular contact was with the chairman of the consulting firm. Throughout the project I had thirteen meetings with him. I also extended field work to consultants from other firms. My professional and personal network provided access to appropriate individuals. I involved four senior people from four additional consulting firms.

Access to other consultancy practitioners to contribute to the development of the theory as the research progressed was easier. Dr Lowe was able to facilitate introductions through his own contacts and I began to identify my own possible 'targets' and started a process of gently warming them up to an involvement in the work. Most of these people I knew or had worked with, and the 'warming up' usually only needed to be making them informed of my research activities, sharing with them some of my research outcomes as 'tasters'. On two occasions I did work

free of charge for the consultants in order to create goodwill before asking for their involvement.

I intended to focus my study on management consulting. In my theoretical sampling I introduced data from three other consulting firms, two design consultants and one market research consultant. Being mindful that such were beyond my original specified context, I satisfied myself that all three exhibited the contextual characteristics noted in chapter one (1.2.3). I was also sensitive to any context specific issues that these three sources might introduce to the data, and handled them accordingly.

Theoretical sampling started in July 1998 and continued until April 1999, when I became confident in the emergent theory as an explanation of the behaviours evident in the data. This concludes an account of the main parties to data generation in the study. The next section notes the procedures I adopted in the research in my application of grounded theory technique.

3.2 Research procedures

The first part of this chapter explains the research design. It outlines what my study has involved, and when the constituent activities took place. This section describes the procedures adopted during the research. It explains how I adapted grounded theory canons to suit the research context, as outlined by Glaser (1998: 40).

In grounded theory, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, as analytic interpretations and discoveries shape ongoing data generation. The methodology is based on process discovery rather than on the measurement of units. It is difficult to show the intricacies of grounded theory method in a diagram. Figure six below illustrates some of the main activities, and hopefully conveys the sentiment that the generation of data and the conceptualisation of insights are iterative within the activity of discovery.

Figure six : The grounded theory process (Haslam 1999: 46)
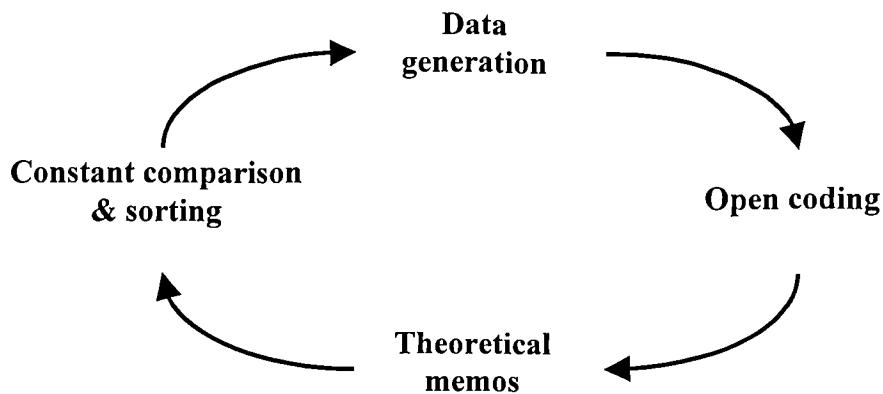
This serves as an overall framework around which my research procedures are explained. My application of the techniques in the context of this study follows.

3.2.1 Types of data

Most of this study's data was generated from dialogue. The purpose of this subsection is to outline the factors I had to acknowledge in the conduct of interviews.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 126) consider the spoken word as the most powerful resource for accounts because of its capacity to present description, explanations and in almost infinite variety. Much of my data took the form of incidents and occasions as explained by interviewees. During discussions and interviews I encouraged people to provide examples of incidents and occasions from their experience. I believed such are able to reveal more than the interviewee intends. Jones (1993: 49) explains,

"People develop over their lives a personal framework of beliefs and values with which they selectively and subjectively build meaning and significance in events. It is this framework or schema and its 'real consequences' for action that the qualitative researcher is interested in learning about."

Egan (1990: 19) identifies three types of expression by interviewees, 'experience, behaviour and affect'. He explains 'experience' as what they do or refrain from doing, and 'affect' as the feelings and emotions that arise from, or are associated with, experiences or behaviour. Being sensitive to these three categories of verbal expression helped me determine opportunities to explore issues with interviewees during the course of discussion. By moving the interviewee between the three, I was able to obtain additional insight.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 127) point out that expression in interviews is normally around the interviewees' perceived misalignment of values, rules or normal expectations and the actual course of events. This implies that people are more likely

to narrate exceptions rather than dominant behaviours. This presents a challenge to the grounded theory researcher. Grounded theory's goal is to discover the core variable as it resolves people's main concern (Glaser 1998: 115). The behaviour of most interest to the researcher may be entirely congruent with the participant's values, rules and expectations, and consequently not articulated because of its seemingly mundane nature. Awareness of this helped me guide interviewees in the articulation of norms by probing for comparison.

Another consideration is the motive behind the interviewees disclosure of information. Jones (1993: 52) suggests that, "some people may well value the possibility that what they say could have some impact on policies affecting them. Some people may feel rewarded by knowing that the interview is important to the researcher. Some people may find that the process of being given the opportunity to talk to someone who wants to listen is of itself worthwhile."

Jones urges a tempering of enthusiasm to accept data as presented at face value. It implies a duty on the interviewer to qualify 'where the interviewer is coming from'. In this study I was aware that some interviewees were more reluctant than others to disclose. One consultant so resented the imposition of interview time on his busy workload that he refused to participate. I was also sensitive to my changing status and the temporal dimension in the research. I began the study as paid adviser which granted me certain rights of access but also meant the subject's agenda was more focused on the future possibilities for the firm and the refinement of strategy rather than an explanation of the strategies of those individuals within. I also realised that the spirit of curiosity and altruism which led to my 'proper' access in the pilot study can wane over the three year period of actual involvement to the fourteenth discussion with the same individual.

There are other considerations which the researcher needs to take into account in working with narratives and conducting interviews. The distinction between tacit

and explicit knowledge has already been mentioned. In chapter two I recognised the
distinction between the two in respect of my own pre-understanding. The same issue
befalls every other participant in the research. Tacit knowledge, that which people
take for granted, governs their behaviour and what they believe they ought to say.
The challenge here is how to enable people to articulate the unexplained in their
lives.

I also needed to be sensitive to context. As Layder (1993: 56) offers, "understanding
the way in which social structure interweaves with activity is an absolutely essential
aspect of fieldwork". I needed to be able to inquire beyond the overt aspects of
interaction.[3]

The above introduces the main issues I needed to accommodate in generating the
majority of data in this study. The researcher as a study instrument involves not only
the challenge in handling pre-understanding, but also issues around the interpretation
of data in identification of the empirically based phenomenon. Glaser (1998: 138)
contributes a typology of data that a grounded theory researcher might encounter. He
suggests five:

- baseline data; descriptive of area or activity
- interpreted; participants' interpretation of experience or behaviour
- properline; participants saying what they believe they are supposed to say
- vague; as little as possible disclosed, imprecise, secretive
- conceptual; rhetorical, hypothetical, without empirical referents.

Glaser's categorisation reflects the sentiments expressed above. In chapter four,
analysis and synthesis of data, I include examples of each of the five from this study.
The study having been completed to the point of discovering an emergent theory, I

remain steadfast in my belief that verbal data was the appropriate foundation. However, I am now more aware of the challenges involved in working with it.

3.2.2 Data recording

I made written notes about every discussion or information source. Usually I was able to make notes during the discussion. In some instances this was not appropriate, for example during informal chats and discussions over lunch with people. I supplemented my notes by reviewing what I had written and adding to what insights I believed I had gained by reviewing notes within forty eight hours of writing them.

Eleven interviews were taped. Glaser believes taping limits a researcher's ability to capture the essence of what he or she is being told (Glaser 1998:108). I believe two reasons which led me to tape some of my interviews support my use of the technique for part of the study. First, I did not trust my untested ability to gain theoretical insights without un-interpreted data to read and re-read. I felt the need for the 'comfort' of a substantial amount of literal data to work with. Second, I felt the need to be able to authenticate my work in the face of external scrutiny. I saw the availability of interview transcripts as a route to this. On all occasions I had the interviewee's permission to tape the interviews. The process of taping interviews also provided an unforeseen benefit. All the taped interviews were preceded and followed by a period of casual conversation. Often the insights gained from the post interview conversation, after the tape had been switched off, were amongst the most illuminating from the whole discussion. Participants feeling the 'threat' of the taped discussion having ceased, enabled them to open up in an 'off the record' manner, probably to a greater degree than achievable without a recorded discussion. With hindsight, this third and unforeseen benefit of taping, additional insight, would be my justification for taping in the future. I feel I have developed in competence as a

researcher. Towards the end of the study moving into the theoretical sampling stage, I moved away from taped interviews and recorded data through notes.

After a disappointing experiment with a secretarial transcription bureau with the first taped interview, I transcribed the interviews myself. I found using someone else to transcribe the data removed familiarity with the content, and stifled my coding of the data. Data from all aspects of the project became recorded as Microsoft Word documents, from either source or open code stages.

3.2.3 Open coding

Open coding is the first stage of grounded theory development. It involves analysis by fracturing the data into elements, which become the initial building blocks of theory formation.

Open coding involved reading over the data generated, and listening to the accompanying taped interviews (if applicable), then assigning labels to those elements I considered interesting. 'Interesting' is a subjective term and represents personal judgement of the importance of what I believe was being said, and the nature of the behaviour exhibited.

I endeavoured to label in the gerund form of a verb, looking to use the language of the informant. The use of gerunds meant I was drawn to the recognition of processes, the implication being that identification of causes, consequences, cutting points and properties would emerge from the comparison process. Chapter four gives examples of my open codes.

Disposition towards in-vivo terms comes from an intent to evolve theories as much in the authentic language of the practitioners as possible. I received comments from

some academics during the research that some of the words I had chosen had more conventionally accepted equivalents, and that I should consider replacing mine. Here the convention was academic terminology which, whilst facilitating easier communication with that community, also made the theory appear more sterile. Such translation of terms represents a possible dilution of their sentiments as the nuances and implications of the original are exchanged for terms that will have already had meanings assigned to them by that body. I defend my adherence to practitioner derived labels.

Within each open code I aimed for the following:

- Label, using a one word gerund.

- Source of the code. Labels were related back to their original source via a simple alpha numeric code. The alpha elements relate to the particular intervention or interview, and the numeric element relates to the sequence of code in order of emergence from the data.

- A definition of the code. One sentence explaining my interpretation of the behaviour.

- Indicator(s) of the behaviour. Examples and illustrations from the research context to help anchor the code to the context and explain my understanding. The indicators appear in italics if a direct quotation.

- Links to other codes. I developed these links increasingly from the outset of coding, as I found it helped me greatly picture the situation I was studying.

The analysis at open coding stage involves my interpretation of words and statements at two levels. The code aims to recognise a description of the empirical case, that is setting the constraints within the characteristics of its context. It also aims to build theoretical insight from this description. That is delineating the phenomenon at a more abstract level. It is that conceptual interpretation I aimed to capture in the label.

Earlier codes were more sparsely recorded for two reasons. First is consequence of my research inexperience at the start of the project. In order to open code as comprehensively as the above suggests, more than the single dimension of descriptive insight is necessary. Initially, I found it difficult to distinguish between conceptualisation and description. Second, in the early stages of research I had little with which to compare and inter-link open codes. Relationships between coded behaviours became more apparent as more data became generated and coded.

The study generated four hundred and twenty four open codes (a list is appended). These became the platform for theory generation, selective coding and theoretical sampling activity.

3.2.4   Code and data logging

I elected to log my codes and data manually. This took the form of word processed sheets of text and 5cm x10cm cards as an aid to sorting and comparison.

I was aware of computer based analysis tools for grounded theory, and reviewed a fellow researcher's use of NUDIST prior to starting this study. I chose the manual route because I felt it provided the better platform to develop an experiential understanding of grounded theory. I considered this important being a novice researcher yet to apply grounded theory method. This was based on two perceived pitfalls of using computer based analysis. First is the possible constraints on the emergence of a theory that a rigid procedural analysis and synthesis method imposed. Losing intimacy with data and surrendering control over research direction I viewed as dangerous. Second is the possibility that attention becomes distracted from the comprehension of grounded theory method in favour of learning the computer package.

Towards the end of my research I became aware of a hybrid approach to the use of computer based analysis tools. This involved the use of the computer to log and track the development and inter-relationship of codes.[4] The benefit is that the path towards theory generation can be more readily demonstrated and the research more sensitised to the contribution of each element of data to the theory. This appeals. However, I felt my research too far developed to merit retracing steps and aligning my process with this system.

I did not envisage the possibilities of a partial embrace of technology at the start of my work, which is to my detriment. I have attempted to apply this approach in subsequent research.

3.2.5 Memo writing

Memo writing is the crux of the development of a grounded theory. Memoing involves "the theorising write up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding." (Glaser 1978: 83)

Glaser offers 'four basic goals' in memoing. These are first "to develop ideas", second "with complete freedom of expression and thought", third "into a memo fund as a bank of consciousness", fourth "that is highly sortable to enable interplay of ideas and comparison process to work more readily".

Despite clarity in what memos are and their purpose, there are no immutable rules on how often a researcher should write memos, the sources of memos and their format in practice. My interpretation from limited experience in grounded theory is that the researcher eventually answers these questions for him or herself, based on a combination of their personal and the contextual characteristics. To answer these

questions, grounded theory (novice) researchers need to be able to survive in a sea of ambiguity.

Initially my memos were too structured and conceptually restricted. Theoretical memos are the means to the synthesis of conceptual understanding. So, although memos are based on the descriptive elements of data, they are aimed at raising the understanding from a descriptive to a theoretical level through focus on conceptual insights into the data. It was some time into my study before I genuinely appreciated this. I aimed for my memos to mirror the format of my open codes:

- Label or title
- A description of the memo, one paragraph explaining the memo's subject.
- Indicator(s) of the behaviour. Examples and illustrations from the research context to help anchor the code to the context and explain my understanding. The indicators appear in italics if a direct quotation.
- Strength of the insight, for example whether un-prompted input from an interviewee or an answer to a direct question.
- Categories of the behaviour and properties of the behaviours.
- Links to other memos.

This, whilst appearing logical, proved cumbersome in operation. The requisite content the structure called for hampered the comparison and theory generation process. At the same time my own mental approach and the format of the memo prevented my study reaching higher conceptual planes. There were two reasons for this. First, I tended towards descriptive writing rather than looking in each memo to determine the perspective on the data. Second, the structure did not seek the inclusion of pre-understanding and conjecture. Consequently they were poor at stimulating potential areas for investigation with future data.

I moved away from this rigid format and began to interrogate and challenge my coded data more readily in order to stimulate insight. Lofland and Lofland (1984: 94) suggest useful questions for this purpose:

"When analysing qualitative data, it is useful to look for certain regularities or patterns that emerge from the numerous observations made during the fieldwork stage. In performing this task, a number of questions can be posed:

- What type of behaviour is it?
- What is its structure?
- How frequent is it?
- What are its causes?
- What are its processes?
- What are its consequences?
- What are people's strategies?"

Appreciating this, I moved to a more 'liberal' style of memo writing. I gave myself permission to write without indicators, properties, categories and links if I felt that none either existed or mattered. I began to feel comfortable with the inclusion of conjecture in memos and the unanswered questions it leads to. This had the effect of stretching data into properties and categories more readily than my initial, rather heavy-handed approach.

I also became more aware of the freedom to 'memo' on anything and at any time. Many of the open codes became the first step in a stream of memos that carried the original label. For example, the memo 'creating' was rooted in an open code of the same name. As the concept of 'creating' became more apparent in the study, it was developed by the incorporation of new data and insight and, through the comparison process, a subsequent stream of memos. The first in the sequence contained 45

words with no properties and categories. Those that followed grew in complexity and length. I also wrote memos on the relationship between concepts, again a result of comparison. On occasions, I wrote about the absence of relationships between concepts.

My natural writing style owes much to my main application of the written word. That is producing reports for commercial consultancy assignments. Here the emphasis is on brevity, description and the definite. It was this aspect that I worked at changing throughout the study. I needed to become less structured and inhibited in my written expression. Early memos did read like management reports, and as the study progressed I noticed a tendency to gravitate towards that style should I feel myself under pressure.

The importance of writing in the grounded theory process is not to be understated. It is easy to 'incident trip' and become seduced by a flash of insight. The memo process introduces a discipline which tempers the tendency to cry 'Eureka' prematurely. As writing speed is a fraction of the pace of thought, it forces the researcher to consider, explore and reflect. It is possible to claim grounded theory insight without the diligence of memo writing. My experience suggests such claims would be suspect.

3.2.6 Comparison and sorting

Comparison and sorting enables the research to move from data analysis to theory synthesis. In this study, data comparison worked in three ways.

First was the mental reaction when a new element of data came to light. Glaser earlier used the notion of insight 'striking' the researcher. I experienced this during coding and comparison. When this happened I expressed my views as a memo,

stating believed insight and the occurrence that facilitated it. My becoming aware of insight through such comparison was not always instantaneous. Illumination, in my experience, often followed a period of reflection.

Second was the systematic comparison of new and existing data. I achieved this by using the typed sheets of text which recorded my codes and memos. I read the new and compared it directly with the existing. Initially insight came from the comparison of indicators, perhaps because these code labels were more descriptive than conceptual. As research progressed I found comparison between existing codes and new indicators/codes a more valuable contributor.

Third was the 'mapping' of insights. I produced diagrams of my understanding of what my codes and memos were saying. This I achieved by writing the essence of each code or memo onto a small piece of card. This usually comprised the label, the code description, its source to enable me to easily track this back to the context when I was building the diagram, the indicator and any links. This was an abbreviation of the code's full narrative. These cards were laid out on the floor, then structured into some order which I felt reflected the inter-relationships and relative position of the codes. This enabled me to see groupings of behaviours and situations where codes appeared to stand alone without obvious affinity with others. I would have found it very difficult to develop my theory without this opportunity for physical visualisation of the data. Typically I was building diagrams from around twenty codes. Often I would check my understanding by re shuffling the cards and building the diagram up again.

Having constructed the diagram I did three things. First was to draw the relationship of the codes on a sheet of A4 paper. Second was to write a summary memo of the diagram. This provided a useful insight, because I wrote with unequal emphasis on the various aspects of the diagram, and with a sense of priority which was not

obvious until I reflected upon it. This summary diagram then led me on to the third step, further memoing. I wrote memos on the groupings I observed in the diagram, relationships which I felt were important, and concepts which I believed the data and diagrams were eluding to but were without data at that time.

Glaser (1978: 85) talks about researchers building a 'memo fund'. I attempted to build a bank using the small cards. The appeal was they were readily useable for comparing and sorting. However, I found this approach too restrictive for me. I usually needed to return to my text file record of the data to find more about the context behind the code in question. I needed more on its properties, and the space on the card was too small to allow noting of anything but key points. I valued the 'card and floor' method as a contributor to the comparison and sorting process, but favoured the text based approach to the memo bank.

3.2.7 Substantive to conceptual codes

Memo writing, data generation, comparison and sorting facilitated the growth of open codes into conceptual codes and ultimately a substantive grounded theory. Underpinning the process of comparison, re-memoing and the elevation to conceptual understanding was the 'six Cs': causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances and conditions (Glaser 1978: 74) that sensitised insight into priority and relationship.

My use of grounded took my open codes in one of four directions. The code could become integrated with another code, or subsumed into another as indicator, property, or category. The code could become more conceptual and have others feed into it. It is also likely that the code would have links with others again which needed to be noted. Sometimes the reflection is that the code is not of particular

value to a line of study and further development of it is suspended. The code provides data to help saturate an existing perspective.

The interplay of codes and memos through the constant comparison process brought about the synthesis of theoretical explanation. As research progressed memos grew in accordance with the dynamics of each element of data as described above.

3.2.8 Core variable

The generation of a grounded theory happens around a core variable. The core variable accounts for most of the variation in the pattern of behaviour around the main concern that people are working to resolve. Core variables only emerge through adherence to grounded theory rules. Trust in the method and the faithful application of coding, memoing, comparison and sorting and re-memoing are necessary. The following chapter, Analysis and synthesis of data, shows the stages in the discovery of the core variable.

Two aspects about the identification of the core variable in this study merit note. First is where I tended towards forcing of data, having discovered an interesting pattern of behaviour through one course of investigation. The next chapter explains how, during the synthesis phase, I forced invalid constructs onto the data. Second, where the study was reaching a relatively advanced stage and several 'candidates' vied for the right to be considered the core variable. This resulted in my having to ultimately suspend investigation into some avenues. This again is explained in the next chapter.

3.2.9 Theoretical sampling

In theoretical sampling, the researcher seeks to explore insights revealed by coding, comparison and memo writing. The choice of what and when to sample belongs entirely to the researcher, who becomes an active sampler of theoretically relevant data.

Although grounded theory study begins as largely an inductive process, it incorporates verification of insight through deduction. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 161) state, "built into this is an explicit mandate to strive towards verification of its resulting hypothesis. This is done through the course of the research project, rather than assuming that verification is possible only through follow up quantitative research".

It is difficult to be precise when the emphasis between induction and deduction changes in grounded theory. This is suggested by the terminology adopted by the method's commentators (see Parry 1998: 60; Starrin et al 1997: 30).[5] However, the move towards theoretical sampling involves a higher degree of deduction than in earlier stages of the work.

As my study evolved I began to appreciate the value of continued access to the research context. My initial perspective was to conduct a fairly comprehensive pilot study and use the fruits of this to broaden data generation to further examples within the same strategic setting. My pilot study firm emerged to become central to the generation of the theory.

The importance of this relates to the ability to theoretically sample around themes revealed in the data. My research method enabled this without necessarily constructing it thus from the outset. Towards the end of my research I broadened

data sources beyond the pilot study firm to enrich my perspectives. However, I believe in future grounded theory work, the window of access needs to be longer, and considered from the outset in the research design. For instance, I have now sought to negotiate two discussions from the outset, recognising that attainment of a third would be much easier to achieve than had the initial request been for one.

In practice, my theoretical sampling technique varied. It was straightforward to identify the people with whom I should theoretically sample. It was the approach to these people that gave me the greater concern. I was conscious of two issues that cautioned against a purely direct approach during theoretical sampling and the pursuit of data saturation.

First is the danger of people agreeing with theories offered about their behaviour without proper consideration. This could be due to the enthusiasm of the researcher when presenting the research, the seduction of the form of presentation, or the lack of inclination of the interviewee to become involved in the development of the theory. 'Fobbing off', as it is colloquially termed. I had prepared maps showing the relationship of the emergent factors to help with the sorting and synthesis of data. Whilst they captured the essence of my work and, by implication, offered themselves as useful frameworks around which to explain my ideas when theoretically sampling, I used them with caution in that context.

Second is the power of grounded theory to enable the discovery of behaviours that people may see at odds with how they believe they behave. This may manifest itself in peoples lack of recognition of the behaviour when confronted with it, or indeed denial. Glaser alludes to this in his classification of 'proper line data.' (Glaser 1998: 138).

The consideration that I noted and embraced in generating data for open coding apply at the theoretical sampling stage.

3.2.10 Theoretical pacing

Theoretical pacing is the rate at which the researcher is able to orchestrate the processes of theory development. The idea of theoretical pacing only made sense to me once my study was underway.

I undertook the research part time in parallel with my work as a commercial consultant. This stretched the elapsed time of the study, as evident from the map of events at the beginning of the chapter. I felt that the intermittent activity that characterises part time study would automatically provide the reflection and conceptualisation space for theoretical pacing. I discovered otherwise. I am aware of three consequences of theoretical pacing, especially as they relate to part time research.

First, despite the gaps in the research agenda with part time study, there were periods of very intense research. Trying to accelerate the development of a theory during such periods is challenging. Early in this study I did not allow sufficient time between some of the interviews in the pilot study phase to code, develop memos, and use the fruits of that interview to inform the next. The danger is generating similar data several times over without generating conceptual insight. At a later stage in my work I fell in 'managerial forcing mode' where I attempted to conclude my theory generation within a self imposed time deadline. The result was an inappropriate explanation of behaviour, and the need for me to ignore the deadline and work intimately with the data. With grounded theory the data, rather than the researcher, appears to be in charge.

Second, possibly all grounded theory researchers experience the elation of a sudden insight. Such happened to me typically after a period of reflection. However, though the insight contributes to a grounded theory, it is not a grounded theory per se. This is no short cut, merely the signal to write a memo, selectively code for, or theoretically sample around the idea. Grounded theory is time intensive, and the pacing of a research project needs to provide for the essential steps in the method.

Third is the impact on the understanding of grounded theory method on the generation of a sound grounded theory. This is a reflection on how much a novice researcher, such as myself, learns about grounded theory whilst undertaking a study. I knew nothing of grounded theory until three months before starting this study. In parallel with field work I read grounded theory method books and articles, attended grounded theory workshops, and joined colleagues in an applied grounded theory method working group. The points expressed earlier in this chapter show how my use of grounded theory technique developed as my research progressed. Some of the more useful insights into grounded theory came in the latter part of my work. I feel that without allowing the space for the acquaintance with the finer points, not just the rudiments, of the method, the research output would be less valuable. Put simply, a novice researcher could find it easy to read about grounded theory, and apply its principles to a research setting. I would question whether the value of such endeavour if the researcher had not allowed his/herself the scope in their work programme for the parallel activity of reflection on the methodology and improving their grounded theory ability.

3.2.11 Saturation

Saturation is the point in the research where further data analysis and synthesis provides no further illumination of part or whole of the theoretical explanation of behaviour. Areas which are saturated see behaviour 'pattern out'. The theory

becomes a method of prediction, and when making a proposition to an interviewee, a saturated aspect of a theory enables the researcher to accurately anticipate the response.

I approached saturating data in the two conventional ways. First by selective coding of existing data. Second through the theoretical sampling interviews.

Saturation is a more difficult concept to apply than it is to describe. Grounded theory doctrine offers no categorical specification for the degree of research that must be undertaken for a theoretical aspect to be saturated. Saturation is personal. It is the result of how confident the researcher feels in what his or her data is showing.

However, this seemingly abstract articulation of saturation is justified. Glaser (1978: 9) offers the criteria of fit, workability, relevance and modifiability as the basis on which a grounded theory should be judged. Implicit in this is the recognition that not only should a theory reflect the situation from which it has emerged, it also needs to exhibit the scope for its expansion and evolution as new aspects of it come to light. Grounded theories should exist at a conceptual, not descriptive level, and have the same intricacies of life as those situations and beings from whom they are derived. Indeed Diane Vaughan (see Strauss and Corbin 1998: 176) offers 'theory elaboration' as a research strategy where existing (grounded) theories may be elaborated and modified as fresh data are meticulously offered to them. Personal legitimising is offered as a substantive theory. I hope future studies, maybe to raise it to a full conceptual level, will see its modification.

My data and my theory is not uniformly saturated. Its central aspects are dense with data and have long patterned out through selective coding and theoretical sampling. More peripheral and detailed aspects contain conjecture. Such aspects are revealing patterns grounded in behaviour but with a lesser degree of assurity. Perhaps any

grounded theory has a varied density, just as no grounded theory has strict boundaries to its scope. I see data saturation in grounded theory as a matter of degree along a probability spectrum. This 'incompleteness' is a characteristic rather than a shortcoming of grounded theory. The evaluation criteria 'modifiability' implies that a good grounded theory has the scope to accept additional insight in the form of categories, properties and delineating factors.

3.3   Justification of the research methodology

This third part of the Research Methodology chapter justifies my choice of grounded theory and provides an evaluation of the use of the method.

3.3.1   Choosing grounded theory

My learning about grounded theory happened during the research, rather than prior to it. This study was my first use of grounded theory. I first became acquainted with the method in November 1994 on the taught research methodology programme[6] which represented the first major step of my PhD process.

I chose to use grounded theory for six reasons.

First, the client group. I felt the nature of the people I wished to research, senior management consultants, were more suited to intimate and personal method working with a small sample. I saw useful data being more problematic to generate via the more conventional high volume questionnaire approach. Choice on data generation method has a consequential impact on the other elements of research design.

Second, the process. Grounded theory involves the application of specific activities. A grounded theory researcher knows he or she will be engaged in data generation, open coding, memo writing, constant comparison and sorting, for example. The degree, timing and adoption of these are left to the discretion of the researcher. The important point is the method brings with it processes to generate conceptual insight from data.

Third, its explanatory power. Grounded theory has the ability to generate high order explanations of people's behaviour. It seeks a conceptual perspective on

perspectives, which themselves are grounded in perspectives on data. During the research methodology programme I read grounded theory work by other investigators. I was drawn by the apparent power of the interpretations, at the same time appreciating their foundation in data.

Fourth, a personal affinity with the essence of the approach. Grounded theory 'makes sense' to me as a method for generating meaning from unstructured data. My pre-understanding explained my alignment with the discovery of theory from contextual practice rather than through the validation of hypotheses.

Fifth is evaluation. The four criteria, fit, workability, modifiability and relevance, inform on how a grounded theory may be judged (Glaser 1998: 18). Myself and others are therefore equipped with the means to judge the research output. I saw guidance in this area as useful in defending the eventual thesis.

Sixth, and finally, is the support I believed I would benefit from in the method. The Marketing Department within the University of Strathclyde is home to a vibrant grounded theory community. This centres around Dr Andy Lowe who is published extensively around grounded theory, conducts and supervises research using the method, and has international academic links around the method including a close association with Dr Glaser.

In choosing grounded theory, I accepted two characteristics of the method which were less appealing to the novice.

First is its inherent uncertainty. I was unsure in which direction my research would take me and what I would discover. Grounded theory involves three successive levels of perspective on data where the data itself shapes the direction of study. This means a resulting conceptual explanation may be far removed from the substantive

context. Commentators (see Carson and Coriello 1996) see the surrender of control of research issues as a characteristic of the method which is hard to handle. Orton (1997: 432) similarly reflects on the challenge of working with a research design in which both data generation activities and the direction of the insight evolve during the study.

Second is its intellectual complexity. Carson and Coviello (1996) suggest that grounded theory is more appropriate for experienced researchers. The method, despite its rigour, depends upon the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher. Little of which I was bringing to this project. I saw the existence of the local grounded theory community as valuable here, but expected from the outset to find the activities involved in embarking on a first grounded theory study intellectually challenging and time consuming.

3.3.2 Confusion around grounded theory

There has been confusion and controversy around what grounded theory entails.

The introduction to this thesis mentioned the ambiguity in the label, grounded theory. Altheide and Johnson (1998: 330) believe "the grounded theory perspective is the most widely used qualitative interpretative framework is social science today". This perhaps should be tempered by Jean O'Callaghan's (1996: 23) recognition that the term is understood to mean the general grounding of theory as well as the method involving specific analytic strategies. Not all that is called grounded theory has been developed by the method originally presented by Glaser and Strauss.

However, within the school of these specific analytic strategies, confusion exists.

Having founded grounded theory and brought the method to the academic community's attention with 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory : strategies for quantitative research' in 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss found themselves having methodological differences which led to a 'public' difference of opinion in the early 1990s, with the latter's publications with fellow researcher, Juliet Corbin.[7] Glaser (1992) explains the direction taken by Strauss and Corbin, as different to grounded theory. The distinction between the two are documented in Glaser's 1992 book 'Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis', written as a reply to Strauss and Corbin's 'Basics of Qualitative Research'.

Lee Parker and Bet Roffey (1997), and Christina Goulding (1998: 50)[8] are among those who offer a perspective on this divergence of views. They reinforce the method outlined initially by Glaser and Strauss in 'The Discovery of Grounded Theory' in 1967 and elaborated by Glaser in 1978 with 'Theoretical Sensitivity', as what should be understood as grounded theory. The Strauss and Corbin direction imposes an over-prescriptive approach to data analysis which impacts on the nature of subsequent synthesis. By being directive on the questions that a researcher is asking of the data, an extraneous view may be introduced and perpetuated through the research. As Strauss' more complex approach to coding can lead to a unwieldy over-conceptualisation of data where appropriate theory generation becomes more troubled. However, this has led to researchers in areas where grounded theory is popular (for example, health) needing to make clear which of the two versions was adopted. (Skodo-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchinson 1996: 123)

It is the Strauss approach that dominates the spread of grounded theory and hence, in my experience, most researchers' first model. There may be several contributors to this. Strauss remained an active academic for longer and perhaps benefited from a more advantageous research network. Second, his books are published by an organisation with significantly more widespread distribution, hence are more likely to

be identified by novice researchers embarking on grounded theory analysis.[9] Strauss and Corbin are perhaps seen as the drivers behind this current grounded theory époque. Glaser and Strauss originated the method in the 1960s. With the exception of Glaser's 1978 book 'Theoretical Sensitivity', little seems to have been added to method post hoc, until the wave of literatures sparked by Strauss in 1987. This is an elaboration of Goulding's view (1999) that Strauss initiated this divergence in how the method is conceptualised. Finally, the Strauss and Corbin research might be more readily understood by the uninitiated grounded theory researcher. The term 'minus mentor' is used to describe the believed large cohort of grounded theorists embarking on studies in the absence of supervision versed in this field. The accessibility of methodological frameworks in the literature becomes a particularly important issue in this context. The prescriptive approach asserted by Strauss and Corbin does offer the benefit of easier comprehension. Such is evidenced by Miles and Huberman's (1994: 58) enthusiasm "of those inductive coding techniques, one of the most helpful is that of Strauss (1987), described best by Strauss and Corbin (1990)". The ready procedures of Strauss and Corbin were offered ahead of a more ambiguous journey towards the connoisseurship that marks the Glaser approach.

It is perhaps inevitable that with growth in popularity comes diffusion of procedure. Aside from the confusion arising from the term 'grounded theory' and the bifurcation between Glaser and Strauss, the third area of messiness arises from researchers positing their own grounded theory rules. As Goulding (1998: 50) reports "such later additions (from academics with no first hand contact of either Glaser or Strauss) include the requirement of a visual diagram with all grounded theories, and a statement that a sample size of twelve be the minimum". Whilst such maxims may appear attractive, they contradict the very essence of grounded theory principles.

My research chronology shows progressive alignment with grounded theory. This started with my supervisor's, Dr Andy Lowe, association with Dr Glaser. This

helped direct my initial reading around grounded theory. I focused on texts written

by Glaser, and it was not until the middle part of 1997 that I read grounded theory

from the Strauss perspective. Such an 'upbringing' has also made me wary about

grounded theory offered by other authors. This makes me unusual, if not fortunate,

as a novice grounded theory practitioner.

3.3.3   Theoretical sensitivity

Glaser urges grounded theory researchers to become theoretically sensitised. This

means aware of the constructs of theory generation. The consequence of this is a

greater confidence in the ability to move from description to conceptualising when

working with data. I found this difficult. My shortcomings in this area had a

detrimental impact on my work in the early stages.

To avoid creating bias and forcing data, researchers are urged to read well written

texts about theories of behaviour outside the substantive area of their research. I was

unsure what to read and what I should learn by so doing. I was not particularly

'theoretically sensitive' at the start of my work. This is portrayed by the descriptive

rather than conceptual coding and memos that characterise my early steps in

grounded theory.

As my research progressed I continued to read other grounded theory studies and

texts on research method. These, combined with the immersement in my own work,

developed a theoretical awareness which has allowed me to discover a grounded

theory. This is certainly an ability I lacked at the start of the project.

3.3.4 My suitability as a grounded theory researcher

This is concerned with my suitability and characteristics as a grounded theory researcher.

I enjoyed the research. I felt comfortable with the underpinning philosophy of grounded theory. Grounded theory is an intuitive method. My own psychometric profile shows me as strongly intuitive. Insofar as such indicators are reliable, I have an innate empathy with the method.

Whilst in tune with the principles of the method, I see scope for personal development in the forms of data that I am able to use in future work. I reflect that I stayed largely within my 'comfort zone' in this study. The data generation techniques I employed mirrored those with which I am familiar through commercial consultancy. I believe personal advancement could result from my familiarity with other routes to data. Grounded theory is a process which facilitates 'sense making' from a melee of data. It is not dependent on conventional methods such as one to one interviews. In his provocative paper 'The Mirror and the Lamp', Andrew McAuley (1998: 721) calls for fresh perspectives on the generation of insight. Grounded theory is able to handle data of 'unusual' form. Such expansion of the boundaries of data source appeals.

3.3.5 Levels of access

I believe I benefited from privileged access into the management consulting arena. I had good links with other consulting firms through my own commercial activities. However, Dr Lowe and I both felt that these more established relationships (for example, with my former employer) would be likely to reveal less due to over-familiarisation. I was fortunate at the beginning of the research to have been in the

position of 'competent supplier' to the pilot study firm. Secondly, I was able to increase my access by degrees. I'm not sure, that if I had made the initial proposition to the consultancy firm that I would like to work with them for three years and incorporate themselves and their clients as the focus for my doctoral research, whether I would have been successful. I felt difficult about pushing the goodwill extended by the pilot study firm too far. To help keep the relationship live I tried to reciprocate goodwill beyond the conditions of my access. I sent Christmas cards, summary reports of my insight, made impromptu visits to their premises when visiting London and Bristol, and sent other interesting information as the opportunity arose. I also maintained a genuine interest in their own development, for example inviting members of the firm to attend events I was staging, at my expense.

My experience as a consultant helped me 'read' the honesty and openness of the various people I talked to during the research. I was also helped by the fact that the consultants I spoke to were not in awe or threatened by my involvement. They had a stronger grounding in behavioural sciences than me (all but one of the consultants were members of the British Psychological Association), charged their clients more for than double for their time than I do, and work at senior levels in more complex organisations than I do. I was able to fit in as the 'naïve researcher.'

3.3.6   Study groups

I believe my work has been well mentored. I benefited, in Dr Lowe, from an enthusiastic and skilled exponent of grounded theory. He was able to direct me through the shortcomings in my approach that I've identified.

We worked together in the conventional sense of regular supervisor/student meetings throughout the project. He was able to guide my research method reading in the early stages of the work. Dr Lowe's network also facilitated my attendance at three

grounded theory method workshops, the first in Dublin, November 1996, the second in Belgium in November 1997, and the third in Paris, April 1999.

We also worked in grounded theory study groups with some of his other students. These were initiated by Dr Lowe during 1997, part way through my own work. They typically comprised three grounded theory researchers who, at the meetings, explained progress on their studies and sought feedback from their peers. Membership of the group changed as different individuals initiated and completed research, but the creation of the group made a sound contribution to my own progress. Three particular aspects are apparent.

First, the scheduling of the meetings (typically on an eight weekly basis) helped the momentum of the work. Second is the personal development that takes place when one has to explain one's research to an interested audience and offer suggestions to colleagues on their work. It accelerated my own sensitivity to theory generation and the comprehension of grounded theory method. Third, it introduced a further perspective to mentoring. Listening to comments made to colleagues about their work, prompted my awareness of such factors in my own study. Perhaps this could be surrogate or indirect mentoring.

3.3.7 Conference and journal articles

Dr Lowe encouraged me to write journal and conference articles as part of the research process. The purpose of this was to develop the ability to structure and articulate theoretical arguments from the data generated in the study. Grounded theory lends itself to the production of papers around part formed ideas and work in progress.

The research chronology at the start of this chapter shows the four papers I have presented to academic audiences during the development of personal legitimising. The relevant content of the articles is contained in the next chapter, Analysis and Synthesis of data, and the papers are appended.

Incorporating the writing of articles into my research method had three benefits. First it enabled me to enhance my sampling around the theories as they developed. This was a result of feedback and comments following the articles. Second, it enhanced my ability to communicate a grounded theory. Grounded theory is a linguistic method. Much of its success depends on the appropriate use of language. Writing articles aided this aspect. Third it helped me begin to position my work in relation to extant theory. Dialogue at academic conferences proved valuable for making me aware of other research and data sources which were able to contribute to my work.

These benefits were achieved at the following two costs. First, writing is time consuming. This is alluded to in the period of my research between the client interviews and theoretical sampling, which is when most of my article and paper writing took place. Second, despite the publication of many PhDs using grounded theory and its resulting stature in the academic fraternity, some researchers remain ignorant or sceptical of its worth. This manifests itself in an unnecessary preoccupation with the methodological underpinnings amongst certain paper reviewers and conference attendees. This is distracting, but I suspect that, as an emergent research method, grounded theory is likely to suffer such a fate for some time to come.

I admit to finding the process of writing article and making presentations at conferences appealing. I suspect this is because I am involved in a significant amount of presentation work as a consultant, and enjoy it. Also because I achieved early success with the academic fraternity's recognition of this study.[10] In November

1997, at my annual review meeting with the faculty at the University of Strathclyde I was cautioned against over-zealous production of conference article at the expense of progress with my thesis. I accepted this. I decided to suspend the preparation and presentation of new papers until the thesis was complete.

3.4   In summary

This concludes my description of research methodology. I have explained the research design, showing what activities the study involved and when these took place. I have outlined the procedures I adopted in the research. This describes how the overall research direction evolved and how I applied grounded theory in this context. Finally I have offered justification of the research methodology. I have explained my choice of grounded theory and reflected upon the strengths and shortcomings of my approach as I see them.

The next chapter, 'Analysis and synthesis of data', shows how the adoption of this research methodology and application of grounded theory rules worked to reveal the core variable in the study.

Notes:

[1] Business Links are a network of government funded support organisations in England and Wales. Their role is to encourage and facilitate the development of local small and medium sized enterprises. They are organised on a geographical basis.

[2] plc – public limited company. All four organisations are substantial and high profile enterprises. They could be referred to as 'household names' in the UK.

[3] Derek Layder offers an example to illustrate the importance of social structure. Noting 'camp' language amongst actors rehearsing a play, he immediately considered the personal insecurities of those concerned. One actor described the verbal interchanges as 'little cuddles without touching'. Broader investigation made him aware of the institutionalised insecurity of the acting profession. Widespread unemployment, short term contracts and the environment that creates, helped engender issues around how people in the profession reconcile trust.

[4] The system of using a computer based approach to code logging to offer an audit trail through the grounded theory process was discussed at a grounded theory workshop. The workshop (Haasrode, Belgium, November, 1997) brought grounded theory enthusiasts from several countries together to develop and exchange techniques.

[5] Ken Parry quotes Silverman's view that grounded theory is concerned with 'analytic induction'. Bengt Starrin and colleagues use the term 'abduction' to capture the interplay between induction and deduction involved.

[6] A research methodology programme is part of the PhD process within the Department of Marketing at the University of Strathclyde. This introduces candidates to a range of research philosophies and techniques. It is represented by 'activity 2 – research method familiarisation' in the research chronology in subsection 3.1.2 of this chapter.

[7] Strauss' catalytic work was 'Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists', published in 1987. This was followed by the influential 'Basics of Qualitative Research : Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques' by Strauss and Corbin 1990. Despite Strauss' death in 1996, a second edition was published in 1998.

[8] I am indebted to Christina Goulding for her insight and work in this area.

[9] Barney Glaser's work is published by his own firm, the Sociology Press. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin are published by Sage. Their work is also included in the influential guides to qualitative research edited by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln.

[10] My paper 'Personal Legitimising: a perspective on marketing management', presented at the Academy of Marketing conference, July 1997, won joint best paper in the 'frontiers of marketing' track.

4   ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF DATA

This chapter describes the analysis and synthesis of the research data to generate the grounded theory. It does this with reference to my coding, theoretical memos and comparisons mentioned in the previous chapter. These, and their build-up, show the emergence of the main research themes and how the concepts are grounded in the data.

The chapter has two main sections, analysis and synthesis. This accords with the development of a grounded theory where first data is fragmented and analysed, and second where a theory emerges through the rigorous synthesis of these elements. Section 4.1 documents the analysis and 4.2 the synthesis. These two sections are followed by a brief third section (4.3), which summarises the path through the analysis and synthesis. The synthesis phase is the more involved, hence more attention is devoted to this.

In parallel with analysis and synthesis has been my increasing familiarity with grounded theory. As stated earlier, I embarked on this study as a grounded theory novice, enacting Glaser's plea to 'just do it' (1998: 1). Consequently, my developing aptitude should be reflected in the following pages, evidenced by an increasing ability to apply grounded theory.

To help navigate the terrain, I've repeated the 'methodology map' from the previous chapter. See figure seven, below. This shows the research project's chronology, including analysis and synthesis stages. Of particular reference to analysis and synthesis of data are the timings of various 'research milestones' encountered. These 'moments of enlightenment' had significant impact on the direction of the study. They are described in this chapter.

Figure seven – Research chronology for this grounded theory study showing the significant activities.

Activity	Description	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	Decision to research management consulting						
2	Research method familiarisation						
3	Decision to use grounded theory						
4	Active participation' with consulting firm						
5	Documentation of pre-understanding						
6	Negotiated access for pilot						
7	Pilot study field work						
8	Extension of access						
9	Coding/sorting/writing - pilot study						
10	Doctoral colloquium paper						
11	Grounded theory seminar - Dublin						
12	First awareness of 'personal legitimising'						
13	Academy of Marketing 'personal legitimising' paper						
14	Decision to involve 'clients'						
15	Negotiated access to clients						
16	Clients' field work						
17	Coding/sorting/writing - consultants' perspective						
18	Marketing/Entrepreneurship paper						
19	Grounded theory study group formed						
20	Coding/sorting/writing - clients' perspective						
21	Customer Research Academy paper						
22	Annual review meeting						
23	Grounded theory workshop - Brussels						
24	Re-coding of data						
25	Selective coding, 'personal preferencing'						
26	Awareness of 'implicit' legitimacy						
27	Theoretical sampling/coding/writing personal legitimising						
28	Organisational tolerance' recognised						
29	Awareness of categories within personal legitimising						
30	Literature comparison						
31	Grounded theory workshop - Paris						
32	Writing thesis						

4.1   Analysis of data

This section is concerned with the early stage in the discovery of a grounded theory, data analysis. Analysis centres around the fracturing of data through open coding. The research methodology chapter explained the principles of open coding. This section contains examples of open codes from three sources; untaped consultant interviews, taped consultant interviews and taped client interviews. This is preceded by brief examples of data in relation to Glaser's data classification, discussed in the previous chapter.

4.1.1   Identification and use of types of data

Glaser (1998: 9) identified five types of data; baseline, properline, interpreted, vague and conceptual. Below are examples of each from the study. They are included to show the application of this data classification. Data are shown in italics.

Baseline

Baseline data is factual and able to be used as a reference point. This example illustrates:

Source: interview with consultant over lunch (20/4/95)

KGL talked about her fee-earning ability since joining the firm. She said, where she worked previously, a good consultant would invoice £200k per year. Between June and December last year she invoiced £170k.

The data is specific. It can be checked through other sources. It stimulates questions. For example, why did she choose to introduce this into the conversation? How does

she compare with other consultants? What has she achieved since December (interview held in April)?

Interpreted

Interpreted data represents participant interpretations of their behaviour or experience.

Source: interview with client (12/8/96)

SH   *How did they (the consulting firm) get on internally (with the client on an assignment)?*

JE   *The team I was working with last year, very well. BB (managing partner) has very little exposure to the business now, he's had one meeting with me and the Group Chief Executive, which probably heard I would both say didn't go as well as we'd hoped. TC (senior consultant and project manager of the assignment) had a pretty direct style which our Group Executive liked. BB is quite reserved so there wasn't the chemistry there that existed before, but they are very very different individuals.*

I saw JE interpreting the affinity between her firm and client organisation as a factor of the personality fit between the heads of the two organisations. I was able to check this by talking to BB and the client to see if their interpretations matched JE's.

Properline

Properline data involves people choosing expressions to support a particular line. Properlining may be present when there is a difference between the espoused and the actual.

Source: meeting with head administrator (10/5/95)

TS talked about the firm being 'completely post modern'. TS had attended the staff meeting a few days previously where the managing director had spoken about the firm as 'post modern' in its approach. I looked for TS to expand on what he meant by post modern and he spoke about the split of the firm into two separate businesses, and their intention to 'get rid of all bureaucracy and red tape'.

I viewed TS's use of 'post modern' as a properline view on how the firm works. I had heard the term emphasised in earlier discussion with consultants as a description of the way they chose to operate. The issue is with understanding of the concept by others in the firm. Whether the term actually does reflect their style of working, I was also keen to learn what activities he saw as post modern activity.

Vague data

Vague data is imprecise. It requires further investigation. It also may be vague in order to conceal an aspect of behaviour.

Source: Interview with client (9/8/96)

SH   What had you used them for before?

JSt   Lots of culture change stuff, just lots and lots of stuff. And we'd also used them to give psychological support to people within the company. That's an area I obviously don't want to talk about too much.

In this case, the interviewee wanted to be deliberately vague about the psychological support. I believe it merited further probing. This dialogue occurred early on in the interview so I decided to register the signal and not question further. I learned about

the support the firm provided by raising the subject in interviews with the consultants at a later date.

The other area of vagueness relates to the general comment of the firm providing 'lots and lots of stuff'. This could have been explored by asking directly about the specific types of work. But reading no deliberate secrecy behind her vagueness I elected to let her speak on.

The interview continues:

SH   Sure .....

JSt   And we used them to put.... The other big piece of work was that they put in,
*   or helped us put in a performance management process. And they take a very*
*   collaborative approach, so that was useful for us. And they have certainly*
*   helped us in terms of our culture change.*

She moved to volunteer what "lots and lots of stuff" embraced. From this I identified the processes of assisting and collaborating. These became open codes.

Conceptual

Conceptual data involves ungrounded opinion or hypothesis. It prompts follow up around the empirical evidence for the hypothesis.

Source: interview with senior consultant, DMc (2/5/95)

SH   ... ... I'll go on and ask the question about the picture of the future and how
*   marketing fits.*

DMc   *And, the view that I was just thinking about - the cultural elements of this*

business that attract people and keeps people. There is space for you to do

what you want here. And there may be, that people become too self indulgent

in doing, what they want to do.

DMc introduces the concept of 'becoming self indulgent'. She articulates the

outcome, suggests it is a process and suggests that one of the causes is the freedom

for staff in the firm. She also suggests this is an appealing attribute of the firm to the

staff.

Having provided an insight into the identification of the nature of different types of

data, and how they were handled in the study, examples of open codes from three

sources follow.

4.1.2   Example open codes from untaped interviews

These examples show open codes drawn from untaped interviews. They illustrate the

type of data that my research records show I was generating.

Source: meeting with chairman, untaped (8/2/95)

CK (the chairman) spoke about the firm's company brochure, a distinctive full

colour publication of a high design value. I told him I liked the brochure and asked

him whether the Mackintosh[1] design theme was deliberate, noting his office furniture

followed the Mackintosh style. He replied he admires Mackintosh's work, and yes, it

was a deliberate choice. He went on to say that the role of the brochure is 'primarily

one of reassuring clients'. He said that the brochure is aimed at the Personnel

Director who wants something credible to put before management colleagues. He

qualified this by saying they often managed to meet the Personnel Director but had

to leave this person with the task of being able to influence their colleagues as to the need for a particular piece of consultancy work with them (the consultancy firm).

From this I initially developed two open codes.

Reassuring

Description: Seeing the need to provide reassurance to potential clients.

Indicator: Role of the brochure 'primarily one of reassuring clients'

Evidencing/Tangibility

Description: This is giving customers something concrete with which to sell the idea to colleagues.

Indicator: His view 'the brochure starts with the Personnel Director who wants credibility (evidence) to put before management'

At this stage, the codes are basic and underdeveloped. They lack any statement to the properties of the behaviours they illustrate. They lack any conjectural opinion as to further insight that might be sought or suggested.

When I originally coded the data, I failed to identify certain possible codes. For example, the issues around the design of the brochure being in accordance with the chairman's own personal taste. The Mackintosh furniture perhaps should have provoked me to question more at the time. Grounded theory though 'self corrects' providing the method rules are followed. At a later meeting with the chairman I identified a code which I labelled 'indulging'. Indulging here is defined as people making choices based on their personally motivated likes and preferences.

Selectively coding for indulging brought me back into contact with this data and I was able to see his choice of Mackintosh for the brochure design and his office furniture as an indication of personal indulgence.

Grounded theory is a linguistic method and imprecise language obstructs. The next example shows how a poorly assigned label gets in the way of full use of the data.

Source: meeting with chairman – untaped (8/2/95)

The chairman was talking about his clients' perception of his firm. He said that they have been chosen (ahead of competitors) by clients for the impression that they would 'lead the clients into unexpected paths'. He expressed this as a positive aspect of the firm. He explained how McKinsey's had a reputation for being expressive, thorough and predictable - and that clients valued his firm's ability and reputation all the more.

From the above I developed the open code 'adventuring'.

Adventuring

Description: Clients seeing working with them as an adventure

Indicator: Chosen by clients for the impression that they would 'lead the clients into unexpected paths'

Note: This is about the impression you give to a client. Why you get chosen - 'suggesting' rather than 'promising'.

I could have used the in vivo term 'leading' and seen adventuring as a category of leading or adventure as a property. I could also have selected 'impressioning' as the

label. Thus if 'adventuring' was not the best choice, it did not matter. Theoretical sampling around 'impressioning' and 'leading', both of which emerged from elsewhere in the data, drew upon this indicator.

Thus far I have shown open codes drawn from untaped dialogue and observation. The next section notes open codes from transcripts of taped conversations.

4.1.3 Example open codes from taped interviews

Coding from taped interviews was based on studying interview transcripts, replaying the tapes, and reading any notes that I'd made during the interviews. By this stage in my research I sought to incorporate more into an open code than label, description and indicator.

Source: excerpt from interview transcript with Managing Partner (2/5/95)

BB   ....whereas here, of course the opportunity to create your own products and services exists and the business comes, probably not in a similar way to (Arthur) Andersens, in the sense that it couldn't come from on high .....

The Managing Partner was answering my question about his initial impressions joining this consulting firm having worked in Arthur Andersen, the strategy team at British Airways and a boutique strategy consultancy.

From this excerpt I developed the following open code.

Creating

This is a cultural issue. It relates to the scope which exists in the firm for individuals to develop products/services/clients. It also relates to the space that people make and the initiative they show in order to create.

Categories within this are 'no scope' for creativity (evidenced by rigid structure and procedures), covert creativity (people act 'entrepreneurially' in order to get things done) and overt creativity (people have support mechanisms in place to help them in their quest for products and services).

This firm appears to be an overt creator, where the 'opportunity to create your own products and services exists'.

The code incorporates more of the expectation of a theoretical memo. I had attempted to stretch my insight by suggesting categories. The three point categorisation of 'no scope', 'covert' and 'overt' was conjecture at that stage. In the opening paragraph I noted the 'scope which exists in the firm for individuals to develop products/services/clients'.

4.1.4   Example open codes from client interviews

I taped the four client interviews. The transcripts, together with the re-playing of the tapes provided the bulk of the data from which these open codes were drawn. Additional contributions of data came from pre and post interview discussions and my observations throughout the interaction.

The main issue in coding the client interviews was interpreting the clients'

perspective into that of the consultants. This data was one step removed from those

being studied, and necessitated handling in that manner in the synthesis stage.

Below are two examples of codes from client interview data.

Source: interview with client (9/8/96)

Client (JSt):   *They are smaller than most other companies, so you get to know them*

better. And I know it sounds a bit kind of naff, like they actually, the

people I have worked with actually care about what they are doing.

And I don't ever get the feeling from them that they're taking my

watch to tell me the time.

From this come two open codes 'knowing' and 'caring'.

Knowing
Description: Getting to know people (clients) better - part of the process
Indicator: 'They are smaller than most other companies so you get to know the people better'
Notes: Again (referring to earlier code), this fits into the general distinction between big and small.

Caring
Description: Projecting the image of caring about

Indicator:	'The people I have worked with actually care about what they are doing'
Notes:	This is what the client feels and what the client values. OK, the task for the consultancy firm on the job is to create the feeling of caring for the work. This is likely to end up under the process grouping to do with 'doing the job well'.

Both codes are in their original, basic form. Both are descriptive, rather than conceptual and I had not attempted to stretch either by suggesting categories. As building blocks, these codes contributed to the emergence of the core variable. Despite my conjecture at the time that 'caring' would become assimilated within a process about 'doing the job well' it became a contributor to the concept of 'impressioning'. 'Knowing' developed as a consequence of the process I called 'selective impressioning'.

4.1.5 Open codes as building blocks

Above shows some of the four hundred and twenty four open codes upon which the theory is founded. In addition to the three main data sources described, selective coding later re-introduced indicators into the synthesis process. Theoretical sampling, as the study progressed, revealed more data. Some of this contributed to codes and memos around which the sampling was based. Others produced more open codes.

The next section of this chapter is concerned with the process of synthesising data. It shows how codes were assimilated into theoretical memos to facilitate the emergence of the core variable.

4.2   Synthesis of data

The following sections are concerned with the synthesis of data. This represents the second phase in grounded theory generation.

4.2.1   Phase one – early synthesis, using 'pilot study' data

The first stage of synthesis involved the data generated in the pilot study, along with codes generated in my period of active participation, during which I provided marketing consultancy services to the firm.

Below are three theoretical memos, 'indulgency', 'leading' and 'non-marketing'. These early memos capture the sentiment of the behaviours. They paint pictures. Their unstructured nature largely reflects my (then) inexperience in memo writing. These memos formed part of a paper at the 1996 UK Marketing Education Group doctoral colloquium. [2]

Indulgency.

The firm seems to be a hot house for self indulgence. Despite it having a reasonably clear boundary to its area of work , and each consultant being tasked with selling and delivering work, the variation in its activities is dramatic. One consultant has developed a reputation (and became the subject of office jokes) for his ability to sell to female clients. Another has become known as the 'works department' because of his pre-occupation with low value short term projects. Despite the credibility that links with academic institutions offer, only two consultants have teaching and research links with business schools. Despite the provision of well equipped offices, senior consultants spend a lot of time working at home. One consultant is interested in projects situated within twenty minutes of an airport or within the City of London itself. The chairman is a keen chef, and much of the client entertainment takes place

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at top London restaurants. The group (I was studying) includes a recruitment business, primarily because the chairman likes to dabble in recruitment. I'm seeing indulgence as a positive characteristic. Consultants are given a great deal of autonomy and gravitate to ways of working which they enjoy. If there are rules on being an effective consultant, they seem to stop at the ability to win work and generate fee income.

Leading

Consultants are encouraged to develop further commercial opportunities when working with a client. They are expected to lead the client's thinking and obtain project extensions or extra projects. The primary approaches for accomplishing this are by making the clients aware of other aspect of their business which could benefit from improvement (a process of education) and performing well on the contracts already in place. The firm's reward for achieving this is absence from direct competition. However, behind this ethos of leading clients into new areas of consultancy support is a very casual approach. There are no contact plans, structured networking and relationship building events. Consultants seem able to stimulate opportunities and then put the client in a stage of suspended animation until they need to re-kindle the idea. The intensity of contact with clients also seems to vary depending upon whether the consultant wishes to activate commercial opportunity from a relationship. Opportunities are not documented. Management meetings outline the workload three months forwards, and long term high value opportunities are also recorded. But the timing and execution of gaining extensions and further work is left to the individual consultants, with minimal management interference and support.

Non marketing

This aspect is a series of anomalies and inconsistencies. Responsibility for marketing management seems to change every six months when disillusionment sets in. On

occasions marketing plans are written but implementation is rarely followed. The managing director states that the firm needs help to implement marketing, then the company chooses to reduce the amount of time that the person recruited to provide marketing support has to dedicate to marketing. And that person then leaves the company because of the lack of scope within her job. One consultant initiates a mail and phone based follow up to prospective customers after a happy client gives a very positive endorsement of the firm's capabilities at an industry conference. He initiated this because his wife works in sales and suggested it was a good idea. His campaign was a success and generates significant new work. Yet his approach is neither copied by other consultants in the firm nor incorporated into the firm's overall way of working. The consultants believe the firm 'doesn't do any marketing'. Marketing ideas are discussed at management meetings and, on occasions, specially convened marketing and PR meetings. Yet the consultants' view is that the actions agreed evaporate and fizzle out during the early stages of implementation. Initiative seems to be easily lost. Yet against this backdrop of marketing disorganisation is a company with a strong client list and order book, along with a high profile and an ability to spot and capitalise on market trends. It seems to me that shortcomings in the detail of the implementation are more than countered by the tremendous ability at a strategic level. I'm not sure why they let marketing give them so much difficulty.

Reviewing them now, I'm drawn to the absence of properties, attempts at categorisation, recognition of cutting points, causes and consequences. Indicators are interspersed with interpretation, but the two are not distinguished. These memos are descriptive streams of consciousness. Though perhaps little more.

The main challenges I experienced in the synthesis of the data at this stage relate back to under-developed memo writing and comparison. I had generated a significant amount of data behind the three observations expressed above. Indeed, I reported 'death by data' in the same paper that contained the above. Each interview

typically revealed about twenty to thirty open codes. I tried to produce representative process diagrammes after each research intervention. The outputs at this stage of research were a series of difficult to communicate diagrammes supported by lists of under-developed open codes. With hindsight I see what I was recording was descriptive rather than conceptual. The proliferation of data and my best intentions to manage it systematically detracted from my ability integrate the individual components I identified through open coding.

My original plan was to use this early part of the research as a pilot study, a 'trawling' expedition prior to embarking on a more focused investigation. Before generating even more data my supervisor encouraged me to develop my insights into the existing. I tackled this by writing longer and more expansive memos, looking for conceptual perspective rather than process description. The first significant theoretical insight began to emerge.

In July 1997 I presented a paper entitled 'Personal Legitimising: a perspective of marketing management' at the UK Academy of Marketing conference. This captured my conceptual understanding of my data in up to January 1997. The foundation of the paper was the more diligent application of the coding/writing/comparison process that my 'death by data' experience led to.

Personal legitimising is about justifying one's own actions or perspective. It is about how individual's priorities and prejudices influence an organisation's behaviour. My paper discussed the application of personal legitimising to influence the marketing activities and style of an organisation. The paper won an award as 'joint best in the frontiers of marketing' track' and was subsequently published in the Journal of Marketing Management.[3]

The paper shows personal legitimising as a sum of six categories. Each category had

grown as a memo through the constant comparison process. The process, and its six

categories as described by excerpts from the memos, is shown below.

Personal Legitimising

Personal legitimising seems to happen when someone wants to operate outside of the

cultural norm of an organisation. Its categories fall into two main groupings, (see

figure eight, below). In grounded theory parlance these two groupings are 'sub core

variables' of the process. They are:

• Obstructing existing marketing activity

• Driving new marketing activity

Figure eight: The basic social process of personal legitimising (1997)
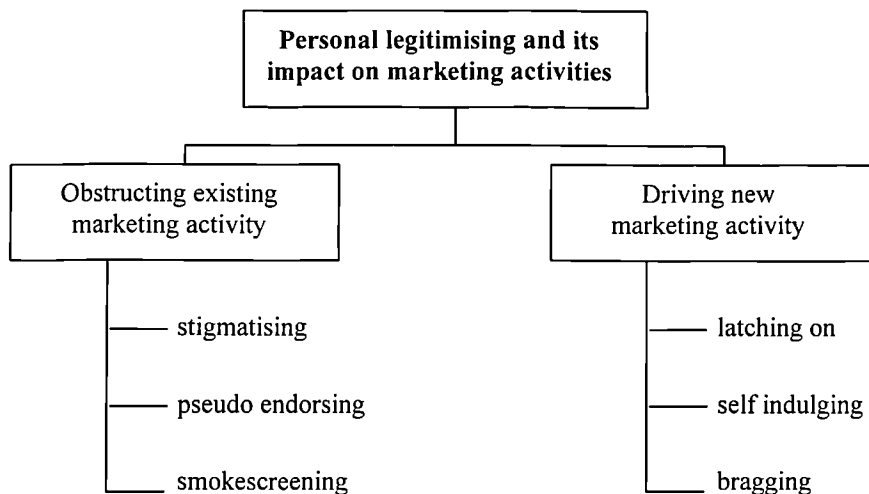
The first sub core variable is about impeding the progress of marketing ideas and

initiatives. The second is the converse and involves the instigation and execution of

marketing actions distinct from those already undertaken by the firm. I will illustrate

the three categories within each sub core variable by referring to the 'theoretical

memos' developed during the research. Theoretical memos are the researcher's

documented stream of consciousness stimulated by the research data. They are the

building blocks of theory development in the grounded theory process.

Obstructing existing marketing activity

Personal legitimising the obstruction of marketing actions is about the moves made by individuals in the firm to prevent marketing ideas being adopted. These are the categories observed.

Stigmatising

Stigmatising is where an individual adopts a distorted view to help legitimise a personal perspective. Here's an example of what I mean.

(From an interview with the managing consultant) His view on running promotional seminars and events for clients is that "we tried them two years ago and they generated 'bugger all' business as far as we can see". He doesn't support the firm's intention of doing more.

Note, the previous seminars did generate some business, albeit not as much as the firm hoped. They contributed to the profile of the firm and generated goodwill with clients who were invited. From its previous attempt, others in the firm concluded that their seminar events would be more commercially successful if they paid more attention to the timing and venue of the event, rather than the content. They felt they had learned from the process and were well placed to try again. The managing consultant does not enjoy cultivating business using client seminars, he directly expressed this view which was endorsed by his colleagues.

In an attempt to legitimise his own lack of enthusiasm for this marketing method, he proffered a stigmatised view. The example highlights a possible property of stigmatising, namely the property of using prior experience as the reference point. In the following paragraph, from a theoretical memo, another property is exhibited, which is the use of external reference points.

I have already encountered this view that a particular marketing method was not appropriate for the firm because "one wouldn't expect a firm such as this to behave in such a way". Sometimes this is logical, but not always. For example, the notion

of issuing newsletters to clients was accordingly dismissed, by drawing attention to the types of firms who used newsletters and voicing an opinion that recipients of newsletters threw them in the bin without reading them. A similar example involved a consultant justifying the non adoption of direct mailing as a marketing method by saying "I don't think it fits with how a firm such as ours should act." People in the firm did accept that newsletters and direct mail can work, and are used successfully by other management consultancy firms.

Maybe this illustration suggests a property of assuming a superiority to other commercial enterprises. Within this category though, attempts are made to legitimise inactivity by using selective comparison. The next category, pseudo endorsing, happens when the proposed action is initiated.

Pseudo endorsing

From my research, pseudo endorsing, is a covert intervention (noted as a property of the category). Within this category, a marketing action is agreed upon within the company, but implementation is obstructed by withholding of the necessary resources. It is associated with giving 'lip service' to an idea. It is also achieved by personally judging an agreed task to be of lower priority than others. In this way, activity can be thwarted without colleagues perceiving the pseudo endorser as lazy or obstructive, merely busy in a different direction. The following are brief excerpts from theoretical memos created around pseudo endorsing. This helps show how the category has emerged from the data. The indicators of the behaviour are underlined.

This memo is an evolution of the notes that I made around the open codes of prioritising, dedicating, under-resourcing and evaporating. Pseudo endorsing is probably a selective code compared to the others mentioned which I see as descriptive open codes.

In the course of discussion with a senior consultant the subject of the monthly management meetings arose. The consultant said,

"And we do have that slight problem that in even our management meetings, which is supposed to be next week or maybe the week after, client meetings come up and there isn't the three line whip, there should be but there isn't emphasis on that. So one by one people have dropped out because they have more important client meetings on. So you know for the business the short term pressures mean that we tend to forget the long term priority or the long term interest and that I expect is the essence of our marketing."

I didn't detect frustration, merely an acceptance that this is the way it works. This person had also 'managed' the firm's marketing for a while, and this is how he explained his experience here.

"...... the business isn't big enough for people like Colin and myself to have to start spending a lot of time contemplating the broader issues, and the longer term issues, like marketing. I mean I was supposed to look after marketing for about six months after the company split. Nicholas was then supposed to have taken it on in total for about a year, but I feel he probably didn't have the interest at the time either, so it's sort of fallen into abeyance."

Looking at this I feel pseudo endorsing includes the properties of committing to something with agreement of the rest of the firm, assigning what you've agreed to a lower personal priority without necessarily seeking approval from colleagues for this, then just letting this under researched commitment die a natural death. To describe this last aspect, the terms 'fizzling' (as in 'fizzles out') and 'evaporating' were offered by two separate members of the firm.

My dialogue with Julia, who was appointed as marketing person, shows the evaporating property in context. I met her on a day she was obviously unhappy with her working life. She was frustrated by the fact she has to provide admin support to two consultants as well as look after marketing projects. I asked her how the various marketing tasks she and I had discussed three months previously were progressing. She said,

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" .... *I've progressed absolutely nothing. I've done nothing with the papers, trying to get into the papers. Colin has the CV and the information that is needed to get into the BBC but he hasn't had the chance ...* ... *from the marketing point of view it needs someone who has got the time to actually do something ...* ..... *at the moment and under tight deadlines, because I work for Colin and Martin as well, I just have not time to do anything. .... I think that's how everything goes. It starts off with lots of enthusiasm and it fizzles out.* "

I asked her what ideas she had to ease the situation. She said that Colin (chairman) and Barry (MD) had agreed to a meeting to look at how the situation could be improved. I phoned her later to see how the meeting went - it didn't go ahead due to work pressures on their parts. It was never reconvened. Within two months Julie left the firm for the more organised pastures of a larger firm.

The final category within the use of personal legitimising to obstruct marketing actions is what happens after pseudo endorsing. This I've labelled 'smokescreening.'

Smokescreening

Perhaps the last step in justifying one's inability to support an agreed marketing action involves smokescreening. This is expressing regret at one's own performance but justifying this lack of performance by drawing attention to strong performance in an area recognised in the firm as being more valuable. The area of strong performance acts as a smokescreen, as the theoretical memo on smokescreening shows.

Comment from a consultants tasked with managing his firm's marketing; "We know that marketing has an important role, but how do you overcome the problem that we are on short term thinking. We are short term thinking not because we can't think in the longer term. Personally the business demands very short term responses. You

know like last week I had to write five complicated pieces of development material
which required three weeks to do. "

He goes on to emphasise that he and his colleagues are purely client driven in their
work. A laudable quality, but also a distraction of attention from other
responsibilities.

A consultant's lack of ability to contribute to a client newsletter being justified by the
comment:

"this raises the other problem in that all the client work I do is confidential, I can't
mention any of it, it's absolutely unmentionable. It's a shame ". It is difficult to
argue against such a position, but there are ways of producing effective client
newsletters without disclosing specific client details.

The two examples suggest three properties within this category of smokescreening.
The first is the use of irrefutable arguments, for example few could disagree with a
consultant's decision to place existing client commitments as top priority. Second is
the characteristic of apologising for an inability to meet obligations, and third is
seeming to give others the choice or right of approval in the matter.

As the research progresses and we are able to further refine our understanding, we
may find more categories of obstructing marketing activity. We will certainly be able
to enhance our comprehension of the properties and characteristics of each
category. The second grouping looks at personal legitimising from a different
perspective - to drive, rather than obstruct, marketing actions.

Driving new marketing activity

This sub core variable is about how individuals accommodate their personal
perspective successfully within the organisation, in the initiation of marketing
actions. The first category is 'latching on'.

Latching on

This is the ability to achieve personal legitimisation by aligning one's own opinions or actions with external and highly revered sources. By highly revered I mean not only influential on the person using them, but also with sufficient gravity to influence others. These two aspects of external sources and highly revered ones should be considered as properties of this category. I came across several examples of latching on. Here are two taken from the theoretical memo on the category.

In justifying his (a senior consultant) preference for a particular style of working, namely opportunistic and responsive, <u>he explained his attraction to the strategy writings of Prahalad and Hamel.</u> He described and was able to use the similarities between Prahalad and Hamels' views on effective strategy and his own style to help legitimise his own approach to winning client work. Secondly, a senior consultant instigated a follow up exercise after a client spoke very positively about his firm's services at a conference. <u>The source he latched on was his wife, who was a former sales director for company in the USA.</u> She suggested the follow up exercise, but such an 'aggressive' marketing action was beyond the consultancy firm's commercial comfort zone. The follow up was duly completed by the individual and proved effective. Interestingly though, despite what should have been powerful organisational learning there seems no inclination within the firm to engineer more opportunities to replicate the exercise.

The second category within 'driving new marketing activity' is self indulging.

Self indulging

Self indulging is a broad category. It involves individuals choosing actions for self interest and enjoyment. The research revealed many examples of self indulging from a marketing perspective. Here are some brief excerpts from the theoretical memos, showing the roots of the various properties the data has helped generate.

This awareness of self indulgence within the firm started with my second interview and Diane's (senior consultant) comment: "there's space for you to do what you want to do here. And there maybe, that people become too self indulged in doing what they want to do."

These are the main contexts of self indulging that I've seen:

- physically locating the business in the area of the UK in which you want to live;

- developing the products and programmes you fancy doing;

- working with the clients and contacts you prefer working on;

- using your hobby (gourmet food) as the basis for client entertaining;

- importing your own beliefs in organisational philosophy into the management style of the business - and doing lectures on this to outside bodies.

In an earlier memo I described the firm as a 'hot house of self indulgence'. I retain this view. Following a very early conversation I had with Karen in the executive recruitment team, she said that the firm maintained this activity because "he (the chairman) liked to dabble in recruitment." I confronted Colin (the chairman) with this. I asked how important the executive selection branch was of benefit as an introducer of consultancy work. He replied: "Not critical, it's an indulgence of mine." (laughing)

I found it easy to see self indulgence going on. Nobody attempts to hide it, and when it is raised with people (as with Colin) they admit it. Some form of self indulgence, including the idea of 'dabbling' seems to be expected.

As well as the recognition of the 'dabbling' property, the data suggests further aspects to self indulging, including the righteous justification of it to others, and the championing of any self indulgence through to the achievement of results.

I spoke with a senior consultant about the problems the firm has with its sales monitoring and incentive system that the consultants supposedly work to. He said:

"The system to incentivise people to sell and deliver? Loosely it is intended to do a little of that, but none of us really believe that ...... I don't think we are involved in this primarily for extrinsic rewards. I think we're much more intrinsically motivated."

Self indulging has the property of being overtly present, it also has the property of being covertly traded rather than negotiated. I have come across no 'granting for permission' for self indulgence. Scope for self indulgence is what Martin is including when he talks about intrinsic rewards. The firm could be described as a chorus of 'My Way' sung in a different key by each consultant. (my picture)

The property of result achievement also becomes evident within self indulging. Points don't seem to be awarded for effort. Scope for self indulging seems to be rewarded by its ability to achieve outcomes for the firm. Nobody seems to be self indulging unsuccessfully. It is as if they champion their indulgence.

I feel that future research and data analysis will enrich and develop my understanding of the impact of self indulging. I see this as a more substantial area than the other categories. This grouping of driving new marketing activity finishes with the category of 'bragging'.

Bragging

Bragging is about legitimising an approach by demonstrating its effectiveness, usually evidenced by numerical data. Consider this example from the theoretical memo on bragging of the consultant who chooses to sell small items of short term work rather than the organisational norm of longer term projects.

Within the organisation he has become known as the 'works department' because of the jobbing shop mentality. Yet he legitimises his approach by pointing out that at any one time he manages three times as many clients as the other consultants, and that he is the organisation's leading fee earner. The rest of the organisation seem ambivalent to this revelation. The data he quoted was his own research and not the

official organisational line. His evidence was neither contested nor recognised, and the types of projects pursued by the rest of the organisation remained the conventional longer term projects.

Bragging happens when facts and numbers can be mustered, irrespective of whether these have an official blessing or not. Individuals claim their own bragging rights. The reason it appears at the end of the process is because the action needs to be undertaken and achieved before performance can be claimed. Properties of bragging therefore look to include that which is experience based, and factual. And as with earlier categories, information is used selectively by the individual.

The process of personal legitimising showed two sequences of actions, each of three behaviours. The two are separated by the property of whether the legitimising was to do with the promotion or obstruction of an activity. This represented my most comprehensive explanation of the data at that time.

I felt a sense of enlightenment in having used grounded theory and developed a conceptual insight. I enjoyed the reception the paper received and saw scope for its future development using selective coding and theoretical sampling to introduce, for example, more properties.

Whilst the emergence of personal legitimising was valuable for my own development as a researcher, enabling me to experience transition to theoretical insight, I was wary about believing I had achieved a thoroughness demanded of doctoral candidates. It would have been easy for me to be seduced by the success of the paper. After having heard him use the phrase 'nifty little paper'[4] (as distinct from a fully developed theory) as an output of grounded theory research, I sent a copy of personal legitimising to Barney Glaser with a covering note offering it as an example of same.

I was keen to move my research on in a different direction. With hindsight this seems a curious intent, but my reasons for this were as follows. I had always seen the pilot study as the facility for me to start a grounded theory apprenticeship and maybe derive some insight into behaviour in my substantive area. Mentally, I had prepared myself for compartmentalising the output of the pilot study accordingly.

My original intent was to study how consultants managed their relationships with clients. My insights into personal legitimising, though interesting, were tangential to this. I moved to the generation of data from clients as the next phase of my study.

4.2.2 Phase two - synthesis of data from client interviews

A 'relationship' may be an interface between two or more parties, but the interface itself is insubstantial. If two parties are involved then there are at least two perspectives of looking at the relationship. In the pilot study I had developed data from the consultants' perspectives, and now set about looking at the same issues from the other parties to the relationships. This seems a statement of the obvious when looking back, but I needed to experience coding and comparing of data from sources of different perspectives for this to become apparent.

The issue about being clear about from whose perspective one is viewing the situation caused me to develop my theoretical insights in two parallel tracks. One from the position of the consultants, and the other the clients. This meant a divergence. Applying the same principle of analysis and synthesis to the same source data, but with two very different slants. I knew that eventually I would have to choose one or the other. At this stage I was not sure which would prove the more interesting.

Insights from the perspective of the consultants

I developed data from the perspective of the consultants, hoping to supplement the insights into personal legitimising. Two aspects to my synthesis proved particularly challenging.

First, I suffered a closed mindedness about personal legitimising as a construct. My acceptance of personal legitimising in the form to which it had developed, and my inclination to treat it with maybe undue reverence, resulted in me 'freezing' it. I looked for it initially to function as a framework around which to hang other data. Second, the data from the clients had a different 'feel' to it. In open coding I had interpreted the agenda of the consultants in the clients' eyes. The data seemed to illuminate different aspects of behaviour which, despite comparing to the memos from the consultants' data, did not synthesise readily.

This resulted in a second and separate cluster of behaviours in the research. Each part of the cluster was a theoretical memo write up of the interpretation of indicators in the data. I called this second cluster 'Personal Commercialising'. Personal commercialising encompassed the techniques used by consultants to develop clients and contracts.

In January 1998 I presented a paper called 'Doing it my way: Marketing as practised in a management consultancy firm' at the 1998 Academy of Marketing/UIC/AMA research symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship.[5] The essence of this paper was a comment on the presence of personal legitimising and this second construct in my theory.

The paper had two distinct parts. One dealt with personal legitimising and the other personal commercialising. Together, I suggested, they captured the essence of how

consultants 'did it their way.' I believed the two were linked. However, I could not demonstrate this convincingly. I theoretically sampled around the two aspects. Interviewees acknowledged the presence of both, but I was unable to integrate the two. I became frustrated by my inability to move beyond what was had become a blockage.

Below is an excerpt from that paper which explains the notion of personal commercialising and its five main categories, "acquainting", "engaging", "assuring", "super-conducting", and "opportunising".

Client development activity; Personal Commercialising

The processes within this umbrella of personal commercialising apply to consultants cultivating commercial relationships with colleagues in the firm and cultivating commercial relationships with external clients. These are not a sequence of activities but a range of techniques intuitively understood and used by successful consultants as appropriate. A repertoire.

Figure nine: The categories of personal commercialising
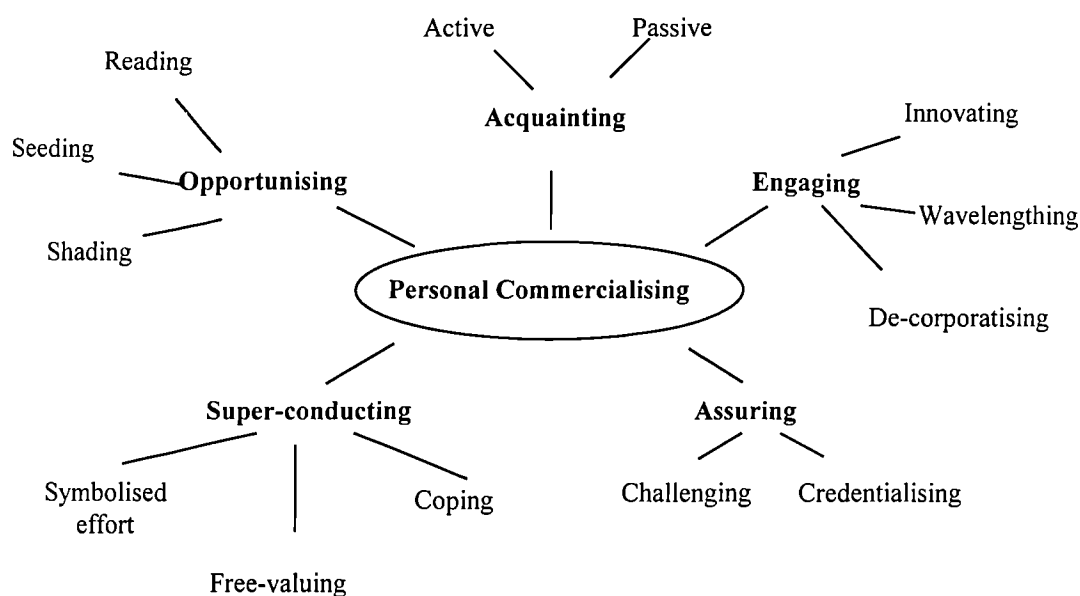
Excerpts from the theoretical memos explain the behaviours my research identified and illustrate some of these.

Acquainting

Acquainting is the ability to meet potential customers face to face. There are two types of acquainting, active and passive. Active acquainting is stimulated by the consultant, for example canvassing a sales meeting. "He rang from Swindon station to say 'I'm an occupational psychologist and I'm waiting for a train which is an hour and a half late, can I come and see you'."

Passive acquainting is meeting potential clients in the course of work, for example meeting people in the course of a project you are doing. Passive tends to be more powerful, because potential clients don't feel they are being sold to and it gives the potential client the chance to see the consultant in action. "Well it was good for us because they could be introduced in an applied way, because there was work to be done ...Another supplier we've used has recently expanded and bringing people in to meet me. I know why they do it in that it has to be done but it always feels intrusive to me. It always worries me when people want to tell me I've got a need and I don't know it yet."

Consultants may do profile raising work, for example, provide training seminars to groups of people in order to create an acquainting platform. "I had had contact with them before, but not as client. Colin interviewed me for an external assignment they were handling." Consultants can achieve this through other bodies, for example professional associations or business schools, which has the treble impact of providing extensive acquainting opportunities, fee income and credentialising the consultant. "They used to advertise advanced interviewing skills courses and you would see their name in every IPM Journal as it was then."

Engaging

Engaging is the ability to relate well with a potential customer. I've noticed three categories of engaging. These are innovating, wavelengthing and de-corporatising.

Innovating is the ability to communicate new ideas to clients. A client's view, "We soon began to value his creative inputs in developing approaches to management development." The consultant's perspective, "We like doing things that are different. If something new comes through then we are more likely to want to do that."

Wavelengthing is about speaking the client's language, and having a personal style that fits with theirs. Some consultants 'click' with some of the people they meet, and quite often the longer term consultant/client relationships are formed on this basis. The key skills in wavelengthing appear to be the ability to read a client and understand the style that relates to that client without needing to ask. Then to have the ability to 'tune in' and adopt the idiom for a given situation. Client perspectives. "So I think they were much better at adapting themselves to the client audience." "I think they are quite good at reading what sort of client relationship you want to have with them." "I think you actually need to somehow or other absorb them into the company, and the team."

De-corporatising is the ability to move a relationship with a prospect from a formal to an informal/semi-social basis. "They don't pester me or do the 'lets keep the client warm' type stuff." Clients talk of some consultants as friends they have grown to know over many years. Often taking them with them as their own jobs change. With de-corporatising the veneer or corporate interaction is dispensed with and the two parties to the relationship begin to enjoy their mutual acquaintance for other

dimensions than work. With this comes semi-social meetings. "And I keep in contact with Steven, and he and I are going to have lunch next month, so I can tap into some ideas. So it's all very informal."

Assuring

Assuring is the ability to convince a potential client that you are the best consultant for their situation, i.e. provide assurance. The two categories of assuring are credentialising and challenging.

Credentialising is how strongly a consultant is endorsed in the eyes of the client. The most powerful credentials come from the clients' direct experience (self referencing) and the views of the client's personal contact network. In the process of selling a particular piece of work the consultant has little control over these, as they are pre-determined. Consultants can influence credentialising by delivering results for clients, publishing books, and media appearances. Credentials are at an individual level and a consultancy firm level. Clients seem to place more emphasis on the former. A client's perspective, "if you go to a big company that's got a name a lot of people sit on the coat tails of that name. Whereas these work hard for their name. And I know it sounds a bit kind of naff, the people I have worked with actually care about what they are doing."

Challenging is consultants asking better and more relevant questions in order to really understand the client's situation. Challenging is not about the volume of questions or the use of a carefully reasoned audit questionnaire. It is the ability to home in on the real issues through asking questions and interpreting responses. I'm not sure whether this is a developable skill, or whether it is a quality of, perhaps, more intuitive individuals. "They were more thorough. And probably the questions they asked were, what might be perceived to be risky questions. So they probably

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asked more about the politics, and, to get a real understanding I suppose of what they would be up against if they took the job on."

Super conducting

Super-conducting is how to perform on a project to create a lasting favourable impression in the client organisation. This is key to how marketing works in the management consultancy field. Super-conducting creates acquaintances and credentials. It generates goodwill in your favour. Marketing is simultaneous with project delivery.

The categories of super-conducting that I've observed are coping, free-valuing, and symbolised effort.

Coping means accommodating client demands as a job progresses. This is conjecture but I believe that consultants create scope in projects to allow this to happen. Consultants also use coping as a tool to regulate or test client interest. For example, consultants will vary the enthusiasm of response to a client's interest and give the client a task to cope with as a method of vetting them. It is about negotiated co-ownership with the skill being sensing how far to push it with a client. "So with the firm, because they know the company well, Barry, Denise or Mark will come in and say 'I just don't think this is good enough, don't think this is right, don't think you are on the right track', and I appreciate that. I'm paying for their expertise. I'm not paying them to be lapdogs in fact 'Oh yes, if you want this, this is what we'll give you, and what's more whilst we're doing it we'll find something else that adds to our bills for this month...it's that sort of glitz, that sort of smooth salesmanship type thing I don't get from them, that I don't have any time for, to be honest." "And that was one of the things I talked to Barry about and he was very clear that they accept

responsibility for the piece of work they do. They are not foisting it off on the client. "

Free-valuing is the goodwill gestures in the course of the project that the consultant provides without seeking recompense. This can be in the form of extra advice, training support, help in 'selling' the work within the client organisation, or personal help for the individual client. "He's very helpful, helping me talk through some of the steering I have to do internally." "I know they are perceived as expensive. Now I would argue that I had value for money because they didn't watch the clock, you know, give loads of free advice, lots of support." "We had one consultant in for an exploratory discussion who then proceeded to invoice me for half a days work." I feel that consultants know they are going to be called upon to provide input over and above the project terms of reference and provision for it when bidding for work.

Symbolised effort is being seen by the client to be working hard on the project. It is a method bringing the comfort of tangibility into an expensive intellectual service such as management consultancy. "We've had some people doing some work on strategy and they've put in an enormous amount of time and effort, but their last document, their final piece of work was half a dozen pages long. And the chief executive sits there and says "what have we paid out hundreds of thousands of pounds for this for, have they really spent all this time." High day rates may be begrudged to a far lesser degree if the client feel they have 'got their pound of flesh'.

Opportunising

Opportunising is the ability to recognise and cultivate opportunities with a client. I've noted three categories of opportunising namely, reading, seeding, and shaping. Reading is the capability of a consultant to see opportunities. "Masses, masses, and

its strongly encouraged. So if any of us are at all sales minded any piece of work you do can lead to other pieces of work. The judgement is a sense of what to go for or what to leave alone. Because there are plenty of things that ought to be left alone."
Which opportunities within the client will be pursued? "There is no formal mechanism for doing it. Its very much at the discretion of the individual."

Seeding is feeding clients ideas which the client subsequently recognise as a need for their organisations. "We may equally choose, and do it increasingly frequently, to invite the key clients to lunch, basically on a just 'when you are in town come and have lunch' and we use it as an opportunity to talk about what's happening and it triggers something 'good heavens, I didn't know you did that, well actually we're very interested in that'"

Shaping is jointly developing an opportunity into a project with a client. Shaping is a way of a consultant minimising the risk of competition by influencing the terms of reference for a piece of work in order to play to their strengths and capabilities.
"Barry and I haven't actually done any live work together although we've talked about lots of things, but we've got nothing off the ground." "I got a call from a marketing director in Paris saying 'do you remember I met you about four years ago in the lake district. I have a problem with my team and would like you to do some team building.' Now she is in a position to initiate a ten thousand piece of work, but she's not particularly senior and probably will not be talking to anybody else."
"And we try and avoid it. We think it creates the wrong relationship with a client."

I felt an instinctive confidence in the overall direction of this line of investigation. I had reached a difficulty in being able to move forwards from here.

I leave the documentation of this track of my research for the time being in order to acquaint readers with my progress along the parallel direction, the behaviour of the clients of consulting firms.

Insights from the perspectives of clients

The second direction I followed was the consultant client relationship from the perspective of the client. I augmented the data from the four client interviews by selectively coding based on the data I had generated in the previous phase of the research, and by theoretical sampling with consultants. The output of this was a development paper which I presented initially at the inaugural Customer Research Academy Workshop in March 1998, and following further work as a competitive paper at the 1998 Academy of Marketing conference.[6]

This paper was grounded in less data than the previous papers from the consultants' perspectives. This limited the degree of grounded theory analysis I was able to apply. My view is that it offers a useful platform for future investigation, but in itself introduces nothing particularly illuminating. This is supported by four blind reviews from my offering the paper to other conferences and journals. It was clear that this line of research was potentially interesting, but my research to date not substantial enough to provide a valuable output.

I needed to determine the future direction of my research. I had pursued two different avenues simultaneously, one looking at the behaviour of consultants and the other, the behaviour of clients. The former has reached an impasse because of my difficulties in synthesising an overall theoretical explanation. The latter was in a far earlier stage of development. Whilst both were suggesting possibilities, it was clear that I was far from being able to offer a new and succinct explanation of the behaviours I had observed.

Choosing the preferred direction

My decision was to suspend investigation around the clients' behaviour in favour of the consultants' perspective. There were three components to this decision.

First, out of the two directions the 'client perspective' had the least data and was less substantial. Second, feedback from the research community moved in support of the consultant's perspective. It seemed to generate the greater interest. Third, my own bias played a part. Working as a management consultant gave me a stronger interest in the understanding of the consultants' perspective.

The client perspective remains as work in progress. I have applied the constructs in a consulting capacity. This has facilitated the generation of more data. Some of the themes have also been recognised or adopted by other researchers.

Integrating personal legitimising and personal commercialising

Having decided to continue with data development from the position of the consultants, I re-attempted to integrate the two aspects of personal legitimising and personal commercialising. I tackled this by fracturing the categories of the two constructs, comparing the relationships between each and generating an theoretical proposition based on this. The result was the concept of 'creative coping', shown in figure ten, below.

Figure ten: a conceptual map of the marketing practices of management consultants 2/4/98
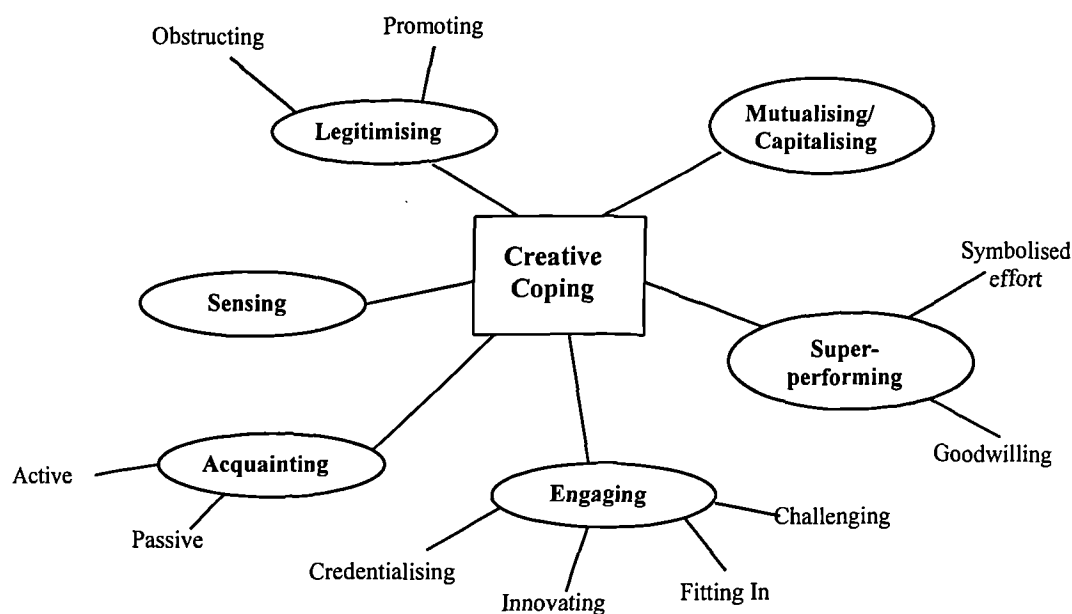
'Creative coping' is about how management consultants reconcile personal preference with individual commercial obligations. This recognises that consultants have the need to generate an income for their employer, and usually find the clients from which that income comes. The aspects of creative coping link very closely with the personal commercialising construct discussed earlier. The main distinctions are as follows.

My re-sorting suggested that 'engaging' and 'assuring' from 'personal commercialising' were sufficiently similar that they could collapse into one. I chose the term 'engaging' in preference to 'assuring' or other choices as I felt it captured the essence of the activity more accurately. 'Engaging' is how the consultant relates with and 'tunes in' to a prospective client. I continued with the processes of 'credentialising', and 'challenging' as previously included within 'assuring', retained 'innovating', but felt that the label 'fitting in' was more appropriate than the alternative 'wavelengthing' when I combined 'wavelengthing' and 'de-

corporatising.' I changed 'super-conducting' to 'super-performing', to make it a more easy to understand label. I elevated the 'coping' aspect to the central theme of the behaviour on the strength of its presence across the other categories. The term 'fee-valuing' became 'goodwilling' (that is the generation of goodwill). 'Opportunising' was re-worked to the label 'mutualising/capitalising'. I perceived the components under the original 'opportunising' term were too broad to fit under the one label. 'Mutualising/capitalising' reflects the characteristic of consultants making the most of situations when developing relationships with clients. The 'reading' element became 'sensing' (explained as a consultant's ability to assimilate the nature of a situation and determine possibilities from it).

I found this representation uneasy. I believed it embraced my data. Yet it appeared too contrived and included anomalies in the logic of its structure. For example, within 'super-performing', 'symbolised effort' is a method of super-performing which generates goodwill, yet 'goodwilling' appears as a separate part of the theory. Such goodwill would contribute to the consultant's ability to engage with a client, but 'engaging' is an un-related branch according to the map. 'Acquainting' and 'engaging' appear as two steps in a client development process, however the remainder of codes at that conceptual level have no process order. My theoretical explanation neither confirmed with recognised grounded theory types[7], nor merited the recognition of a new one. In an attempt to generate a theoretical explanation of my data I had forced the fusing of previously developed constructs rather than remaining faithful to the inherent processes of grounded theory research. I had tried to take charge of the data with unsatisfactory results.

I felt I had reached a mental 'impasse'. I reasoned the most appropriate action would be to return to the data afresh and attempt to ignore the theoretical insights I had built up. In this way I sought to avoid a (by now recognised) tendency to give an unwarranted regard to my own ideas.

4.2.3 Phase three - re-coding of data and further synthesis

I entered the third phase of my research in April 1998. This involved me in re-coding, comparing and synthesising the data I had generated in the forty months since the start of the study. I believed my competence as a grounded theory researcher had developed over the time I had been working on the study. I was now more capable of using data generating insights through a grounded theory approach. When I was selectively coding I noticed on occasions I was gaining perspectives from data which three years ago I had not considered relevant.

My return to the data did not transpire to be as dispassionate a dissection as I thought it might. I began with data at the very start of my field work, and then progressively re-coded and applied the principles of grounded theory. This brought out new interpretations, interrelationships and patterns. As my re-coding progressed I noticed that, through the process of memo writing and comparison, certain themes were beginning to emerge as significant. My work gravitated around these themes. I experienced having to handle my own prejudices and biases in this analysis and synthesis.

The process of re-coding brought me up to a point where I had developed substantial memos around main themes in the data. I moved further away from the very rigid memo structure that I'd adopted at the start of my research. I found it easier to broaden my insights into the data. However, I still needed to identify the relationships between these themes and the over-arching explanations for the behaviours observed. I found this a particularly difficult phase of the research. A core variable was not clear.

Evolution to the emergent grounded theory

I show the evolution of the theory and the data synthesis using three diagrammes. These diagrammes come from the middle months of 1998 and were developed by me as an aid to my communication of the 'state of the theory' to my supervisor and fellow grounded theory researchers. They represent sequential steps. Each diagram is underpinned by theoretical memos on its constituent parts. These explain the behaviours, with indicators from the research data. Properties and linkages were recorded to the degree that I was able to identify them.

Figure eleven shows the main themes from my initial re-coding of data, and some of their components.

Figure eleven: Behaviour of management consultants – themes 27/7/98
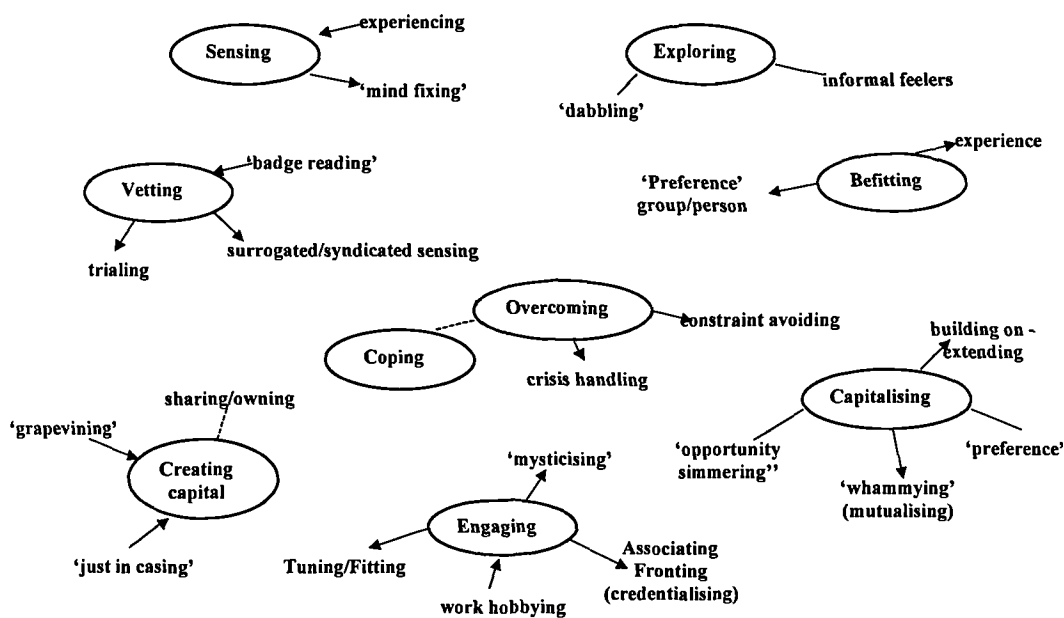
The labels are explained below.

Sensing *is the consultant's ability 'read' a situation. I had noted this behaviour before. In this representation I saw that a consultant's 'experiencing' of a situation contributed towards 'sensing', and 'sensing' in turn helped determine the mind set with which a consultant viewed future situations, which I labelled 'mind fixing'.*

Vetting *is the process of determining the attractiveness of an option, to glean its possibilities. I saw that 'badge reading' (looking at the physical trappings and associations of someone) a one method that consultants used to vet a person or situation. I also picked up that consultants are themselves vetted. This happens by clients talking to their peers and getting recommendations of good consultants from them, and clients holding 'beauty parades' which involves a short list of consultants taking it in turns to present their credentials and modus operandi of handling a project to a panel of executives from the client firm. The data also showed how clients gave consulting firms they were dealing with for the first time 'little testers' of work to gain experience of their performance. I labelled this 'trialing'.*

Exploring *is where consultants investigate possibilities. Evidenced by the data were two processes, 'dabbling' and 'informal feelers'. 'Dabbling' involves experimenting with ideas or areas of work, to generate learning or familiarity. 'Informal feelers' is a consultant's use of casual associations with others to gain information. The emphasis here is the informal, rather than formal approach by which this is conducted.*

Overcoming *is about being able to resolve the work challenges the consultant has to deal with. I'd put a dotted line link with 'coping' as I saw this as very closely related to coping, as explained earlier. But more importantly the data suggested two main ways in which consultants overcome challenges. The first is 'constraint avoiding' which is the circumnavigating of obstacles and usually involves creative thought.*

The second is 'crisis handling' which is the consultant being able to manage calls on his or her time in light of the obligations they are under.

Befitting *is choosing actions and directions appropriate to the context. I noticed the strong influence of individual and group preference on the way consultants chose to behave in order to maintain a certain image. This led to the label 'preference'. The data also showed how a consultant's experience shaped what they considered to be 'befitting' behaviour in the future. This led me to the label 'experiencing'.*

Capitalising *is about making the most of situations. Evident in the data where the characteristics of 'building on' or extending existing contracts, the notion of 'whammying' where consultants try and achieve a double or treble impact from a particular situation, and 'opportunity simmering' which noted the consultant's ability to sense opportunities for work with clients and 'keep them on the back burner' until the consultant felt it the appropriate time to push the opportunity further with client. The data also showed how an individual's 'preference' influenced his or her inclination to pursue an opportunity.*

Creating *capital is to do with the development of credentials, knowledge and goodwill. There were three aspects of creating capital evident in the data. 'Just in casing' is the process of a consultant making sure that they make a favourable impression on everyone they meet in the course of business, because the consultant is never sure who will become a potential client in the future. 'Grapevining' is the consultant benefiting from word of mouth recommendation from satisfied to potential clients. The 'grapevine', over which consultants have little direct control, acts as a method of broadening the perceived worth of clients in the eyes of the market. 'Sharing/owning' related to the individual consultant's claim on a relationship, and the potential for enabling other consultants to use that relationship for their own business development, and the reciprocal situation.*

Engaging *is about 'getting on' with people. This code has been prominent in my earlier stages of theory development. The re-coding suggests four components to engaging. 'Tuning in/fitting' is the consultant's ability to establish empathy with a potential client. 'Work hobbying' is the consultant's use of their own interests as part of the client engagement process. It recognises the overspill from personal to work life in this arena. 'Mysticising' is the technique of generating sufficient opacity in a proposition to help engage the client. Being selective about what you tell a potential client is part of this. It is demonstrating that you have information which you are not prepared to share with the client at that stage. 'Associating/fronting' is the use of recognised identities to project a favourable image for yourself.*

This map of themes was presented with two footnotes. The first noted the importance of 'contextual characteristics' in the presence of these behaviours. This is saying that the structures and procedures in this substantive area impact on the ways people behave as illuminated by the data. The second commented on the prevailing influence of 'personal preference' on the way that consultants worked. This is brought out specifically in some of the themes shown on the map, but the variances in the data intimated that the influence of personal preference was of high significance.

I reflected on the result of my data re-coding and noted the following:

The labels I selected are broad in scope, and open to possible misinterpretation (some require a fair amount of explanation to make them comprehensible). There is little sense of cohesion between the themes as mapped. Aspects are shown as stand alone items, although linkages between them are suggested, these are not clear from the map. Some of that shown by the data are processes, and some outcomes. Maybe insufficient scholarship has been applied to facilitate a more insightful understanding

of actual process. Several aspects are unremarkable. Their presence is expected, not insightful, and one could reasonably believe that the presence of these, together with an understanding of their particular components, exists in the domain of knowledge to a far greater degree than my data was able to demonstrate.

Overall, this is too broad a picture. There are many possible avenues I could take to develop my research. Possibly each of the themes merits exploration in its own right. But the pursuit of all is beyond the expectation of doctoral research. I needed to devote attention to the main issue evident in the data, and in so doing suspend investigation down all lines.

I looked around the area of 'personal preference'. I had subconsciously recognised its importance by electing to treat it as an overall qualification of the behaviours observed by reporting it as a footnote. The data gave its status of influencing everything on the diagram. I moved to undertake selective coding around the theme of 'personal preference'.

Selective coding for 'personal preference' generated the longest single memo to date. The diagram below (figure twelve) shows the main clusters within 'personal preference' as evidenced by the data. As with the previous map, the diagram does not show the relationships between the themes, its purpose was a statement of my overall comprehension of the data at this stage in the development.

Figure twelve: Selective coding and 'personal preferencing' 16/8/98
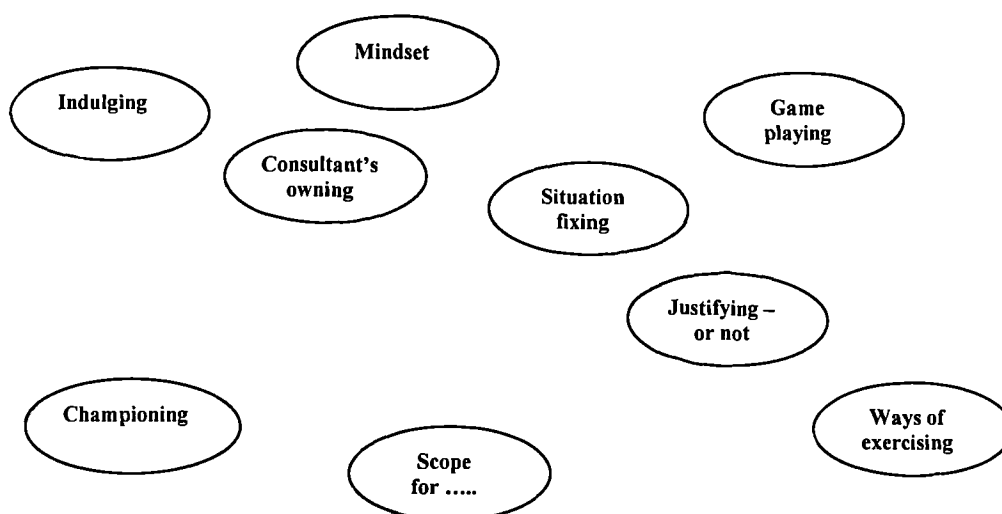
The following notes help explain the diagram.

Indulging *is a consultant's actions being driven by his or her own preference. It comprises being attracted to some working situations more than others, choosing who you work with and the company you choose to keep, using hobbies and interests, selecting what you do because you enjoy it ('creativity' and 'fun' came through strongly in the data), blurring the boundaries between personal and work life and using work activities to facilitate a more advantageous standard of living through other means than getting paid.*

'Consultants owning' *is their 'territorial' behaviour. It involves overtly staking a claim on a client or intellectual property, treating clients as personal property, 'just in casing' and goodwill stunts to expand personal property, owning the consulting firm or part thereof, and applying the techniques to colleagues as well as clients.*

Mindset *is the individual consultant's mental frame of reference when considering a situation. It involves latching on to ideas, being selective as to what information one pays heed to, being selective in assertion, seeing mindset shaped by personal*

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experience, the influence of personal ambition and intent, and the degrees of

stigmatisation exhibited by individuals.

Game playing *is an interpretation of some of the actions by consultants. The data demonstrated a detached perspective that some consultants held as a result of their ability to distance themselves from what they viewed as a game of work, and their sensitivity to the game playing of other (clients and colleagues).*

Situation fixing *involves consultants making the working environment or context as they wish it. This includes having a level of discomfort they are prepared to tolerate, flirting with possibilities and dabbling with ideas knowing that not all will be followed through, finding 'an angle' to overcome a perceived constraint, and accommodating their own particular agenda within the bounds of the situation. Choice in impressioning is a collection of tools and techniques that consultants use in the influence of others. This includes associating, name dropping, selective use of props, idiomatic engaging, perceived customisation, selective disclosing, selective performance/responding, engaging through personal qualities.*

Championing *is the consultant's ability to take charge or drive a situation. Included are self starting, using assertion, taking advantage of confusion, championing in the face of opposition, and having 'permission' to champion.*

Justifying *is about successfully explaining a course of action if required to. The data showed justifying to promote or obstruct actions, justifying prior to and retrospectively, pseudo endorsing and letting things fizzle out, bragging and performance claiming, smokescreening to distract attention, logical consequencing, using enforced priorities, obeying preconditioned obligations, trading off, using the sympathy vote, and rational argument.*

Ways of exercising *are the methods used to mobilise personal preference. This involved taking advantage of situations, selective alignment, opportunistic whammying, leaving alone and letting evaporate, subtle impressioning, influence by activity, recruiting support, and selective creativity.*

Scope for *is about the freedom to be self indulgent that a consultant enjoys. This includes personal targets, plate balancing and the juggling of several commitments, having cultural permission, having space, using the dual role of selling and delivering.*

It was at this stage in the study that I first became conscious of the distinction between implicit and explicit permission in the consultants' behaviours. Explicit permission involves requesting and receiving permission to act in a certain way. This involves the techniques of 'justifying'. Implicit permission is a consultant having the freedom to pursue a particular course of action without needing to gain expressed permission. The distinction is intimated in the map above. For example: 'having space' and 'cultural permission' appear under the theme of 'scope for', 'taking advantage of confusion' under 'championing', 'blurred boundaries' under 'indulging" and 'situational accommodating' within 'situation fixing'. This revelation I still believe was a significant point in my understanding of the data, and the emergence of the core variable.

I returned to my personal preference data and began to synthesise a conceptual interpretation, with explicit links between the various components. Seven days later I drew the diagram below (figure thirteen), as a representation of my current consciousness.

Figure thirteen: Personal legitimising – map of memos/themes 27/8/98
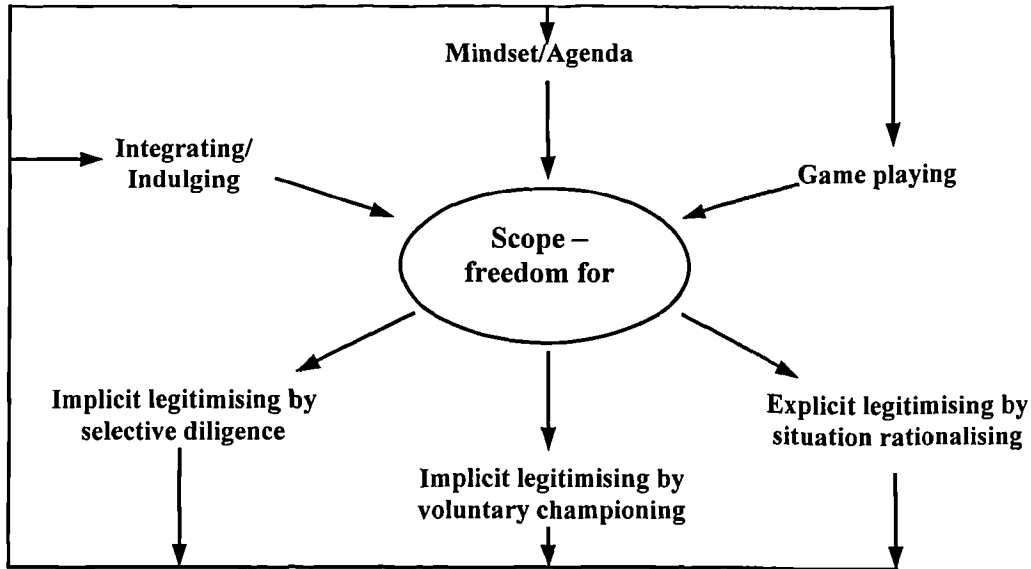
This, from the memo that accompanied it, is an explanation of the diagram.

Central to the picture is a consultant's 'scope' or freedom. This has three main

influences on it. First the **'mindset/agenda'** *of the individual, second their ability to*

integrate *personal and work interests, and thirdly the ability to* **'play the games'** *in*

influencing others and deploy the tricks of the trade. The mobilisation of legitimising

is noted in three directions.

Implicit legitimising by selective diligence *involves consultants doing what they*

want to do within the bounds of their professional freedom. This is based around

their ability to choose what they do to a degree without needing to 'ask permission'

or justify themselves. Within this the process of 'engaging', 'shaping' opportunities,

'stimulating' new opportunities, and 'super-performing' on jobs in order to make an

impression are noted. All these happen at the discretion of the individual consultant.

They are selectively diligent in their actions.

Implicit legitimising by voluntary championing *involves a consultant expanding his/her territory. Voluntary championing is where people put themselves forwards to take responsibility for activities in a certain area, and in so doing expand their area of legitimate activity.*

Explicit legitimising by situation rationalising *involves consultants gaining approval to act. This involves justifying their intent in advance or explaining their actions retrospectively. This may be achieved by 'latching on' to popular ideas, 'being obligated' to provide things for others, 'selective disclosure' of information during the justifying process, using 'smokescreening' to distract attention from one issue when promoting another, 'logical expediency' as a rational justification for the next step, 'performance claiming' to provide evidence of achievement as justification, and 'pseudo endorsing' as an avoidance tactic for something which the person considers a lower priority.*

There is a feedback loop which connects each of the three methods of legitimising activity to the inputs to 'scope'. This feedback reflects the change in a consultant's inclination, perspective, game playing ability, and (ultimately) territory as a result of their actions. This mirrors the idea of 'experiential shaping' that had emerged in earlier developments from the data.

I moved away from the working theme of personal preference back to the label I first created nearly two years previously, personal legitimising. I felt the explanation of personal legitimising I offered then, namely 'the process by which individuals manipulate situations to suit their own agenda' captured the essence of the main issue emerging from the data. However, the breadth of explanation now offered by the label had broadened significantly.

This was the first portrayal of a core variable since becoming 'blocked' in my working with the data five months earlier. The map was still far from an explanatory grounded theory. Not all of the items in the flow diagramme were processes, I had not determined the properties of each element of the diagramme which are the characteristics that help inform of cutting points, causes and consequences. The term 'mindset/agenda' was too simplistic a label; the data and my own pre-understanding suggested that people work to multiple rather than single agendas. However, I saw this as a significant step forwards. I felt that I had become clear about the central theme to my research, the core variable, and was beginning to believe more confidently in the aspects picked up in the map and the behaviours exhibited in the research data.

I used this as a foundation for what transpired to be the fourth phase in my analysis and synthesis of data.

4.2.4 Phase four – establishment of the theory around the core variable

This phase of the research saw the re-establishment of personal legitimising as the core variable in my study. At first glance it appears that my analysis has come full circle but that is not the case. Having previously suspended investigation into personal legitimising, I returned to the construct with a confidence of its centrality to my data, and with a far more embracing comprehension of its components and influences.

I now recognise at times during the research I began to search too hard for a central theme for a theory. Looking back I see that at times I lapsed into 'managerial forcing' where I became more interested in the outcomes rather than the processes.

The synthesis of the theory from this stage was achieved by my application of the following for procedures.

First, progressive memo writing around the theme of personal legitimising, each memo looking to gain further insight into the situation from the previous. This started with a brief summary of thoughts and embraced a further nine stages resulting in a memo 23,000 words long. Second, the use of selective coding and theoretical sampling with further consultant interviews together with personal reflection and the mobilisation of pre-understanding as sources of new data between each memo stage. Third, the identification of 'causes, consequences, and cutting points', being the parameters by which the data within personal legitimising became progressively handled, and its structure emerged. Fourth, the use of a grounded theory study group within the university faculty as a discussion forum for the evolution of the theory and the challenging of any of the components it comprised.

This proved an intensive period during which my research gathered pace. Below is the first, and shortest, of this series of memos. Its roots in the previous representations of the data shown in this synthesis section should be clearly evidenced. As a summary memo it is naked of indicators.

Personal legitimising (memo PLTM 1)

The process of personal legitimising is how people effectively influence their working environment to suit themselves. This is a substantive theory which has emerged from the study of the marketing behaviour and practices of management consultants.

Personal legitimising happens in these main ways:

- *developing legitimacy by selective diligence*

- *creating legitimacy by voluntary championing*
- *obtaining legitimacy by opportunistic accommodating*
- *justifying by selective disclosing*
- *justifying by logical consequencing.*

These are explained in turn.

1. Developing legitimacy by selective diligence

This is the process of influencing the (work) situation by being selectively diligent, and in so doing shaping the environment to suit yourself.

The way that this is done is by being selective in which clients or contacts you give attention to which opportunities you choose to promote, by selective seeding/shaping and stimulating, and by being selective on which projects you put in extra effort and super-perform. In this context, these form a process, i.e. selective engaging, selective shaping, and selective super-performing. By doing this you are fashioning your working world in the style you want it to be.

This is the dominant form of personal legitimising. I see people using this method to integrate their own interests with their work situation.

The properties of this are:

- *implicit, i.e. by doing things this way, people get away with following their own agenda, and don't have to justify their actions. You do this with stealth*
- *slow, it can take quite a long time to succeed in aligning your working life through this route. These aren't up front 'in yer face' fixes*

- *resource ownership dependent, a person's ability to accomplish personal legitimising through this route depends on their ownership of the resources and mechanics of implementation, i.e. time, contact, clients*

- *organisational tolerance, another main property is the high degree of organisational tolerance or scope that is available to the individual. The amount of freedom they have. This comes from having a senior rank in the organisation, having a broad, rather than narrow role, performing strongly such that credentials and goodwill have been earned, or working in an environment that is generally tolerant*

- *'nous*[8] *and guile, the method needs people with the capability of influencing subtly, to shape and influence situations without the people and situations realising they are being shaped. These tend to be experientially derived skills.*

- *choice, there has to be choice available to people, or the scope for creating choice*

I could call this branch 'creating legitimisation by subtle influence', meaning that what goes on is away from the notice or adjudication of outsiders, and the method depends on an ability sway the work environment in the direction of your own ends.

2. Creating legitimacy by voluntary championing

This is where a person achieves legitimacy by volunteering for an area of responsibility aligned with their interests, and getting their offer accepted.

The properties of this are:

- *quick, tends to shift personal boundaries of legitimate activity in a short space of time*

- *no initial territory necessary, the method is about claiming chunks of territory, rather than developing it organically*

- *implicit, when the responsibility for that area is awarded, activity within becomes implicitly legitimised.*

Involuntary responsibility can be handled by 'pseudo endorsing', whereby you overtly agree to support a direction or initiative, and impede its progress by withholding resources necessary for the accomplishment of the task, thus impeding its progress.

3. Obtaining legitimacy by opportunistic accommodating

Here, the person sees an opportunity to integrate an element of their personal agenda, with work priorities. This happens on a piecemeal, opportunistic basis, by being able to dovetail personal priorities in with the organisational ones on a largely reactive basis.

The properties of this are:

- *opportunistic, need to take advantage of situations when they arise, little scope for forwards planning*

- *small scale, usually opportunities are small in scope, but numerous*

- *neither overt or deliberately covert, its as if they don't merit the seeking of higher approval, or secrecy*

- *no adverse impact, i.e. whatever is accommodated has no noted detrimental impact on the main task in hand*

- *links exist or can be easily created) between items on the personal agenda, and the work agenda.*

4.   Justifying by selective disclosing

This is where a direction or action has to be overtly justified. The characteristics of the situation do not match the properties of the first two routes to personal legitimising. Selective disclosing is the considered partial use of information by a person, to show the situation they are aiming for in the best light. The ways this happens are:

- *performance claiming, here data is offered to show a particular direction in the best light*
- *latching on, here a reputed (often external source), is used as evidence in support of a direction*
- *blaming the unreachable, here failure for something to happen is attributed to something, which has no real method of answering for itself or being interrogated.*

The properties of these methods are:

- *explicit, the justification is overt*
- *intolerance, the need for such justification is the person being recognised as operating outside the areas of organisational tolerance permitted*
- *variability of disclosure, there is no 'best degree' in the amount of information to disclose, this is a personal judgement.*

5.   Justifying by logical consequencing

This is being able to justify an action or direction by presenting it as a logical consequence to the current situation. Way this happens are:

- *meeting obligations. Here the person is likely to have 'become obligated' by previous endeavour, or commitments given*
- *logical next-stepping. Here the way ahead is logically justified by the efforts or investment of what has gone before.*

The properties of these are:

- *explicit, this is overt disclosed/discussed justification*
- *intolerance, the need for such justification is the person being recognised as operating outside the areas of organisational tolerance permitted*
- *engineerable, the obligations may have been explicitly created, or be a natural consequence of the person's earlier cultivating work*
- *rationally sound, the justification stands up to reasonable logical scrutiny.*

Putting this together....

This is my view of how the parts within personal legitimising all hang together.

People work away and do a reasonable amount of 'obtaining legitimacy by opportunistic accommodating'. They follow their whims and their little indulgences and nobody seems to mind much. The work gets done, indeed the ability to do this may be viewed as a perk of the job. In parallel with this is the progressive shaping of their personal working world by selective diligence. This takes time (e.g. years), but over time has a powerful ability to align the working world with personal agendas. The techniques at play seem equally valid on internal colleagues as well as existing clients and external contacts. And providing what people do remains within the boundaries set by the properties in that context, then their style and direction of endeavour remains largely unquestioned.

When a person wishes to dramatically re-align the direction and scope of their work, they move into voluntary championing. If successful, they acquire new territory, and their activity in and around this is implicitly legitimised. They may find opposition from others, if others feel they have claim to that territory, and indeed they may have to defend their patch from colleagues in 'championing mode'.

The main cutting point between the method of legitimising with implicit properties (which is the majority of the legitimising I picked up), and the methods with explicit properties come from where the person oversteps the boundaries resulting from those properties. Then they have to either accept a lower scope for personal legitimising (which may result in disillusionment, etc), or be able to justify what they are doing/want to do explicitly. If indeed they fail to accomplish this justification successfully, it is very likely to create disillusionment. Just a point here, all the overt/explicit justifying I came across was based around rational arguments, or arguments contrived as rational.

If I were a manager trying to use this theory to help run my organisation, my main concern would be around the 'developing legitimacy by selective diligence'. I cannot be sure that my people are always working with the best interests of the organisation at heart. Yet, when I challenge them, they can all come up with logical and plausible reasons why the situation is as it is. But if I'm not careful, knowing my organisation will reap the seeds sown today in years to come, I will find my organisation taken off in all manner of directions, largely because of the imposition of personal agendas.

The above represents the first stage in the final phase of theory development. Personal legitimising has emerged as the core variable. Five behavioural categories have been identified. Each is a strategy by which personal legitimising can happen. The structure of the theory looks to be a grouping of strategies with individuals moving between the routes to personal legitimising.

As stated, the remainder of this final phase involved theoretical sampling and re-memoing. This involved a further nine forms of personal legitimising, each a refinement on the previous.

During this process, indicators were woven into the fabric of the memos. Properties and other characteristics of the categories were identified. Some categories were amalgamated when the data exhibited identical properties. For example, 'justifying by selective disclosing' and 'justifying by logical consequencing' became part of a new category, 'retrospective justifying'. New but related categories emerged when fresh data revealed a variance in properties across the same category. For example, 'support mustering' emerged as a division of the original 'voluntary championing' category. 'Pseudo endorsing' emerged from 'selective diligence'. On occasions, new data helped illuminate the fuller nature of a category and its label changed accordingly. 'Selective diligence' evolved into 'sequential impressioning'.

The process emphasised the importance of the distinction between implicit and explicit forms of personal legitimising. This, supported by the properties of the categories, became a major factor in the structure of the final theory. To illustrate, opportunistic accommodating is an implicit route to personal legitimising and voluntary championing, an explicit route. The second structural determinant emerged as the direction of personal legitimising. The theory makes the distinction between those behaviour strategies with which an individual aligns their personal and work agendas, and those with which the individual defends. Opportunistic accommodating, for example, is about alignment whereas the emergent 'retrospective justifying' category is defence after the event.

As the theory developed, the distinctions between categories made the boundaries of each clearer, and the dynamics of causes, consequence and the presence of cutting

points more evident. On the 1st October, 1998 (6.30 a.m.) I became aware of the

main cutting point in the theory, 'organisational tolerance'. Organisational tolerance

is about the freedom an individual is allowed, the degree of autonomy they have.

This was shown to be the key determinant on whether an individual's route to

legitimising was implicit or explicit. That is, should an individual wish to

accomplish something beyond the bounds of his or her operating territory, then that

individual would need to secure explicit permission. The data also revealed the

importance of personal astuteness in identifying possibilities for personal legitimising

and making the strategies work. I've chosen the colloquial English word 'nous'

(rhymes with 'house') as a label for this.

The next chapter explains the emergent grounded theory, personal legitimising. Prior

to that the concluding section of this chapter reflects on my analysis and synthesis of

data.

4.3 Reflections on the analysis and synthesis of data, and the emergence of personal legitimising

I round off this chapter with my reflections on my route to personal legitimising. This section accomplished three things. First, it summarised the route I travelled to discover personal legitimising. Second, it reinforced the difference between the resultant form of personal legitimising as presented in the next chapter and the earlier published version. Third, it identified some of the issues about the research process I used.

4.3.1 The route to personal legitimising

At the start of this chapter, I repeated the project chronology from the earlier explanation of research methodology. The purpose of this was to aid the reader's navigation through the analysis and synthesis of the data. The navigation task is complicated by me not following a linear route in the generation of the theory. Hopefully, the path is evident in the previous pages in this chapter. To emphasise the main points, below is a synopsis of the key parts in the theory generation process.

- Access to a consulting firm, obtained and subsequently extended. This revealed data which led in October 1996 to the discovery of 'personal legitimising'.

- A 'work in progress' paper on personal legitimising presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference, July 1997, and subsequently published in the Journal of Marketing Management. Personal legitimising established in the literature.

- Gained permission to involve the consulting firm's clients as data.

- Coding the consultants' behaviour in the eyes of clients revealed the construct 'personal commercialising' which I attempted and failed to integrate with

personal legitimising. Presented in a paper at the January 1998 Marketing and Entrepreneurship research symposium on personal legitimising and personal commercialising.

- In parallel, coded the clients' behaviour in their use of consultants. Saw this as alternative direction for the research project. Presented paper at March 1998 Customer Research Academy Workshop, and subsequently at the 1998 Academy of Marketing conference.

- Selected the 'consultants' perspective' as the more attractive direction for the study, despite being blocked by the incompatibility of the original personal legitimising theory and personal commercialising.

- Decided to return to the original data generated in the study and re-code/re-synthesise, as a route to overcoming my difficulties.

- Identified several clusters of consultants' behaviour using grounded theory, but not synthesised to the form of an integrated theory.

- Needed to decide which of several possible avenues to pursue. Decided to focus on 'personal preference' (i.e. the manifestation of personal priority in work activity) as it permeated all the other behaviours identified.

- Selectively coded around personal preference and re-labelled core variable, personal legitimising.

- Became aware of the distinction between implicit and explicit forms of personal legitimising.

- Engaged theoretical sampling and further writing in a series of ten progressively longer memos covering a theoretical explanation of personal legitimising.

- This resulted in the discovery of six behavioural strategies by which personal legitimising happens, and the identification of the cutting point of organisational tolerance.

4.3.2 How personal legitimising has evolved from 1996 to its current form

This thesis is about the process of personal legitimising. Personal legitimising is about how individuals integrate their personal and work agendas. My original perspective on personal legitimising was developed in October 1996. That it became a prize winning conference paper and was subsequently published has perhaps given it an unduly high status in the context of this project. The original perspective of personal legitimising represents one stage in the development of a satisfactory theoretical explanation. This subsection clarifies the difference between the original and subsequent forms.

The original form involved two three-stage processes. The first process is about how people obstruct the progress of ideas and initiatives that don't fit with their own agenda. This is a three stage process of 'stigmatising', 'pseudo endorsing', and 'smokescreening'. It involves taking a deliberate blinkered view of a situation, giving lip service to an initiative rather than genuine support, and finally using a form of distraction to justify one's inaction if called. The second process was concerned with how people promote personal legitimising. The three stages in this are 'latching on', 'self-indulging' and 'bragging'. One recognises an alignment between personal and commercial agenda, excessive indulgence and, if one is called to explain, use bragging to justify.

The final emergent form of this theory is more embracing. It comprises six behavioural strategies by which personal legitimising happens. These are not presented as a sequence of activities, but delineated by their properties, in particular the distinctions between implicit and explicit activity, and whether the strategy aligns or defends personal territory. It introduces a dynamic in the form of how one's personal legitimising scope increases. This is brought out through the recognition of organisational tolerance and a personal astuteness which I've labelled 'nous'.

All but one aspect of the original insight into personal legitimising are incorporated in the fuller theory. 'Latching on' relates to aligning and is evident in strategies which bring personal and work agendas together. It has become a sub-core variable. Self-indulging is present in all six categories, and to some extent is implicit in the title, personal legitimising. Bragging, under a modified label, has become one of the activities within the new category, retrospective justifying, as has smokescreening. Pseudo endorsing remains a category in its own right. Stigmatising is the only aspect term not figuring strongly in the new theory. The data showed it lacked significant presence and role clarity to earn its way into the final theory.

4.3.3   Reflections on the grounded theory process

I am aware that in arriving at personal legitimising I turned my attention away from several, possibly fruitful, channels. As stated previously, the perception of the consultant-client relationship from the client's point of view remains as work in progress. I feel that I could have presented a case for the elevation of other themes such as 'sensing' or 'coping'. I chose the personal legitimising angle, because the data showed it to be the most embracing, but some of these other ideas remain as the roots to further discovery. The two main observations of the process relate more to grounded theory method rather than personal legitimising per se.

First, providing the researcher 'follows the rules', I believe grounded theory is a very sympathetic method. It will take you somewhere. By nature of data, as the building blocks of theory, being grounded, the method will facilitate valuable insight. Second, with grounded theory, the data takes charge of the researcher, not the other way round. If one follows a grounded theory route, one may be confident of an outcome, but it provides no particular control on the direction of the outcome, or how long it will take the researcher to get there. I have mentioned this in the research

methodology chapter, and will re-visit this in my final comments at the end of the thesis.

A concern for me in the development of a grounded theory is being able to position the theory within extant knowledge. I deliberately avoided reading texts about the management of management consulting firms, and the marketing of consultancy services prior to undertaking the study. Without the process of writing papers for journals and conferences, which involved reference to contemporary literature, I would have depended totally on the final literature search to determine the fit of my work in the parc of knowledge. I valued the feedback and insights the process of publishing and presenting provided me. I appreciate that this introduces another source of bias/pre-understanding/ pre-conception into the generation of a grounded theory. But I believe my work owes much to this.

Notes:

[1] Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868 – 1928) is one of the most famous of Glasgow's sons, and a highly significant figure in the Art Nouveau movement. An architect, decorator, graphic artist, painter and furniture designer, Mackintosh's most famous buildings include the Glasgow School of Art, Scotland Street School and the Willow Tea Rooms.

[2] Investigation into the marketing behaviour of independent management consultancies, using a grounded theory approach, Simon Haslam, MEG doctoral colloquium, University of Strathclyde, July 1996.

[3] Personal legitimising: a perspective of marketing management was published in Journal of Marketing Management Volume 13, number 7, October 1997. It was awarded an Anbar "citation of excellence".

[4] Barney Glaser used the phrase "nifty little paper". in general discussion at a grounded theory workshop in Haasrode, Belgium, 1997. The term implies grounded theory study which has some conceptual insight but is not strong enough to be representative of the main issue that people are trying to resolve in the study.

[5] "Doing it my way: marketing in practised in a management consultancy firm" appears in Academy of Marketing UIC/MEIG – AMA symposia on marketing and entrepreneurship interface, proceedings 1996-1998. ISBN 1-901-547-005, pp 599-610.

[6] "Corporate executive seeks management consultant for long term friendship" appears in the proceedings of the 1998 annual conference of the Academy of Marketing ISBN 0 86339 807 3, pp 278-281. It is being developed as a working paper with the Department of Marketing, University of Strathclyde.

[7] Grounded theory types are expressed by Barney Glaser in 'Theoretical Sensitivity, Sociology Press', (1978), pp74-82, and by Bengt Starrin and colleagues in 'Along the path of discovery: qualitative methods and grounded theory', Studentlitteratur, (1997), pp 40-42.

[8] Nous is British slang (rhymes with 'house'). It is a colloquial term which reflects an individual's astuteness of interpretation and action. It may be likened to people being "streetwise". It is explained more fully in chapter five.

5   PERSONAL LEGITIMISING, THE EMERGENT GROUNDED THEORY

This chapter explains the emergent theory of Personal Legitimising.

The first section (5.1) outlines the overall theory, and defines personal legitimising. The second (5.2) section expands the theory into its six constituent categories, then maps the relationship between these. The third (5.3) explains why personal legitimising happens, and the foundations for the processes observed. The next six sections (5.4 to 5.9) examine each category in turn, using indicators from theoretical memos to show the properties within each category. Each of these sections has three parts, an explanation of the categories, the properties of the category and the implications of the category. Section 5.10 examines the major cutting point in the theory. This is followed by section 5.11 which looks at how an individual's ability and scope for personal legitimising develops. This helps position the theory within other data emergent in the study, showing its fit with the broader context of my research. Section 5.12 introduces the consequence of failed attempts at personal legitimising. The final section (5.13) begins to illuminate the implications of personal legitimising on marketing management. This explains why I believe this theory is important, and how it impacts on the understanding of marketing. This final section leads into a fuller consideration of the relevance and implications of the theory in chapter seven.

I have included excerpts from my theoretical memos to assist in communicating the theory. These are written in italics and boxed. Phrases of particular gravity when analysing and synthesising data are underlined. These excerpts are small elements of longer documents, so each is preceded by a brief introduction to its context, and followed by an interpretation. The purpose of the indicators in this chapter is to help

convey personal legitimising. The indicators are not themselves the explanation of the theory.

5.1   Introducing personal legitimising

The process of personal legitimising is how people effectively influence their working environment to suit themselves.

This is a substantive theory which has been discovered from the study of the marketing behaviour and practices of management consultants. As a substantive theory its explanatory scope is bounded by the context from which it has emerged.

The term 'legitimising' means to make logically acceptable, to serve as justification for. 'Personal' means such legitimacy centres on the individual in question rather than a group of people or an organisation. Individuals legitimise their own activity. Personal legitimising is how people secure acceptance for what they do and the way they do it. Colloquially it has been expressed by management consultants as people 'doing it their way', and individuals 'getting away with it'.

The theory is primarily a cutting point study within the theoretical type of 'strategies'[1] (Glaser 1978: 76; Starrin et al 1995: 41). Personal legitimising reveals a group of six behavioural strategies, each of which is a category within the theory. The properties of each category form the boundary to the activity. That is the cutting point between one form of personal legitimising and others. Individuals move between types of personal legitimising activity according to the characteristics of the situation.

The categories do not form an overall process. The nature of personal legitimising activity in any context depends on the match between the properties evident in a specific context and those within each context.

Personal legitimising is offered in an 'emergent' form. This means it accounts for the data upon which it is founded, but recognises enhancements and modifications may follow as more data are introduced.

5.2   An explanation of personal legitimising

5.2.1   Theory structure

This section explains the structure and constituents of personal legitimising. Figure fourteen, below, shows the theory's structure.

Figure fourteen: The substantive grounded theory 'personal legitimising'

Key: [solid box]   =   core variable
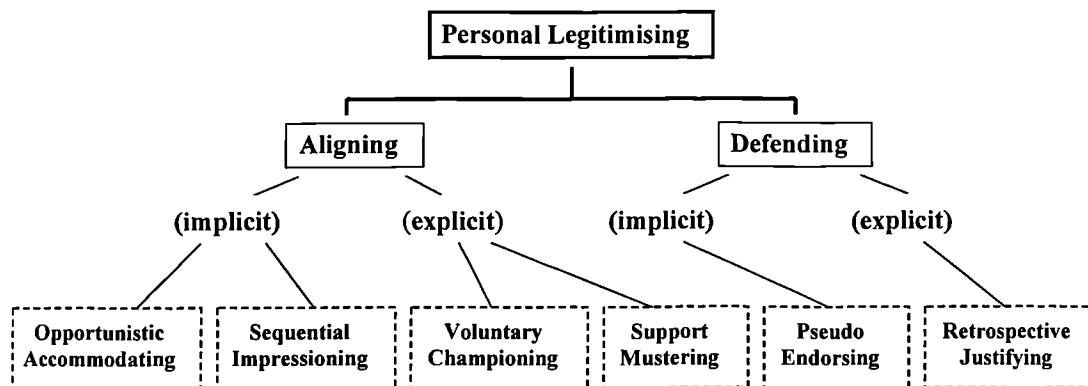
[thin box]   =   sub-core variable

[dashed box]   =   categories

Personal legitimising has two sub-core variables, 'aligning' and 'defending'. Aligning involves the processes that individuals use to bring their working domain into harmony with personal agendas. Defending encompasses the processes that individuals use to retain areas of activity that they feel legitimately theirs. These two sub-core variables reflect commonality of properties within the six categories of the theory.

Within the two sub-core variables is a distinction between those categories that are 'implicit' and those which are 'explicit'. Again this reflects the properties of the

categories. 'Implicit' means legitimising processes that are un-discussed with colleagues. Explicit means discussed or agreed areas of legitimate activity.

5.2.2 Introduction to the six categories

A brief outline of each of the six categories follows.

Opportunistic accommodating

The least intrusive form of personal legitimising is 'opportunistic accommodating.' Here, the person sees an opportunity to integrate an element of their personal agenda with their work priorities. This happens on a piecemeal/opportunistic basis. People follow their whims and exercise small indulgences and nobody seems to mind much, not that everybody else in the firm necessarily understands the true extent of this. The work gets done, indeed the ability to 'opportunistically accommodate' may be viewed as an un-discussed perk of the job.

Sequential impressioning

In parallel with this is the progressive shaping of their personal working world by 'sequential impressioning'. This takes time (for example, many months), but has a powerful ability to align the working world with personal agendas. The techniques seem equally valid on internal colleagues as well as existing clients and external contacts. Providing what people do remains within the boundaries set by the properties in that context, then their style and direction of endeavour remains largely unquestioned. This appears the most dominant form of personal legitimising.

Voluntary championing

When a person wishes to dramatically re-align the direction and scope of their work, he or she moves into 'voluntary championing'. If successful, they acquire new territory, and their activity in and around this is implicitly legitimised.

Support mustering

Substantial shifts in the areas of legitimate activity can be achieved through the idea of 'support mustering.' This involves influential groups 'changing the ground rules' around which they and others operate. The acquisition of support from colleagues to jointly invoke change is a part of this.

Pseudo endorsing

Defending legitimacy by pseudo endorsing involves situations where an individual agrees to support a direction or decision, then impedes its progress by withholding the resources necessary to accomplish the task. No approval is sought for the behaviour at the time of doing. It involves giving 'lip service' to an unrequited area of responsibility, to enable the pursuance of more appealing interests.

Retrospective justifying

Retrospective justifying involves the 'after the event' justification of one's action to colleagues. It happens when a person's behaviour is questioned and involves the response to such questions. The term 'justifying' is involved because an individual selects the most appropriate line and style of the argument for the situation.

The six categories are explained more fully, together with an illumination of the properties and their implications, in sections 5.4 to 5.9.

5.2.3 Three other facets of the theory

Personal legitimising embraces three further important aspects. First is the cutting point of 'organisational tolerance'. This is a major factor in the distinction between implicit and explicit forms of legitimacy. A cutting point is a threshold which indicates a step change in the pattern observed. The behaviours or modes of operation either side of the cutting point are different. As a person moves across the cutting point they move from one mode of behaviour to another.

'Organisational tolerance' is the scope for freedom afforded to somebody in the organisation. As people cross this cutting point they are forced from categories of personal legitimising that have properties implying implicit legitimacy to those with the property of requiring justification and the attainment of explicit permission. The study suggested most activity is implicitly legitimised. This means conducted within the bounds of freedom that an individual feels he or she has.

Second is the growth of an individual's 'nous'. 'Nous' is an individual's guile and astuteness in a context. Its presence impacts on the style of and scope for personal legitimising.

Third is the consequence of frustrated attempts at personal legitimising. This leads into 'accommodating'. This involves what happens when personal legitimising is thwarted.

These three aspects, together with the six categories, are explained more fully later in this chapter. This concludes the overview of personal legitimising. The next section

discusses why personal legitimising happens and the drives behind the behaviours recognised.

5.3   Why personal legitimising happens

The theory is concerned with how personal legitimising happens and the strategies that individuals use to affect self interest. It is less concerned with motive, although data did reveal some of the ingredients of personal agendas.

In summary, personal legitimising seems to exist because people seek autonomy over their working environment. Excerpts from my theoretical memos help explain. In this indicator from the memo 'indulging' a senior management consultant describes a characteristic of her firm.

> " There is space for you to do what you (consultants) want here.... people become too self indulgent in doing what they want to do. And that the discipline about, 'well actually a business plan is what we need to do, whether we like it or not', it becomes second on the agenda and nobody minds that particularly."

She intimates the pursuance of personal agendas and priorities. She recognises this as a characteristic of the way her colleagues work in the firm, suggesting this might at times be at odds with the believed corporate direction. I also see the characteristic of personal freedom coming through. Her phrase, "nobody minds much" gives the impression of a high degree of tolerance of people's individual agendas.

A second indicator from an interview with a market research consultant during the theoretical sampling phase adds to the recognition of alternative agendas being present in their work behaviour.

> WH (the consultant) replied to my comment on the presence of personal legitimising, as she enquired into the nature of my research, saying "Yes, there is always an ulterior motive".

The above, from the memo 'personal preferencing', suggests more complex motives behind peoples actions than purely the pursuit of business objectives. In her later example, her ulterior motives were driven by her personal inclinations. Below MG, a senior consultant comments on the financial targets and incentive system that his consulting firm operates.

> *"There is a target system, the system to incentivise people to sell and deliver. Loosely the target system, loosely, is intended to do a little of that. None of us believe that's that. I don't think we're involved in this primarily for extrinsic rewards. I think we're much more intrinsically motivated. So I don't think anyone would pretend that that (the incentive system) really does that."*

This suggests people's motives and stimuli are more complex than the behaviour promoted by the two 'crude' areas of incentivised selling of projects and the incentivised contribution to consulting contracts. The term 'intrinsic rewards' suggests outcomes that are more personal and possibly harder to discover. It also conveys they are not entirely selfish.

This indicator from the memo 'blind spots' intimates the complexity of motive behind behaviour. The chairman of a consulting firm was talking to me over lunch about the troubles he was experiencing with his publishing subsidiary.

> *CK (the chairman) spoke about the performance of the sales person within this venture, highlighting what, in his opinion, was an error of judgement. He believed from the outset that this potential client was too small an organisation to be able to afford his firm's fees, but his sales person was insistent that this potential client was 'very interested' in what was on offer and consequently "she continued to devote a great deal of her time and effort to them". In the end the chairman's view was*

upheld, and despite the protestations of interest, the client never bought the firm's services. The sales person here was not necessarily applying her effort for purely self indulgent reasons, her behaviour was seen by the chairman as naïve. She had a stigmatised view of the situation, but moved ahead in the direction of the information, as far as she was able to interpret it.

The word 'devote' portrays considered diligence. In this case, the behaviour looks closely aligned with the work task. I am not sure to what degree. The chairman keeping an eye on the situation forced the sales person to justify her actions. Without the chairman's attention he believes she would have carried on doing what she did in the way she did it for longer. She justified her actions as appropriate, when called upon to do so.

The above three indicators provide different perspectives as to why personal legitimising happens. It may suggest a spectrum of 'sheer indulgence' through to 'misguided, but honest endeavour' to 'competent, and appropriately focused'. From a management perspective, the consequences seem independent of motive. It is the strategies that people use to mobilise personal legitimising that this theory sensitises people to. The next six sections look at the components and categories that make up the process of personal legitimising.

5.4 Personal legitimising by opportunistic accommodating

This is the first of six sections, each discussing a category from the theory. Each section follows a standard format of three parts. The first explains the category, the second outlines its properties, and the third examines the implications of the category.

5.4.1 Explanation of the category, opportunistic accommodating

'Opportunist accommodating' is the piecemeal integration of personal preference into the work agenda when the opportunity presents itself. It seems the least intrusive or consequential form of personal legitimising on the shape of an organisation's marketing. This is because personal indulgences are accommodated within the pursuit of a business responsibility or task, rather than having the direct affect of reorienting the task.

This, from the memo 'personal propping' illustrates.

The company chairman is interested in art. The company brochure is 'artistic' in that is follows the design style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, one of the chairman's favourite artists. His office furniture is also in the Mackintosh style. And whilst on holiday in Australia he commissioned for the firm's offices a set of glass pictures, each one being a caricature of an aspect of psychology (this being the firm's area of work).

A company brochure, office furniture and office wall decorations are useful trappings for a professional services firm. In this case, their choice strikes me as a purely personal one. Opportunistic accommodating is the label for this characteristic of

arranging the execution of professional responsibilities to facilitate the integration of one's personal preference.

5.4.2 Properties of the category, opportunistic accommodating

The four properties of opportunistic accommodating, which have been discovered so far, are:

- **opportunistic**, the chance to do such activities is taken when the opportunity presents itself. These tend to be stand alone/one-off occurrences. A research consultant I interviewed offered this indicator.

> " *Its like when we have to conduct field work and organise focus groups around the UK, we choose the field work locations so we can visit our pals. So I'm spending a lot of time in Manchester at the moment. "*

Manchester is her home town. Her ability to visit Manchester in this way depends on her firm winning research contracts that can be conducted anywhere in the UK, the acquisition of such work generating the opportunity. When this arises she selects Manchester as the location for the field work. In so doing she accommodates a personal preference.

- done **without the seeking of higher approval**. There is implicit permission, a personal freedom.

The types of indulgence within opportunistic accommodating tend to be small scale, for example using hobbies such as golf or gourmet cuisine as a method of client relationship building, or accepting invitations from universities to speak on favourite subjects. Freedom of choice seems more easily obtained if

the person has senior role in the firm. This example from the memo 'indulging' illustrates.

> *I questioned one chairman, about why his consulting firm had a recruitment and staff selection branch, after being told by one his directors that the chairman "liked to dabble in a bit of recruitment." His answer was a laugh and an admittance that the recruitment branch "is an indulgence of mine."*

As the majority shareholder, he has little need to seek permission from colleagues. The terms 'like' and 'dabble' convey personal indulgence, which when confronted, the perpetrator admitted to. This recognition of different degrees of freedom helped illuminate the cutting point of organisational tolerance. The chairman is staying within the boundary of organisational tolerance, but those with less freedom have to choose the appropriate disclosure in order to 'get away with it.'

• **no adverse impact**, whatever action is taken isn't seen to impede the work task around which the indulgence is based.

> *Talking to a group of consultants in a firm, they spoke about their ability to work from their homes which were over an hours drive from the office. They used the term 'rarely' to describe how often they came into the office. They believed they could handle consulting projects just as effectively using this method, and they valued the 'time effectiveness' that this style of working gave them.*

Accommodating personal preference for flexibility and home working is not seen as having a detrimental impact on the outcome of the task. Indeed, the implication is that the 'time effectiveness' presents this recipe as more

productive. I argue later that such deductions on the consequence of actions are over simplistic. They give superficial plausibility, but have the impact of shaping the marketing style, competence, and direction of the firm in a subtle manner.

- **integrative**, it forms a bridge between work and personal priorities. A consultant told a story about the managing partner of a firm in Leeds in the North of England who was a former rugby player for the county of Yorkshire (the county in which Leeds is located*).*

> *"When interviewing for new staff he used to look at the CVs of those applying for posts in the firm and exhibit bias towards other rugby players. He brought the subject of rugby up in conversation (Oh, I see you play rugby) and engineered discussion around it."*

Here, the interest in rugby stimulated the structure of the conversation. The managing partner is able to construct a bridge between personal interest and work. However the concern, as previously indicated, is that the import of such bias is not without consequence.

5.4.3 Implications of the category, opportunistic accommodating

Awareness of this as a strategy for personal legitimising raises four issues for exploration.

First, such activities as those illustrated can seem innocuous and inconsequential. One could view these as useful ingredients in an employer being able to maintain the appeal of a role to employees. Opportunistic accommodating may be facilitated into a job as a means of enhancing an employment package. The use of the word

'facilitated' is deliberate. My conjecture is that successful opportunistic accommodating is created by the individual in the role. It is of value if the person feels they are 'getting away' with something. I don't see the same appeal resulting from a consciously bestowed freedom. Maybe it links into the notion of intrinsic reward mentioned earlier.

Second are issues around the formation of habit. 'Permission by non objection', which is this aspect of implicit legitimacy, can create patterns of behaviour, which become more strongly rooted the more they are repeated. Tacit acceptance breeds precedence and habit. The consequence of this is the concern that opportunistic accommodating exercised without explicit recourse to management intent may unwittingly take a firm down certain directions.

Third relates to the consequence of opportunistic accommodation. The personal choice to take one course of action means an organisational choice too. For example, the decision to equip the office in Mackintosh style means that becomes part of the 'front' of the organisation. This indicator from a client interview suggests the consequence of opportunistic accommodating. She introduces (unprompted) the subject of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh style brochure mentioned earlier.

> *They were very efficient when I first made my enquiry to Bristol over the telephone. They did send me some literature straight back which engaged me as it had Charles Rennie Mackintosh designs in it, which I thought "gosh, I like that". And the narrative sort of hit me as well. But that's a very personal thing and some people would know Charles Rennie Mackintosh if he ...... 'never heard of him'.*

The decision to conduct field research in Manchester enhances that organisation's ability to organise field work in Manchester as against any other city in the UK. If

opportunistic accommodating has the property of 'no adverse impact' on the immediate task, it also makes a small but definite change to the host organisation.

Fourth is what happens if people overstep their bounds when opportunistic accommodating. A consultant who is comparing his new employers, a smaller owner-managed consulting firm, to his previous employer, the much larger PA Consulting describes.

> "...and nobody actually _nobody sort of checks up_ on what you have been doing each hour of the day or what have you. You really are accountable to yourself at the end of the day."

This 'bestowing of freedom' is one interpretation of this property. In situations where freedom was more restricted the data showed how people are effective at disguising their indulgences by being very selective in which information they disclosed to colleagues. When called upon to justify their actions, or when they felt they ought to seek permission, an 'angle' on the situation would be contrived to make their actions plausible. This reflects a transition from opportunistic accommodating to retrospective justifying. Supposition here is that once an individual has had to move to retrospective justifying, he or she sensitises colleagues to a propensity to use the strategy. In short they attract attention towards themselves. This could result in the 'clamping down' of freedom or may disadvantage the individual through the 'laying bare of the actions'.

5.5 Personal legitimising by sequential impressioning

5.5.1 Explanation of the category, sequential impressioning

My data suggests sequential impressioning to be the dominant category of personal legitimising. It involves individuals being selective in what they give attention to. It stems from people having choices in how they execute their work and satisfy the requirements of their organisations, and the cumulative effect of this over time.

Impressioning is the ability to, and exertion of influence. Sequential impressioning recognises that influence is the result of a series of consequential actions. In this substantive area the attainment of commercial opportunity results more from progressive nurturing that one significant event. Personal legitimising by sequential impressioning explains how individuals exercise their personal preference through this dynamic, noting the consequential impact on their operating context.

A chairman of a consulting firm gives an example of the selective use of impressioning on clients he feels merit development.

> *"we may equally choose, and do it increasingly frequently, to invite key clients to lunch, basically on a just 'when you're in town come and have lunch' and we just use it as an opportunity to talk about what's happening <u>and very frequently that triggers something</u>. 'good heavens, I didn't know you did that, well actually we're interested in that'."*

Here, he is focusing on selected targets and contriving situations that the prospective clients find plausible in order to promote particular aspects of the firm's activity. A consultant from the same firm is more candid in his explanation.

> *"... we're also proactive in that we lead our clients into what they need."*

Again, the view of deliberate and calculated intent comes through, as does the ability to be successful in this task without the clients realising this is happening to them. The use of the word 'lead' also suggests the 'series of steps' approach to marketing that is evident very strongly in the data.

This suggests one important consequence of sequential impressioning, that of 'displacement'. Preference for one direction by implication means the 'letting go' of others. As demonstrated in the data, this is personal choice. The cumulative impact of this can be whole lines of activity, endeavour and relationships that are rooted in individual preference rather than agreed corporate direction. The 'sequential' aspect also creates a momentum which, once energised, can be difficult to dilute. The subtlety by which impression takes place helps create an opacity and a management challenge if one wanted to control it.

5.5.2 Properties of the category, sequential impressioning

The five properties of sequential impressioning revealed by the data are:

- **multi-modal** means there are many different ways that impressioning happens. Each method belongs to one of three types: associating, signalling, experiencing.

  Associating involves impressioning by inferring or suggesting a link with an established concept or reference. The resultant impression is rooted in the credentials of the association.

Signalling is impressioning by asserted intent or promise. The impressionor seeks to stimulate and condition the expectations of the impressionee. Here the head of a consulting firm uses 'impressioning by coat-tailing' to introduce a colleague to a client and successfully execute a 'hand off', thus avoiding an unwanted personal commitment and the need to fully resource the project with a fellow senior consultant.

> *The initial introduction came to me, I had an initial meeting, I er made sure I involved BB in the second one, making it explicit to the client that if they go ahead with us the work will be done by BB. In practice BB will probably do it with someone else..*

The head of the firm initially develops the opportunity, then senses the appropriate opportunity to introduce a colleague, taking care not to 'foist the client off' with someone perceived as too junior. The head of the firm also realises that his colleague will be equally selective on what he chooses to do with this client, by using a third colleague as additional resource. This indicator from a client shows 'impressioning by rhetoric.'

> *"I suppose they knew what they would be up against when they took the job on, although it was far worse than they had predicted so I'm told."*

The choice of words comforts the client into further believing she obtained excellent value for money. The timing of words has the 'security of the winning post' rather than the effect of creating undue concern should they have been uttered earlier in the contract.

Experiencing is impressioning by engineering the experience of others, managing their interface and involvement in order to convey certain messages.

> *"what they don't do is wash their hands of it, of the responsibility once they have made a change or accommodated some change."*

I've labelled this particular 'impressioning by super-performing'. This is the ability to willingly accommodate extra effort and provide further attention to make the client feel valued. This indicator below from a client demonstrates 'impressioning by personal fit'

> *"I had a meeting with Terry and someone called Mhari who I think works part time. We clicked, there was energy there."*

Impressiveness here results from individual urgency, style, and energy. The data is rich with examples of different ways of impressioning. Sorting and comparing revealed that each is a member of either associating, signalling or experiencing. This suggests opportunity for another grounded theory study around the multi-modal property of sequential impressioning, and its three categories.

- **building on**, sequential impressioning is not the implementation of a 'grand plan', but a series of actions, one after the other, building on what has gone before. This, I believe, is an important characteristic as the data shows that each step in the development of an opportunity is evaluated on merit. In the early stages of impressioning care is taken to 'keep everybody warm.' The owner of a consulting firm illustrates this by answering my question as to whether his firm operated a marketing database system.

> *"It's not realistic. I think we have a view in the business generally that almost everybody you meet is a potential client, either now or in the future". He*

> *explained further, "it is very difficult to predict work in advance, but almost*
>
> *always you can trace it back to source."*

There seems to be a basic standard of care and attention to clients because of this difficulty of instantly being able to determine. The building on of impressions is at an individual level. Here articulated by a consultant.

> *"..its almost impossible to conceive clients other than individuals. Erm, and it*
> *would be rare in some ways that you have a contract with a client company..*
> *its signed for on behalf on the company by somebody, but its usually very*
> *directly commissioned by the individual."*

Consultants talk of clients 'disappearing off the scene' and 're-surfacing' thus showing the uncertainty and temporal complications of the 'building on' aspect from the initial 'just in case' impression. As interactions between the consulting firm and individuals grow, the stimulation of opportunity becomes more deliberate. This from the memo 'extending'.

> *I asked a senior consultant about the scope for extending a live project into*
> *other areas of work. He replied, "masses and masses, and its strongly*
> *encouraged. So if any of us are at all sales minded, any piece of work you do*
> *you can see, they lead to other pieces of work."*

The term 'sales minded' suggests the importance of being able to tune in to an opportunity and have the personal competence to be able to stimulate attractive opportunities further. Power and scope again rest with the individual. A client describes how the building of opportunity happened with him.

> *"...and I said, 'this guy looks like he's doing something interesting.'" Later in the same conversation I learned that the consultant had managed to engineer the original meeting with the (then) prospective client on the strength of a colleague's previous work. The client indicated the consultant was likely to be expanding his work in the firm. "He's already whetted our appetite...he's going to need to invest a bit more time into bedding it in." said the client, showing how the consultant has progressively built up the opportunity from the initial contact.*

This excerpt shows one step leading to another, and the progressive building on what has gone before. The consultant decides the opportunity is attractive to him, and uses the strength of previous endeavour as the platform for his next step, not being certain where that next step will take him. The point about 'needing to invest more time' into the project as articulated by the client leads to the next property, selective diligence.

- **selective diligence.** Quite simply selective diligence means that individuals exercise choice over what they do and don't do. Sequential impressioning does not imply the equal pursuit and cultivation of every opportunity or relationship. It involves personal decisions or priorities.

This indicator is taken from an interview with the chairman of consulting firm.

> *I asked how the decisions on which opportunities to develop and which ones to leave alone were made, and whether this was a collective management decision. He replied "There is no formal mechanism for doing it, it is left very much in the discretion of the individual."*

The firm 'trusts' personal decision making. The individual consultant is expected to judge the attractiveness of an opportunity and act accordingly. A discussion with a client who worked for a retail division of a prominent UK plc gives an example of how such approaches translate into practice. She said about her relationship with a consulting firm.

> *"And I think from their side there must be quite a few frustrations this year because they had a huge stream of income from me last year and absolutely nothing this year. And that's one of the measures of a relationship. If you can keep the relationship going when there is no project in place. If you can continue to meet and continue to update each other on what's happening in the organisation and what the issues are and so on." I asked her how this worked, she replied, "Barry and I have breakfast together, we have breakfast meetings probably once every eight weeks. Its all very informal,.. he's very helpful helping talk through some of the steering I need to do internally, I can tap into ideas."*

My reflection on this is that the consultant has decided this client merits his effort, and he devotes time to the generation of goodwill and the leading of the client along particular paths. He is being selective in how he spends his time, preferring to pursue this opportunity in a particular manner ahead of other possibilities he has available to him.

- **resource ownership dependant**. To legitimise activity by sequential impressioning people need the platform of responsibility, contacts, and other resources in order to have the freedom to operate in their chosen manner. A consultant outlines the underlying business development dynamic in his firm, showing the currency of individual relationships.

> *"sixty to seventy percent of work is from existing clients, the remainder is entirely from personal contacts."*

The understanding is that contacts are the personal property of the consultant, not a corporately owned resource. The data has already suggested that relationships with clients are also individual rather than corporate. Another consultant describes the temporal dimension to the development of contacts.

> *"You know some of my clients go back from when I've taken them from WS Atkins and held onto them all the way through the years."*

The consultant went on to say that over the years he had worked on different projects with these clients, but the main point is that these relationships belong to him and will move with him should he leave one consulting firm and join another.

The intimacy of a relationship between client and consultant is a dimension of this ownership along with the issues of interpersonal fit. One client, who had been forthcoming elsewhere in an interview, declined to say much about a particular area of work that her consultant was well immersed in. She volunteered this opinion in the interview.

> *"that's an area I obviously don't want to talk about too much."*

The sensitivity of the work made her uncomfortable discussing it with 'an outsider' like myself. This illustrates the depth of insight open to a consultant when working for a client. Consequentially it intimates the 'right to the ownership of the territory', such intimacy being an effective barrier to intruders.

People actively defend their territory/resources for fear of losing the control of their freedom. A consultant spoke about her reaction to the well intentioned enthusiasm of one of her new peers.

> " *And I had to say, 'hands off that's mine'*

The particular resource (an area of work), whilst owned by a consultant, was guarded from the intrusion of her colleagues. Another management consultant here reflects on her observations when advising other consulting firms about strategies for co-ordinated marketing and cross selling.

> *In commenting about territorial attitudes in firms she said. "We see this often. People say 'That's my database. You want to do a mailshot, my secretary will do it for you. These fee earners are wasting a lot of time on people who are nice chums or who they think will eventually give them work"*

There are two aspects arising from this. The first is that, despite a corporate intent to co-ordinate marketing, the consultant is unwilling to relinquish control of valued resources. The second is that, having maintained control, the consultants work unchecked in directions driven by personal interpretation and desire. The scope afforded by their resources gives them implicit permission to operate as they see fit. This 'implicit legitimacy' is the final property of selective impressioning.

• **implicit legitimacy** Within selective impressioning consultants don't need to justify actions to anyone else. The boundaries of their areas of responsibility give them license to operate without the recourse to approval. This property mirrors the dimension of 'organisational tolerance'.

5.5.3 Implications of the category, sequential impressioning

There are three issues emanating from 'sequential impressioning'.

First is the recognition that sequential impressioning is a mainstream business development strategy and has implications wider than the study of personal legitimising. One of the challenges in the research was the determination of the degree to which sequential impressioning was being used for personal agenda. The position of each form of sequential impressioning on the spectrum of personal to organisational motive proved difficult to determine. This intimates its opacity from a marketing management perspective. It is difficult for people tasked with marketing management to have visibility, let alone influence over techniques explained by sequential impressioning.

Second is definition of the audience for sequential impressioning.

The techniques of sequential impressioning are applicable to relationships between internal colleagues as well as with external contacts. This indicator from my participant observation in a consulting firm helps illustrate.

Two consultants, Neil and Kate, who although working for the same firm had different areas of activity, chose to undertake joint marketing initiatives, primarily (they said) because they worked well together as individuals, whereas neither undertook any joint marketing work with any of their colleagues working in more closely related areas.

The scope that exists under the umbrella of sequential impressioning give space to personal bias and preference. The ability of the two colleagues to 'work well together' stimulates a personal intent to do more work together.

Third is the characteristic of displacement and the consequence of sequential impressioning activity. Displacement recognises that if an individual is putting effort in a certain direction, this is at the expense of other possibilities, time available being finite. This results in the development of expertise and competence in chosen fields, and stronger bonds with some clients, at the discretion of the individual. This form of legitimacy being implicit, such strategies and decisions are largely un-discussed. A main difference between personal legitimising by sequential impressioning and opportunistic accommodating is the scale of impact. The 'shaping' of an organisation is higher with the former. The capability of a firm seems more strongly directed by residual impact of the individual actions already taken (and not taken) by its members. These personal decisions are unconsciously influencing the dynamics of the overall organisation.

5.6 Personal legitimising by voluntary championing

5.6.1 Explanation of the category, voluntary championing

When a person wishes to dramatically re-align the direction and scope of their work, they move into voluntary championing. If successful, they acquire new territory, and their activity in and around this is implicitly legitimised.

This example from an interview with a senior management consultant who is talking about a particular marketing initiative he instigated.

> *Well, in terms of the marketing, one thing did take place this year or at end of last year into this year, which has had quite a pronounced effect on the business, and I don't know if you've heard much about it. One marketing initiative if you will. One of our clients gave a talk at a forum for management development people in companies about their senior management development. They talked about us as being the people who were doing it with them and how effective it's been, all this got into the press, some magazines. And I followed up that talk with a brochure and a letter to each.*

As with selective impressioning, achievements are the result of discretionary endeavour. With voluntary championing, you 'claim new territory' rather than building on existing resource. It has the characteristic of being able to quickly generate areas of legitimate activity. In the above example, the consultant being granted permission to carry out a follow up and his resulting endeavours resulted in new client relationships and a broadening of his consulting work.

5.6.2 Properties of the category, voluntary championing

There are three emergent properties:

- **quick,** tends to shift personal boundaries of legitimate activity in a short space of time. This indicator from the memo voluntary championing shows how a new appointee in a management consultancy firm carved out a particular area of responsibility.

> *"I've become the practice head for 'bar work' (working with barristers chambers). I did some of this at the last place and enjoyed it. So I put myself forwards as the person to head what we do in that area. "*

She was able to capture a territory of activity in a short space of time. This 'permission' granted to her by her colleagues gives her licence to operate in that area.

- **expansion of territory,** the method is about claiming chunks of territory, rather than developing it organically. It represents a step change in scope. Its execution depends less on the size of the original territory than sequential impressioning. This indicator shows a particular initiative, an initiative promoted by a senior consultant in a firm.

> *They identified the value of getting decision makers 'on the way up', that is before they have decide who will be their 'pet' suppliers. They created a junior directors club. This was instigated by MG, having got the go-ahead from CK (chairman) and BB (managing director). They have recruited seven younger directors from business units of larger institutions. These people are in their first directors role. MG has also called in a few favours to make up the numbers (to make the group viable). The group should just about break even financially. It costs a few thousand pounds a year for someone to be a*

member, and the biggest expense in running the group in the costs of the guest speakers and presenters for the group's meetings.

My impression of this is that the club creates two new areas of scope for MG. The first is the relationships with the individuals in the group. MG has established the right to lead the firm's efforts in the cultivation with seven new institutions. He also has gained freedom on the nature and mode of operation of the club itself. He has asked the members for their opinion on which topics they think would make valuable meeting subjects for the club, but MG has overall control and has the ability to influence the slant on the various subjects that they plan to meet and discuss.

MG had little initial territory. He suggested the idea of the club to his senior colleagues, and capitalised on goodwill in order to establish the club in a viable manner. The people from whom he called in the favours were his initial territory. He was able to use this as 'multiplier' in the creation of new scope. In the previous indicator the female consultant was able to use her former work with barristers chambers as the initial territory, and similarly she was able to engineer substantial new scope for herself in a short time as a result of this.

- **plausible** This involves two aspects. First, the consequence of voluntary championing is implicit legitimacy, rather than this being a property. The important distinction here is that, unlike the first two categories of opportunistic accommodating and sequential impressioning, voluntary championing does not involve 'getting away with it undiscovered'. The 'permission' needs to be granted first and the territory (that is, scope) bestowed before activity in this area becomes legitimate for the individual.

Second, the request for the territory needs to be plausible. This excerpt from
the memo 'aligning' demonstrates.

> *My wife used to be sales director of a company in the States and she said "So
> how's the follow up going?" I said "What follow up?" She said "Well the one
> following the talk, how can't you...?" So I said we don't do that, but then why
> couldn't we? So I sent a letter of introduction and a brochure to each of maybe
> forty, fifty people, and then I followed them up with phone calls. And out of
> that, either directly or indirectly, we have, well certainly the one client I'm
> doing most work with right now, which will be, erm, this year I started with
> them in June, so in the second half of this year....*

The plausibility on the way forwards, and the granting of freedom to instigate
the follow up task, came from the sales credentials of the consultant's wife.
The consultant needed this input to build a sound enough case for his
endeavour. This indicator shows the thinking through of plausibility.

> *The marketing assistant in a consultancy firm was part of a team putting
> together a client seminar programme. The firm had undertaken a client
> seminar programme before with mixed results, and there was some resistance
> in the firm to the exercise being repeated. I asked the marketing assistant what
> she was busy working on and she said "we have plans to organise three
> seminars before September, and we need for these to be a success in order to
> silence the (internal) critics. "*

I interpret this as the credibility of 'organised' marketing within the firm being
at stake. It is as if the seminars were a test case. The diligence on pre-planning
is part of the plausibility building for the seminar programme (in the face of
internal resistance), and the success of the seminar programme is part of the

credentials building of the marketing function. With voluntary championing, the person crosses the boundary of organisational tolerance in order to claim the territory. This is how plausibility fits. Having achieved this the person obtains the area of implicit legitimate activity.

5.6.3 Implications of the category, voluntary championing

Three issues regarding voluntary championing merit expansion.

First relates to cause behind the use of this strategy, and why individuals follow this route. It seems to be employed when people feel organic progress either too slow or un-rewarding to achieve the outcome. Voluntary championing has the property of being 'quick' to achieve its outcome. Logical explanation suggests that time pressure, be it human impatience or a limited window of opportunity, is a factor in this strategy's use. The temporal dimension is evident in the indicators above.

Second is the style of justification used to make a claim for the territory plausible. Data is not saturated any further than plausibility to appear any more precisely described than being logically sound. This is not to say that more emotive justification is not used. Nor does it illuminate the choice of logic most suited. The category of retrospective justifying which is explained later may herald what the fruits of further research around this theme would reveal.

Third is the consequences of voluntary championing. The outcome of successful voluntary championing is a greater area of legitimate activity. Hence the individual moves back into the area of implicit legitimacy, and is likely to enjoy greater scope for opportunistic accommodating and sequential impressioning. Should voluntary championing be unsuccessful, that is the individual's request for the territory is refused, he or she moves out of the process of personal legitimising into a construct

which I've labelled 'accommodating'. Accommodating embraces how individuals

handle frustrated attempts to personally legitimise. This is explained in section 5.12.

5.7   Personal legitimising by support mustering

5.7.1   Explanation of the category, support mustering

Support mustering is creating areas of legitimate activity by recruiting the support of others. This is about fairly radical shifts in the way things are done. This indicator from a consulting firm illustrates the category.

> *The firm went through a major change three years ago. It had grown steadily previously to that, but some people in the firm weren't happy with its general direction. The chairman felt that it had reached a sort of cross roads and could go "up beat" or "down beat." Up beat involved having sales people and standardising its offering thus de-skilling the consultants' role. Down beat involved an understated behaviour, behaving more like a professional practice. The prevailing direction had been up beat, but the chairman was keen to go along the 'professional' route. After discussions, others of a similar persuasion joined him. The chairman used the phrase "the type of business I don't personally want to be in" to describe how he felt about the situation." The firm ended up splitting into two. Each with different styles of working, ownership, identities, premises and staff.*

The nature of legitimate behaviour was being changed by the 'up-beat' working style of the firm. It took one person to make his views known to colleagues, and in so doing found people of a similar persuasion. Together they energised a substantial change. The operational 'ground rules' changed as a result.

5.7.2   Properties of the category, support mustering

The three properties evident in the data are:

- **needing the support of others** to mobilise the change. Support mustering involves the 'recruitment' of others into a particular line or direction. The galvanising of support. Sound reasons may need to be presented to people in order for them to pledge support.

- **major change**, this is not about increments. It is major changes and discontinuities. I believe this is why it is the least frequent within the theory. Because the scale of the impact is correspondingly high, it occurs the least frequently.

- **slow gestation**, it takes time to hatch the idea and get people committed to supporting it.

5.7.3 Implications of the category, support mustering

Two issues arise from the data.

First relates to the nature of this form of personal legitimising. This category is the least commonplace aspect of personal legitimising. I believe this is because of the scale of magnitude of what is involved. Indeed the properties illuminated by my data come from different consultants' perspective of the same major incident in a firm, its splitting in two. More research may bring out more indicators around these properties and even reveal more properties. Its cause appears to be significant frustration. A frustration that an individual feels powerless to confront on his or her own, but one which is felt others share.

Second relates to the consequence of support mustering. As with voluntary championing, it creates areas of legitimate activity. Its outcome is the creation of fresh scope and the significant re-framing of the boundary of organisational

tolerance. Instigating the activities within this category may involve crossing the boundary into overt explanation and justifying. Much lobbying may need to take place to energise the process. The conjecture is that failed support mustering has an adverse consequence in proportion to the momentum of the movement. The individual may find themselves thrown into 'accommodating' mode (section 5.12).

5.8   Defending personal legitimising by pseudo endorsing

5.8.1   Explanation of the category, pseudo endorsing

Pseudo endorsing is where people apply 'lip service' to avoid unattractive tasks or unwanted responsibility. With pseudo endorsing a commitment is given, then resources are withheld (selectively non-diligent) and the initiative left to 'fizzle out.' The managing partner of a consulting firm discusses why his firm's marketing remains uncoordinated.

> *"I mean I was supposed to look after marketing for about six months after the company split. Neil was then supposed to have taken it on in total for about a year, but I feel he probably didn't have the interest in it either."*

He cites personal interest as the reason why things get done or not done. A disillusioned marketing assistant in a firm gives her own perspective.

> *" yes, that's how everything goes. It starts off with lots of enthusiasm and just fizzles out. I don't know why."*

The impression is that unwanted initiative dies a natural death. It doesn't need to be killed off and it may not even get an inquest. A consultant in the same firm used the term 'evaporates' to describe this characteristic of initiatives fizzling out. With pseudo endorsing, initial support for an idea may be offered by an individual, but the task fails to sustain an appeal becomes 'de-prioritised.'

5.8.2   Properties of the category, pseudo endorsing

The three distinguishing properties of pseudo endorsing are:

- **selective**, individuals choose what to pseudo endorse;

- **implicit**, people do not offer to justify their intention to pseudo endorse in advance;

- **otherwise active**, this means they are busy in a different direction. That which is pseudo endorsed suffers at the expense of another activity, rather than at the expense of no activity.

5.8.3   Implications of the category, pseudo endorsing

The main issue regarding pseudo endorsing is the consequence of pseudo endorsing action. When pseudo endorsing is successful, the individual defends their territory of legitimate activity. The data shows though that pseudo endorsing may be called into question by colleagues, which forces the individual into the next category of personal legitimising, 'retrospective justifying'.

5.9   Defending personal legitimising by retrospective justifying

5.9.1   Explanation of the category, retrospective justifying

Retrospective justifying involves being explicit with regards to personal actions.

Retrospective means it happens when an individual is called to task and accounts for

his or her actions. Justifying involves the individual's choice of the most relevant

line of argument for the context.

Research revealed a range of methods used within the strategy of retrospective

justifying. My study found that individuals being interviewed moved into

retrospective justifying mode because I asked them to expand the explanations of the

examples they offered me. The process of interviewing therefore forced retrospective

justifying to a degree. This sensitised me to the scope of retrospective justifying and

the propensity to use the approach. Less evident was individuals' actual use of the

technique in the work situation. The result is the category is richer in terms of

methods of retrospective justifying than it is people's use of the technique.

5.9.2   Properties of the category, retrospective justifying

Comparison of data reveals three generic properties across these methods of

retrospective justifying:

- **explicit**, the justification is overt;

- **intolerance**, the need for such justification is the person being recognised as
  operating outside his/her area of responsibility or operation;

- **reactive**, justification is offered in response to query or challenge.

5.9.3   Implications of the category, retrospective justifying

What is clearly demonstrated in the data is people's capability to retrospectively justify their actions. The methods noted below should be viewed as subdivisions of this category which merit further research. Labels, descriptions, indicators and distinct properties follow.

Smokescreening

Smokescreening involves directing attention away from one aspect of activity by focusing on performance in another area. Usually the area to which attention is drawn is of greater perceived value, and the technique seems to apply to retrospective justifying. This indicator from the theoretical memo 'smokescreening' shows the approach. I was talking to a consultant tasked with managing his firm's marketing.

> *The consultant said "We know that marketing has an important role, but how do you overcome the problem that we are on short term thinking. We are short term thinking not because we can't think in the longer term, but personally the business demands very short term responses. You know like last week I had to write five pieces of development material which required three weeks to do."*

The consultant used the phrase 'purely client driven' as a powerful justification for his attention on producing the development material for a fee paying assignment at the expense of giving consideration to marketing direction. In this indicator a consultant explains why the idea of client newsletters is not part of the marketing recipe for his firm.

> *"Well if you did this raises the other problem is that all the client work that I do is confidential, I can't mention any of it, its absolutely unmentionable. It is a shame".*

It is difficult to argue against such a position, but the research did reveal approaches to producing client newsletters that didn't disclose intimate client details.

These two indicators suggest three properties of smokescreening:

- **irrefutable arguments,** for example few could disagree with a consultant's decision to place client commitments as the top priority;

- **apologising** for the inability to meet obligations, using the smokescreen as almost an 'olive branch' or redemption for failure or under-performance;

- **proffered choice,** this is suggesting to others that they have choice in the matter, but with the impression that if they had to make the same decision they would have followed the same direction.

Quoting

With quoting, a reputed (often external source), is used as evidence in support of a direction. The same association that individuals use to embrace a particular approach is used as supporting evidence when convincing others of the approach's efficacy.

This indicator illustrates the use of quoting to justify the adoption of a sales monitoring and tracking system in a recruitment consultancy.

> *The chairman of the firm mentioned picking up this approach to sales tracking from Rank Xerox. He held Rank Xerox in high regard for their sales management ability, basing this judgement on his many years consulting experience. When I went to visit his firm, I saw the system in use. They (the consulting firm) has enhanced it to make*

> *it more visual by using caricatures for each of the consultants (for example Kate was depicted as a rugby player because she played women's rugby for her university), and the display of the data took the form of three of the walls in the firm's admin. office. The staff in the firm <u>said the system was used by Xerox as a sales management tool.</u>*

The Xerox association gave the system a credibility which a 'home grown' variety may have lacked. And this credibility was seen as a necessary factor in getting the approach, which was essentially a control and communication vehicle accepted as useful.

This has the distinct property of:

- **revered source,** whatever is 'latched on to' has credentials and the gravity to impress.

Compassion

This is justifying by appealing to human benevolence and understanding. It involves the use of emotion to legitimise a particular position. Here a managing partner talks about the financial performance of his firm, explaining that, whilst he has been personally very busy the overall performance of his firm is not as stunning as might be expected.

> *Financial performance should be strong but any short term problem will inevitably create a sense that if you're beavering away delivering means you're not then selling on for the next wave. And that does happen, I mean that has happened this year. We were all very busy towards to the end of last year then what with me tied up with recruiting, trying to recruit people in January, <u>Colin for a variety of personal</u>*

> *reasons having problems and so on, our mind was really off the ball in terms of*
>
> *business which meant that it was poor for a quarter. Well we will recover it, I mean*
>
> *you know as you know yourself consultancy is incredibly cyclical, and we're pretty*
>
> *relaxed about business.*

With this approach the logic stems from human consideration and the stimulation of a sympathetic response to the plight of another.

The property of this is:

- **emotion**, as the dominant ingredient of the logic.

Blaming the unreachable

Here justification is attributed to something which has no real method of answering for itself or being interrogated. In this indicator, a manager of a consulting organisation shows how his colleagues are able to manipulate situations to their advantage, and use 'blaming the unreachable' as legitimisation for they views.

> *The manager said his team are supposed to be promoting the 'business excellence*
>
> *model'. The PBA (Personal Business Advisor - the title given to consultants in this*
>
> *type of organisation) wasn't personally keen on the excellence model as an*
>
> *approach. So when with clients the PBA mentions the services the Link (the name of*
>
> *his firm) can provide and says 'you don't really want to bother with that' when it*
>
> *comes to the 'business excellence model'. When he gets back to the Business Link*
>
> *and is questioned about the excellence model, he says of the potential client , 'they*
>
> *aren't ready for it yet.'*

I came across similar from a consulting and training firm in the South West of England. Here a shortage of referrals by consultants of their clients onto the firm's training courses was countered by a 'they've all been trained' response from the consultants. Instinct told the manager of this firm that this was not the case, but having charged his colleagues with the responsibility of interfacing with the clients he was not in a position to challenge their responses.

Properties of this are:

- difficult for people to challenge the assertion, because they **can't get access**,

- **excusing inaction**, rather than promoting action. I've used the term 'scapegoat' before to talk about this idea of excuse.

Meeting pre-conditioned obligations

Here the person is likely to have 'become obligated' by previous endeavour or commitments given. The interesting aspect here is that such obligations can be conditioned or stimulated.

In this indicator a consultant talks about the falling attendance at the firm's monthly marketing and management meetings.

And we do have that slight problem that in even our management meetings which is supposed to be next week or maybe the week after, client meetings have come up and there isn't the three line whip there should be but there isn't emphasis on that. So one by one people have dropped out because they have more important client meetings on. So you know for the business the short term pressures mean that we

> *tend to forget the long term priority or the long term interest and that I expect is the essence of our marketing.*

The phrase 'we tend to forget the long term priority' suggests that the firm and the consultants have the scope to organise themselves more effectively should they wish. I don't believe the firm has an intention to do this, and I suspect that the consultants are happy to focus on the 'meeting of client obligations' and indeed may engineer such obligations any way.

The property of this is:

- **pre-conditioned obligations,** what you've already seeded. Using this as a plausible excuse.

Performance Claiming

Performance Claiming is the use of selected facts and information to convey an individual's worth and credentials.

In this indicator a management consultant talks about his prowess in fee earning, using this to justify his particular style of working.

> *Within the firm he (the consultant) was known as the 'works department' because of his jobbing shop mentality. His approach was to work on smaller consultancy assignments, and to usually complete them by himself rather than on a team basis as used elsewhere in the firm. When I raised this with him, he legitimised his approach by pointing out that at any one time he manages three times as many clients as the other consultants and that he is the firm's leading fee earner.*

The rest of the organisation seems ambivalent to this revelation of his fee earning and client management performance. The data he quoted was his own research and not the official organisational line. His evidence was neither contested nor recognised. The types of projects pursued by the rest of the firm remained the conventional longer term assignments.

In this indicator a director of a recruitment consultancy firm expresses a view on her own fee earning ability.

> *KGL also made a claim that in her first six months of working in the firm she generated £170k in fees against the 'sector expectation' of £200k annually.*

Performance claiming shows similarities with 'quoting' described above. It has the property of:

- **factual data**, what is quoted is portrayed as fact. Numbers figure highly.

One aspect alluded to in the data suggests an insecurity or nervousness associated with performance claiming. Within six months, the individuals who provided the two indicators had left their firms. My view is that performance claiming should signal a warning to firms and consultants alike. Perhaps both people in the indicators were pointing out a mismatch between themselves and their employers. Maybe further research will illuminate this point.

This concludes the explanation of the six categories within personal legitimising. That some categories have more data than others is not surprising. Similarly, the recognition that some have greater scope for future development. The next section discusses the major cutting point in the study, organisational tolerance.

5.10 The cutting point of organisational tolerance

Organisational tolerance reflects the freedom enjoyed by an individual within an organisational context. Its importance in the study is its role as a boundary between implicit forms of personal legitimising, and explicit forms.

5.10.1 Explanation of organisational tolerance

Organisational tolerance is rooted in four factors.

The first is **rank** within the organisation. This excerpt from the memo 'indulging' illustrates.

The chairman of a consulting firm created a separate legal entity under the label of a consulting firm. This was really an investment vehicle for his family. As well as holding shares in the other subsidiaries, it owned the building and cross charged the other firms within the group.

Here the chairman and majority shareholder is able to use his control over the structure of his enterprise to the advantage of his personal situation. In this indicator the chairman is the firm's highest internal authority. The term rank here has two dimensions. The first the level in the organisation, and the second is ownership. In this situation both aspects are present. The combination of these could be considered 'position power.' The higher the rank held within a firm, then the greater the amount of operational freedom that person seems to have. The more the remainder of the organisation has to tolerate that persons activities.

The second constituent of 'organisational tolerance' is **'role'**. The view of a managing partner, when talking about his work in a consulting firm in a firm illustrates.

> *When talking about who did what in the firm, the managing partner said "I mean I would be expected to do everything from, you know everything from developing ideas to programme design work, in terms of delivery, and everyone else would be expected to do the same."*

The role of 'consultant' in this firm facilitates a great deal of personal scope. My experience suggests other firms may be different. Other firms may have standard operational processes, branded or packaged products, or a separate team of people to deliver the service once it is sold. The presence of these factors reduces personal flexibility, giving people tighter constraints in which to operate legitimately. Also certain job roles, for example sales and business development may afford an individual greater freedom than other roles, for example company accountant, in the same firm.

The third factor within organisational tolerance is the person's **'credentials and reputation'** amongst colleagues. This example comes from a highly thought of consultant within a firm, here talking about the implications of his fee earning target on the way he manages his work.

> *"But, I mean you know, I did ten days (fee earning work) for the first three months of the year. Total. Whereas my target is I think ten days a month. Everybody knew I was doing other things so nobody said a word to me (the same person goes on to intimate to cutting point from this category of implicit legitimacy) '..so I suppose that if I'd continued at that rate, there would have been a discussion somewhere.'.*

He was able to enjoy the freedom resulting in his colleagues' trust in his judgement to work appropriately and effectively without intervention. It is interesting though that the consultant recognises that this 'reserve of goodwill' is finite. He appreciated that failure to achieve his fee earning objectives would generate comment. My perception of this factor is that individuals with a perceived record of high achievement (positive reputation amongst colleagues) engender greater freedom of operation. They are seen as a 'safe pair of hands'.

The fourth aspect of organisational tolerance is the firm's prevailing **'culture'**. This powerful indicator comes from a final question I asked a director of a recruitment consultancy at the end of a face to face meeting in the early stages of my data generation.

At the end of one interview with a consultant I asked him what questions I would ask if he were in my shoes doing this research, and he said, 'what would the culture allow to be built.'

My interpretation of this comment is the importance of the operational climate on the scope that individuals have. That organisations have a single culture is perhaps an over simplistic notion, but with smaller firms, such as those in this research, it is more reasonable to accept that there may be a dominant style and 'code of behaviour'. The consultant in this example intimates the influence of such behavioural codes on personal freedom.

5.10.2 Implications of organisational tolerance on personal legitimising

There are three characteristics of organisational tolerance which have significant impact on how personal legitimising works.

The first is how the four constituent parts of organisational tolerance seem to work together. Using Boolean logic, they relate more on an 'or' rather than 'and' basis. This means that if a person has a relatively lowly position in a firm, the firm is considered a strict regime, the person's high credentials provides personal freedom and scope. However the data generated in the research guides my belief in proffering the relative importance of each of these factors in the obtaining organisational tolerance is the order in which they are reported; namely rank, role, personal reputation, and prevailing culture in declining order of importance.

The second aspect is the movement of this organisational tolerance cutting point over time. As individuals spend more time in a working environment they generally benefit from greater organisational tolerance. This is partly because people tend to progress upwards in organisations with the passage of time. This is coincident with them carving out reputations and personal credentials. The other aspect is the skills for manipulating situations that individuals develop through experience. I've termed this 'nousing' using the word nous to describe an experientially derived ability to comprehend situations and deploy appropriate tactics to develop the situation in their favour. Section 5.11 elaborates this process of nousing, but its impact on an individual's increasing ability to maximise the scope offered to them through the four characteristics of organisational tolerance is noted.

Third is the degree to which an individual will put themselves over the line of organisational tolerance. This is an area for future research although it is intimated in the data.

5.11 'Nous', and how an individual's personal legitimising ability develops

The data shows the consequence of people being engaged in a course of work is an increase in their 'nous'.

5.11.1 'Nous' explained

Nous: 1. common sense (British slang), rhymes with 'house' 2. Mind or reason; regarded as the principle governing all things (Metaphysics)

Nous is the ability to sense situations and have a feel for possibilities and practicalities. Perhaps it is the art of the possible.

My opinion from the data is that people may temper their horizons before they cross the boundary of organisational tolerance, believing that their requests would be unsuccessful. This suggests a process of 'sensing' the situation, 'assessing' possibilities, and 'adjusting' one's approach accordingly. Although this process is largely conjecture, it captures the essence of what I mean by nous. This indicator from a consultant contemplating the location of his house in relation to the location of his work portrays this.

> *The consultant said he was likely to move to Sevenoaks in order to avoid spending 'half his life' on the M25.*

The aspect here is the realisation that personal compromise and inconvenience is necessary. In his opinion, a request to his employer that he spend less time with clients or could alter his working day to avoid the busy times on the greater London motorway network would not be met with enthusiasm. He had not raised the issue with his bosses, and was contemplating actions to ease his personal situation.

5.11.2 The development of nous

Whereas some individuals have a greater propensity towards this than others, the study showed that nous can be developed. Nous is an experientially derived attribute. The more someone is immersed in a context, the greater their ability to 'manage' that context appears to be. They learn more and seem to apply this learning more readily.

This indicator is about a managing partner describing the most prudent method of introducing a subsidiary business into his firm. He is making the distinction between the 'big bang' approach which involves a major launch and more steady incremental route.

> *Well, I would prefer the big bang, and I think the reason I prefer the big bang is that, a very gently done incremental approach erm, I mean which is probably more feasible. You know when I say preferred it doesn't mean it's more you know attractive. Your question is slightly difficult, and I'll answer it by distorting your question. I certainly found that because it actually makes an impact if you actually put in resource, quickly select the target company, produce products and sort them all out and shape them up and ship them out and everything, and that will be good you know for a high impact, high visibility approach. If we do the incremental approach we will bring in one person with a bit of money, what will happen is that he will be sucked into, as his skills are broad and the versatility of him is such that he can actually do mainstream (company) work and deal competently with his work, so it is very easy for him to be pulled away gently but firmly into (the company).*

Two things strike me from these comments. First is the person's ability to answer the question he wants to answer but to do this in a manner which relates his response

to my original enquiry. Second is the ability to choose the more effective route as the

one that best fits the context. This next indicator is a comment made by the

managing director of a consulting firm about how he positions his firm in relation to

the competition.

> *I mean there are consultancies out in the market place that have products and they*
>
> *sell them relatively cheaply, I think we want to be in a game where we actually do*
>
> *sell them at a more premium rate.*

The word 'game' suggests an ability to involve yourself in situation with the belief

that withdrawal from the situation is possible at anytime. It conjures up a 'low stake

environment,' and pretence. With nous, perhaps you have the ability to picture more

holistically, to see the relationship between players that a game involves.

This next indicator from a senior consultant in a firm shows the another view of

experientially shaped nous. He is talking here about a follow up campaign on a

number of prospective clients.

> *He said. "And I followed up that talk with a brochure and a letter to each, I think I*
>
> *weeded out maybe a third of the seventy five people there, so I sent a letter and a*
>
> *brochure to about fifty of them." I questioned him about the weeding out and he said*
>
> *that he had been 'caught before on that one' where he had expended a great deal of*
>
> *personal effort in courting people who it transpired to have no ability to influence a*
>
> *purchasing decision for consultancy services.*

The term 'weeded out' is a powerful expression of vetting potential clients. His

justification for and basis of weeding out could be traced back to his experiences on

similar occasions. This excerpt from an interview with the client of a consulting firm

presents another perspective to 'nous'. Here she is talking about how one of her

most admired consultants is able to facilitate the development of a particularly

intelligent and challenging group of her colleagues.

> *"BB has a nice understated way of going about things, he's nobody's fool. And occasionally he let's them know that. He sizes them up well".*

The client goes on to talk about the skills in trying to train difficult people and how

the consultant can successfully communicate with people who think about detail and

are extremely pedantic. There are several dimensions this indicator. Asserting is

subtle, and perhaps the word signalling fits in this context. He looks to occasionally

flex his muscles. There is also the dimension of sensing, as the consultant is able to

read the signals from the client and know when to assert himself, and how to do it

effectively. I am seeing tremendous ability here, and it strikes me that a consultant so

highly skilled in handling difficult clients has the wherewithal to use the same tactics

on his or her colleagues.

The head of a design consultancy shows how experience influences one's perspective

on a situation. Nous is maybe about becoming 'wise' to situations and their

possibilities.

> *"And again there's the balance there between doing that (responding to people) and between just getting tossed around by the client who never plans anything and who just expects you to be there at a moment's notice."*

The type of judgement being exercised here suggests a higher order of consideration.

Personal subjectivity perhaps. This final indicator around 'nous' provides further

illumination. Here the manager of another design consultancy talks about he

consideration of and use of different tactics to achieve a desired result.

"So you have to find a <u>different way of going in'</u> and <u>usually</u> that is to say, well we're going to understand, or we're going to do something more creative. "

This is about being able to see a viable 'angle of approach'. The word 'usually' conveys the fruits of experience and the entire sentiment suggests an ability to continue productively after the first set back. By careful thought a path can constructed to the desired outcome.

5.11.3 Nous and personal legitimising

Nous relates to the ability to apply personal legitimising. The indicators above bring out the characteristics that nous develops, it is experientially derived. This means that a seasoned practitioner may be expected to have the capacity to personally legitimise his or her activity by both implicit and explicit means more than the novice. It introduces a dynamic to the theory which sees the boundary of every aspect of personal legitimising expanding in line with experience.

I make no assertion that people apply nous to the extent to which they possess it. I also accept the likelihood that both the innate aspects of nous and its development with an individual will vary between individuals. However, the extent of this research shows that nous is inextricably linked with personal legitimising.

5.12 Accommodating consequences of failed personal legitimising

The theory discusses the strategies used by individuals to successfully legitimise activity.

This section recognises individuals don't 'get away' with everything they wish for or attempt. This could fall within the generic label, 'accommodating'. This aspect of personal legitimising is about people coming to terms with (to whatever degree) the unsuccessful outcome to legitimise their activity to the extent that they wish.

This is a relatively under developed part of the theory, further research should generate more data around this area.

5.12.1 Accommodating through accepting

The first behaviour is 'living with the result' of a decision. This could be labelled 'accepting'. Within the framework of personal legitimising this is likely to mean crossing the boundary of organisational tolerance by seeking approval or justification, finding this not forthcoming and accepting the decision. The indicator below illustrates. Here a consultant is describing some of the tensions in her firm's decision to create a publishing subsidiary to exploit some of the intellectual capital within the consulting team.

She says, "my understanding is that the majority of the products that the publishing venture is going to use are located in the consulting firm. So we will still be providing them through our consulting activities but they will also be available on the mass market in a sense, in a product, in a packaged form.... so there are some issues around whether we are, I guess, are being creamed off, and I get one rationale for that, that stimulates people to creating something different, and I can understand

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that and we will continue to go on creating new and different .... there may be some things that stay that the <u>consulting team could even get benefit from</u> ...We don't want it to go on the mass market yet. "

The term 'creamed off' is not a complimentary view of the new strategy. The consultant is seeing the reduction in her control, whilst accepting there may be commercial merit in this.

5.12.2 Accommodating and 'checking out'

The second approach to accommodating a decision is the acceptance of the situation, but personally feeling the resultant situation is untenable. This could be labelled 'checking out'. It represents a mental and physical disenfranchising. In this indicator, a marketing executive within a consulting firm expresses her displeasure at her working situation. She left the firm two months after these comments.

<u>I'm really frustrated</u> actually at the moment, <u>I'm feeling quite negative</u> because a third of my role should be marketing and PR and we sort of started off with great intentions and its just gone nowhere. And then you talk to other people here, its always been like that on the marketing side.

Maybe her initial enthusiasm for the role was naïve. Perhaps she's inexperienced at being able to read situations, or finds it difficult to look objectively. Irrespective, disillusionment dawns. In her eyes the firm's inability to help her resolve the role conflict issue that underpins her sentiment pushed her into securing another post.

5.12.3 Accommodating and personal legitimising

The relationship between accommodating and personal legitimising is that the former is a consequence of failed attempts at the latter. The data shows two initial categories of accommodating. There may be more, but a search for these and the properties therein is beyond this study of personal legitimising. To emphasise a point made earlier, the data shows a relationship between 'performance claiming' as a tactic of 'retrospective justifying' and 'checking out' within accommodating.

5.13   The implications of personal legitimising

The preceding pages of this chapter have explained the emergent grounded theory of personal legitimising. It is a substantive theory, meaning its power of explanation is associated with the context from which it has been discovered.

The management implications of personal legitimising strike me as follows. First, most legitimising is achieved without the seeking of permission. People manage to weave their personal agendas and preferences into their working lives without needing to justify their actions. The categories within the property of implicit legitimacy show how this is done. The implications of this are that it can divert a firm's business development possibilities and directions. This may undermine a sense of strategy or cohesion that a firm feels it has. When it comes to overt justification in the firm, the challenge for managers seems to be in determining which strand of justification they're faced with, other than the 'actually genuine' variety. They may be looking at a smokescreen to disguise the mobilisation of personal preference. Or they may be seeing actions that are believed sound and genuine by those doing them, but are founded on naiveté.

Chapter seven is devoted to discussing the findings and implications of this research study. Whereas this expands beyond a concern for the emergent theory, most of that chapter discusses the contribution that the discovery of personal legitimising can make.

Prior to this discussion on the findings and implications, the next chapter compares personal legitimising with relevant literatures. The purpose of this is to help integrate this new theory with the results of other research and insight.

Notes:

[1] The sub-core variables suggest the theory could follow a 'paired opposites' structure. Paired opposites means that for every behavioural category, there is an opposite behaviour within the theory. This is partly, but not totally reflected by the emergent categories. For example, 'voluntary championing' could be paired opposite to 'retrospective justifying', but I have four categories within 'aligning' and only two in 'defending'. This may be due to the data being denser around the 'aligning' aspects of personal legitimising. Maybe the theory has potential of expansion into a paired opposite structure, but such exploration would involve further research. An introduction to the six categories follows.

6.   Literature comparison

This chapter compares the theory of personal legitimising with published research. Its purpose is to position the emergent grounded theory with extant knowledge. The chapter has four sections.

Section 6.1 explains the literature search strategy and summarises the sources used. It then outlines a two stage process in comparing existing literature to personal legitimising.

The first stage involves a review of literature in the field of management consulting. This is the substantive area from which personal legitimising has emerged. This comprises section 6.2. The objective is to locate personal legitimising within the management consulting literature. This is the main component of literature comparison, personal legitimising being a substantive, rather than formal theory.

The second stage, section 6.3, involves moving beyond the substantive area to examine the broader implications of the theory. This aims to identify linkages between personal legitimising and the other fields of knowledge. Awareness of these fields have emerged from a review of substantive literature. It may be possible to raise the status of personal legitimising to a formal theory in the future. This section offers a glimpse to identify potential for its elevation.

The final section, 6.4, reviews the literature comparison and begins to consider its implications on personal legitimising.

6.1   Literature search strategy

6.1.1   Purpose and focus of the literature comparison

The purpose of a retrospective literature comparison is to determine how accepted wisdom relates to the new theory. The reference point of this literature review is the substantive grounded theory, personal legitimising.

I presented the grounded theory of personal legitimising in the previous chapter. To aid continuity figure fifteen below is a re-statement of the summary diagram that encompasses the theory.

Figure fifteen: The substantive grounded theory 'personal legitimising'
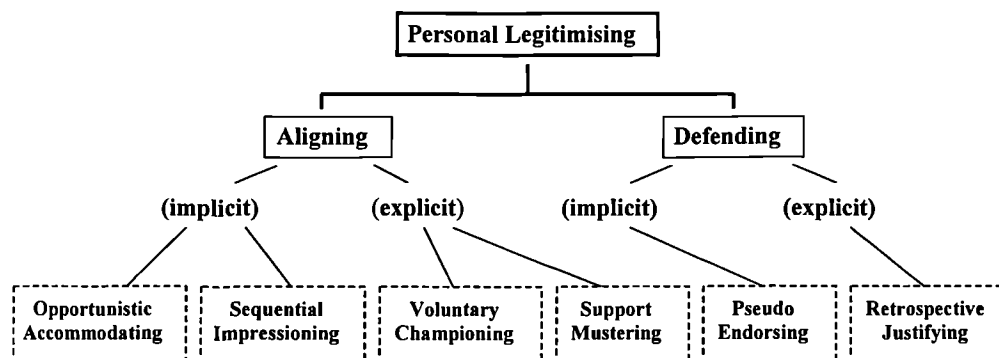
Key: = core variable

   = sub-core variable

   = categories

In relating literature to personal legitimising I looked to illuminate the following five areas.

First, the presence of personal legitimising and its components in other researchers' work. Second, the identification of other possible properties and categories of

personal legitimising, recognising the theory is offered as an emergent substantive explanation. Third, insight into the causes and consequences of the behaviours within personal legitimising and the conditions around which it applies. In short, its contextual links. Fourth, an assessment of the degree of importance that should be attached to personal legitimising within the broader realm of management consulting activity. Fifth and finally, some insight into the scope of the theory to translate to other substantive areas and potential for elevation to a formal theory.

The scope of the comparison

As a substantive theory, the external references of primary interest are literature around management consulting. A formal grounded theory would include data from a range of contexts and require study of a correspondingly broad range of literature. Such is beyond the scope of this thesis. Section 6.1.2 explains the search strategy, the rationale for examining the management consulting literature, and the consequential search steps.

Terminology implications when comparing

Grounded theory researchers are encouraged to explain their theories in the languages of their source contexts. Consequently, descriptors used in grounded theory may differ from academic convention, despite similarities between the processes or characteristics both apply to. This introduces a practical challenge to effective literature comparison. For example, it would be clearly naïve to conduct a search around the label 'personal legitimising' and hope to attain the necessary degree of thoroughness. Effectiveness in this area necessitates a strategy which reflects the nature of the processes illuminated and accommodates differences in terminology between the emergent theory and extant literature.

The importance of understanding the methodological underpinnings of work when comparing

I am aware variances between this and other theories could result from methodological differences. Just as grounded theory method is likely to produce a theory which is process oriented and offers conceptual insight, other research methods will impose a particular style on their outputs. My literature comparison strategy needed to account for this.

6.1.2   Literature review strategy

Focus on 'management consulting' literature as a first stage

Above, I established the locus for the literature comparison in the grounded theory personal legitimising, and the main area of interests in management consulting literature. The purpose of this first stage is to ensure an adequate comparison between personal legitimising and literature in the substantive area to demonstrate confidence in the integration of the new theory with contemporary knowledge.

Initial searches were conducted around 'management consulting' and its lexicographic derivatives. Early on it became clear that much research into the practice of management consulting is embraced under two other headings, 'professional services' and 'knowledge organisations'. It was tempting to embrace these two headings as entirely relevant to the substantive area. However, I believed such would be a dangerous first step. Because all management consultants fall within the domain of professional service firms or knowledge organisations, the reverse need not apply. I decided to focus on research which definitely emanated from studies around management consulting and seek input other than the two bodies of knowledge as the search progressed.

Emergent themes of interest as a second stage

The strategy I followed involved determining themes of interest from the substantive stage to focus further literature search. The two emergent themes I chose were relationship marketing and issue selling. Both these are implicated as relevant to personal legitimising from the management consulting literature.

This strategy is able to incorporate areas of literature that transpire through analysis to be of interest. Their value is self asserted. It negates the need to risk specifying streams of literature from the outset. If poorly chosen, such could make the comparison less meaningful.

My approach does not specify the degree of rigour with which particular streams are pursued. This is down to researcher judgement. There is no obligation to 'drain the tank' in terms of each extra area of literature chosen, as the role of this stage of the comparison is to indicate rather than conclude.

I picture this strategy as a dense area of activity with arms of different length emanating from its centre. The dense area represents a comprehensive treatment of literature in the substantive area. The arms each represent a resultant avenue of investigation, with the size of each arm reflecting the degree of intensity the researcher devotes to that avenue of literature.

Employing a categorising framework to aid evaluation

As part of the strategy I viewed literature through a categorising framework. The purpose of this was to help me view other management consulting research from a

more elevated perspective. Ability to determine the nature of various writings was
seen as a useful way in explaining relationships with personal legitimising.

Reviewing necessitates an awareness of the characteristics of any piece of
comparative literature. Gummesson (1991: 159), for example, warns against the use
of inappropriate frameworks to assess the work of others. The role of the framework
is to help assess the applicability of material by taking into action the salient
characteristic of each piece. Particular questions informed my choice of framework.
These included:

- content validity, does what the researcher is saying make sense?
- conceptual explanation, does the work elevate beyond a descriptive level?
- access, is the output based on genuine access to the issues under investigation?
- construct validity, does the research use external data and reference points to
  help anchor its hypothesis?
- credibility, has the research process used been applied with rigour?
- focus, who is the work aimed at, for example the research community,
  practitioners, or policy making groups?
- appropriateness, how appropriate is the research method used to the research
  issue being tackled in the work?
- bias, how has the researcher dealt with the inherent bias in the research method
  used?

6.1.3   The framework to handle literature in the substantive area

I mapped management consulting and related literatures onto a two dimensional
framework. The first dimension was a determination of the empirical underpinning
to the literature. The second dimension distinguished the nature of the research
output.

The framework is shown in figure sixteen below.

Figure sixteen: A framework for categorising literature for comparison with an emergent grounded theory

Nature of Output

	Process	Structure
Inductive		
Deductive then Inductive		
Inductive then Deductive		
Deductive		
Method not transparent		
Conjecture		

(Empirical Underpinning — y-axis label)

The explanation of the framework categories follows.

Empirical underpinning (y-axis)

This dimension denotes the prevailing research method upon which the outcomes of the literature are based. I chose six categories. They reflect my interpretation of the method used by specific researchers to develop their insights. These embrace sentiments of the literature evaluation criteria outlined in sub section 6.1.2. I recognise there is no such thing as pure induction, or total deduction. Inductive theory generation involves deductive steps and vice versa. Inductive and deductive are perhaps opposite ends of the same spectrum. However, I needed to account for

the implications of the methods used by other researchers to underpin their findings. What I mean by these six categories is as follows.

'**Inductive**' involves method where findings are synthesised to promote fresh insight. Plus the researcher presents sufficient methodological information to explain this. Such work embraced case studies and some grounded theory projects. Some authors used the label 'qualitative' to describe their activity.

'**Deductive then inductive**' involves work which starts with a deductive analysis to provide the platform for a second stage with inductive investigation. Included here are studies labelled as grounded theory which start with a literature review to home in on areas of interest, and set parameters for exploratory study.

'**Inductive then deductive**' involves initial exploratory work followed by a second stage in the research which seeks to validate findings, usually by survey. Grounded theory achieves validation through theoretical sampling, and embracing constant comparison through to data saturation. Method which I've labelled 'inductive then deductive' has the characteristic of a step change from one to the other, rather than viewing it as a simultaneous activity.

'**Deductive**' work involves research that validates hypotheses. This was often quantitative in nature. It also includes the generation of reasoned hypotheses and propositions from the interpolation of the literature.

'**Method not transparent**' involved work that I believe exhibited a gravity beyond conjecture, but whose empirical foundation was unclear. This embraced books whose content focused on research outcomes without the clear articulation of method. Such books were typically the fruits of research projects, but written for a practitioner audience. This also embraced papers reporting brief excerpts from much

larger projects. Research papers whose underpinning method was obscure, but which I felt were grounded in research activity are likewise included.

'Conjecture' usually involved writing whose underpinning was unclear, to the point that it was presented in absence of a location within existing literature. Such texts may have been more than pure personal opinion or insight, but the document showed its content to be 'floating freely'.

I must state that the categorisation is my personal interpretation. No meaning should be attached to it other than this is how I helped myself make sense of the management consulting literature and consider each text appropriately. Beyond this, there is no intent to judge or convey different levels of integrity.

Nature of output (x-axis)

Nature of output, the second dimension, is concerned with the product of a research exercise. It distinguishes between research which informs 'process' or method by which things happen, and research which informs 'structure' or frameworks within which things occur. This distinction is noted by Glaser (1978: 102) from a grounded theory perspective. I chose this categorisation, given my grounded theory is about processes of personal legitimising. It explains how personal legitimising occurs.

Whilst the distinction between process and structure takes no other account of the nature of content being categorised, being able to position the work of others in such a manner helps appropriate comparison. It provides a rationale for understanding similarities and differences between this new theory and the work of others who in essence have researched in the same substantive context.

I applied the framework to literature around the arena of management consulting, professional services and knowledge intensive organisations. In summary, that which I believed embraced the substantive area.

Other considerations in designing the framework

This interpretative framework is itself the result of experimentation. I considered other possible variables with which to map the literature. These included whether the work was conceptual or descriptive in output, the specific subject of the work (for example, marketing of consultancy services), the intended audience, the occupation of the author (whether practitioner or academic). None of these categorisations proved as valuable as the parameters selected.

I found it difficult to make clear distinction between research best termed conceptual and that best termed descriptive. The distinction I attempted to apply is that conceptual work has the power of explanation beyond the immediate context of its revelation. I also found that conceptual output seemed more likely to emanate from inductively based method, whereas deductive techniques spanned more descriptive outputs. With the relationship between these, I felt this approach would restrict the value of empirical underpinning as a parameter, which offered the framework six categories.

The distinction between the academic or practitioner nature of work was both difficult to distinguish and of limited contribution to categorisation. Some literature claimed to serve the needs of researchers and practitioners. Where the intended audience was not stated, I didn't feel my opinion to be sufficiently sound in distinguishing between the two types. It was also difficult to distinguish whether the author was an academic researcher or a practitioner. It could be argued that academic researchers, being participants within knowledge based organisations, are by nature

practitioners too. Academics often engage in consultancy work, and an individual author's previous role (for example, whether an author who is currently a management consultant had previously been an academic) was not readily identified. To further complicate, some work was the fruit of more that one person's efforts, thus exacerbating the problem of distinction.

I expected the research to reveal different facets of management consulting (for example, traits of management consultants, processes for business development for consulting firms). One possibility was to group literature into these facets. I chose not to use this as a categorising method because of a fear of forcing distinctions into the literature without letting the literature itself offer these. Personal legitimising encompasses several aspects of consulting activity. Part of its appeal is the fact that it embraces more than one such dimension. It spans the boxes that I would consider for categorisation. It seems inappropriate to force the work of others into a format that I'm keen to separate my work from. Imposing my prediction of such through a categorisation framework would perhaps limit the insight I could obtain from the literature and certainly not follow the spirit of grounded theory.

Consideration of the above engendered confidence in the two constructs previously explained. It had also resulted in a framework that was non-context specific. It has potential for application beyond the immediate situations of personal legitimising. The next section (6.2) documents the fruits of the literature comparison using this framework.

6.1.4   Sources of literature

Having outlined the rationale of literature comparison, the literature search strategy and the literature categorisation framework, the following states the literature sources I used in the project.

The methods used to reveal relevant literature were: on-line access of databases of academic and practitioner texts using key word searches, citation indexes, reviewing abstracts and obtaining full texts as appropriate; attendance at academic conferences, and reviews of conference proceedings to capture emerging ideas; dialogue with fellow researches, and procurement of texts suggested by them; physical searches in the university library, using bibliographies and 'shelf scanning'; procurement of contemporary practitioner journals and books in the substantive field. From the outset I appreciated no single source would cover the parc of knowledge.

The library offered CD ROM search facilities. It also facilitated the locating of literature through publications' indexes. The least productive source of literature for me was physically searching library shelves. Maybe this reflects the growth in technologically enabled routes to literature, or maybe this reflects something about my own nature. However, I was able to obtain and read less prominent journals whose area of interest coincided with the substantive area of my study. An example of this is the Journal of Professional Services Marketing.

On-line searches I found productive from the point of view of being able to consider a large number and variety of writings in an expedient manner. I found the Social Sciences Index and Anbar's management library particularly useful. Later, I was able to search literature for citations of the key authors, such as Alvesson, Clark, Lowendahl, Maister, Morris and Sveiby. Despite the breadth of texts covered by electronic databases, their scope is not total. I was mindful of the danger of being drawn in by the ease of the method, and as a result unwittingly ignore valuable contributions.

I encountered the difficulty of being able to obtain contemporary books from library sources, especially those aimed at a practitioner rather than academic audience. I

purchased these from book shops. Despite the casual demeanour of such writings, I found these of interest. They are largely written by practitioners reflecting on their experiences, without fidelity to particular academic models and paradigms. Their main appeal was the 'read this... this is how it really happens...'. I became aware of these texts by reading book reviews in the business and marketing press, scanning the shelves in book shops, and via book shops undertaking author and key word searches of their own databases.

The value of academic conferences in the development of research was a revelation to me. My supervisor encouraged me to write papers as my research progressed. I was able to present at five conferences and colloquia during my research project. I found the dialogue that arose from my presentation of papers to be particularly valuable. Fellow researchers were forthcoming with references on related work. From a value of interaction point of view the less productive forums were large scale events such as Academy of Marketing (main conference and doctoral colloquium), and the more productive were the more focused research workshops such as the Research Symposium on Marketing and Entrepreneurship and Customer Research Academy. I believe their particular value was a combination on the relative intimacy and the fact that attendees had an interest and involvement in the particular workshop subject, so were better placed to contribute.

Dialogue with other researches often resulted from contacts made at research workshops and conferences. This form of information gathering involved exchanging ideas and perspectives with people working in the similar research areas. This embraced the distinct fields of grounded theory method and management consulting. Phone and e-mail were the usual media for these avenues. Whilst very unstructured, I found this valuable in making me aware of literature and issues that related research had tackled.

6.1.5 In summary

This section has outlined my chosen literature comparison strategy. It moved from the focus on management consulting literature, through to the identification of other areas of relevance. It explained the choice and use of a categorisation framework to look at management consulting literature. The section finished with a record of literature search sources employed.

The next section documents the results of the comparison with management consulting literature, the first stage of this project's literature strategy.

6.2 Comparison of personal legitimising with management consulting literature

This section of the literature comparison chapter relates the grounded theory of personal legitimising with literature within the substantive area of management consulting.

It applies the categorising framework outlined in the previous section as a means of handling the empirical nature, as well as the content of the existing literature. The section organises the literature in accordance with the categorising framework. Thereafter the section devotes attention to a more in depth discussion of relevant management consulting texts and their relationships with personal legitimising. The presentation of these is in accordance with themes of interest that emanated from study of published management consulting research.

6.2.1 Apply the categorising framework to management consulting literature

The outcome of applying the categorising framework to management consulting literature is below (see figure seventeen). This shows my perception of the work of other authors and researchers in this field in relation to the categorising criteria. This serves as a first step in enabling appropriate comparison.

As stated earlier the position of any literature in this categorisation is my opinion of the nature of that piece of work. Readers may disagree with my view of specific texts, and such differences could be debated. This does not detract from the purpose of the categorisation which is to facilitate comparison. It forces me to actively consider the foundations of other people's views as well as the views themselves. Personal legitimising is located in the 'inductive-process' dodecile. To repeat, no

assessment of merit is placed on the position of any piece of literature within this

framework, and none should be interpreted from it.

Figure seventeen: Literature in the substantive area (by author), categorised by methodology underpinning and nature of output

	Process	**Structure**
Inductive	Edvardsson, B. McGivern, C. Sturdy, A.J.	Bloom, P.N. Gummesson, E. Harding, C.F. Lowendahl, B.R. Payne, A. and Lumsden, C.
Deductive then Inductive	Clark. T. Legge, K.	Gable, G.G. Halinen, A. Maupin, R.J. Morris, T. and Empson, L.
Inductive then Deductive	Clark, T. and Salaman, G. Covin, T.J. and Fisher, T.V.	Alvesson, M. Day, E. and Barksdale, H.C. Morgan, M.A and Piercy, N.F. Morgan, N.A Robertson, M. and Swan, J. Whittington, R., McNulty, T. and Whipp, R.
Deductive	File, K.M, Cermak, D.S.P. and Prince, R.A. Grayson, K. and Ambler, T. Beaton, M. and Beaton, C. Mitchell, V.W. Poulfelt, F. Schuyt, T.N.M and Schuijt, J.J.M. Sharma, A.	Mills, P.K. and Moshavi, D.S. Morris, T. and Pinnington, A. Nachum, L. Macdonald, K.
No clear method	Blustain, H. Empson, L. Kubr, M Lundberg, C.C. Pollecoff, M. Wittreich, W.J.	Gallouj, C. Hagedorn, H.J. Hussey, D.E. Kotler, P. and Connor, R.A. Maister, D.H. Schein, E.H. Shepherd, C.D. Stevens, R.E. Sveiby, K.E.
Conjecture	Ashford, M. Block, P. Bloom, F.B. Bobrow, E.E. Dale, P Forsyth, P. Hattersley, M. Kesner, I.F. and Fowler, S. Kitt, G. Lundgren, B Navis, E.S. Page, A. Poe, R. Taylor, I.W. Ziehm, R.	Bookes, N. Burke, W. Craven, R. Miller, E. Outram, R. Russam, C.M. Smith, B.P.

Texts from over eighty authors were reviewed. These ranged from research projects in academic journals to theoretically oriented books based on large scale investigative work, and short journalist pieces to directive handbooks aimed at practitioners. One main theme is apparent in the literature. This is the dominance of prescriptive practitioner based approaches emanating from the United States of America. Mitchell (1995: 11) echoes a sentiment that "a more theoretical, empirical, non-US based and organisational perspective might make a welcome addition to the literature". The agenda with these is usually the determination and improvement of a consulting firm's marketing ability.

The positioning of management consulting literature within the framework leads me to make eight comments.

Expectations of the most relevant areas

The immediate impression is a scarcity of similarly oriented research to that which resulted in personal legitimising. Differences in research nature detract from the harmony of outputs.

With personal legitimising being a process derived from inductive study, I was expecting that literature of sympathetic emphasis to be the most valuable in providing reference points for the theory. In terms of this framework, the three potential most valuable empirical underpinnings are 'inductive', 'deductive then inductive', and 'method not transparent'. Literature around structure, the organisation and frameworks around management consulting (as distinct from the process therein), may only be able to perform a limited role in respect of personal legitimising.

Essence of findings yet to be discussed

Despite this categorisation, the subjects of the various texts have yet to be introduced in the comparison process. For example, two texts may both be by deductive analysis of processes. However, one might be concerned with the activities of clients in the reduction of risk when buying services, the other might be concerned with an evaluation of marketing methods used by consultants. The texts embrace a range of perspectives including the management and development of consulting firms, processes for consultants to develop clients and the perspectives of clients on the use and role of consultants. This range of positions also needs to be taken into account when considering the literature. These distinctions are woven into the comparison later in the section.

Inductive research appears more difficult to categorise

I found it harder to categorise inductive based research and easier to categorise deductive work. The reason is that deductive methodology appeared more transparently presented. Work of an inductive nature that was not accompanied by a clearly outlined method of synthesis had, by default, to be assigned to the 'method not transparent' boxes, for example. Consequently that which appears as 'method not transparent' is more likely to be of an inductive than deductive emphasis.

Induction, but within fixed parameters

Some work of an inductive nature was bounded by the pre-determination of the field of study. For example, a researcher who has undertaken a series of fifteen in-depth interviews with the intention of learning more about how consultants develop client relationships becomes sensitised only to data within that domain. Personal

legitimising emerged from a study that started without a determination of what the field of interest should be - other than that I chose to study management consulting.

'Client' research included, but less illuminating

Some research within the management consulting arena was based exclusively on data drawn from the clients of consulting firms. This is less illuminating of personal legitimising than the consultant's perspective, because elements of personal legitimising involve actions that are undetected by clients.

Contribution of 'conjecture'

That which is embraced under conjecture is broad in nature. It involves assertion of models, hypotheses and processes without evidence of their grounding in, or suitability for the context. As such the literature based on conjecture has to be treated with care. It also includes 'inside stories' and journalistic perspectives on the practices of consultants, for example Martin Ashford's 'Con Tricks'[1] which is a reflection of his experiences whilst working in Andersen Consulting, and Tony Page's autobiographical diary of a consulting firm principal 'Diary of a Change Agent'.[2] Whilst these may provide descriptive data of relevance to personal legitimising, questions over the provenance of the data make it difficult to rely heavily on such sources. This is not to decry the value of these works. It is merely to observe I am using them for a purpose for which they weren't intended.

A sequence to presenting the analysis

The benefits of the categorising framework are first that it helps present a considered overview of the management consulting literature, and second it ensures cognisance of empirical underpinning remains throughout the comparison process. The

immediate task is to report the comparison of personal legitimising, which necessitates a degree of order being placed on the remainder of the section. The intention of this is to make it as digestible as practicable.

I've elected not to report the comparison in accordance with the categorising framework, because I feel this is not the optimum way of serving personal legitimising. If I followed this route, the diversity of topic areas within categorised sections of the management consulting literature would render the section piecemeal and laborious to read. I have presented the management consulting literature in topic groupings that enable construction of reasoned arguments in relation to personal legitimising and the management consulting literature. These topics emerged from a reflection of the management consulting literature. The purpose of them and their sequence is to give shape to my report of the literature comparison. Hence it is the content under these topic headings, rather than the topic headings themselves which readers are encouraged to heed. The topic headings are 'people', 'personality traits', 'management', 'relationship development', 'power-influence-conduct'. These topic areas, together with a final summary, form the remainder of this section.

6.2.2 People

Here begins the report of the comparison of personal legitimising with specific literature within the management consulting arena. The literature selected, and the quotations included have earned their way into this chapter from the perspective of being able to contribute to the positioning of personal legitimising. The sequence in which they appear hopefully reflects a logical path in the integration of this new grounded theory.

Centrality of people to the consulting enterprise

The first point I draw from the literature is the centrality of individual consultants to the modus operandi of management consulting. This supports the scope of influence afforded to individuals which is an ingredient of personal legitimising activity. My study selected the perspective of the individual consultant as the most interesting direction of the research, the following I believe helps uphold that decision.

Homer Hagedorn (1982: 49) reports an interview with Boston Consulting Group founder Bruce Henderson. Henderson draws attention to a fundamental characteristic of consulting operations, namely that people are central to the enterprise.

"The consulting business is fascinatingly different from any other business. People are the principal resource employed; so the essence of consulting operations is instability. In most other productive businesses, by contrast the object is to maximise a value that arises by properly manipulating a relatively fixed productive resource."

I also take from this the implied difficulty in managing people within the consulting environment (Henderson uses the term 'instability' in his description).

Consultant, as service deliverer, exercising influence

Henderson continues to state that "the development stages in a consulting firm are defined by who gets the leads to new business and who develops them" (Hagedorn 1982: 56). This implies power held by those involved in commercial development activity, together with the influence of activities of people in strategy.

This accords with the impact of individuals on the direction of the firm identified within personal legitimising. Personal legitimising though looks further than Henderson's point. Within personal legitimising, impact on the organisation's direction also comes from covert influence by consultants. They demonstrate a capability to promote favoured types of work or relationships without them being recognised as such. Henderson recognises the influence of those involved in business development activity but does not pick up on the nuances of individual consultants. There are three explanations for this. First, Henderson is offering a general perspective of consulting firms and therefore omits the subtleties therein. Second, his own empirical context of the Boston Consulting Group is substantially different to those smaller consulting firms from which personal legitimising has emerged. Three, Henderson's perspective is not the result of a rigorous treatment of data that grounded theory encourages, which means the covert dimension of personal legitimising has yet to reach his consciousness.

Bo Edvardsson (1990) conducted inductive research involving the purchasers of consulting relationships. The field of interest was the client-consultant relationship and a fuller investigation of this research is included later. Within the data though is an important consideration with regards to personal legitimising. Collier, quoted in Edvardsson (1989: 13) discusses the service process and argues "Remember – the service is the process." If we accept this view, then the behaviour of delivery

becomes that which the client is purchasing. 'How' something is delivered, rather than 'what' is delivered is a significant determinant of the client's perception of a consulting firm's value. This places the deliverer of service in direct control over the degree of client satisfaction, which in turn stimulates propensity to re-purchase and the broadcast of recommendations.

Warren Wittreich's (1966) article 'How to Buy/Sell Professional Services' was one of the first landmarks in the literature on management consulting. He is clear on his assertion of the most beneficial orientation of consulting firms, from the client's perspective.

"Management (clients) should insist on dealing directly with individuals of true professional competence. The professional salesman may be fine and dandy for tangible goods, but he has little or no place in the selling of professional services. He can only function as a middleman. Only by insisting that the people you are talking to can render a service to you as well as sell it, can you be assured that what you are buying will be of genuine value and use." (Wittreich 1966: 136)

The basis of his assertion is unclear. He points out the preferred alternative to the use of dedicated business development individuals within the consulting field. We have seen earlier that the act of delivering services to clients gives the opportunity to influence. Wittreich is encouraging the sector to bestow even greater power on individual consultants by suggesting to firm's management's that business development should overtly be given to those delivering services. This 'dual role' was evident in the context from which personal legitimising emerged.

Consultants mobilising personal agendas

Martin Pollecoff (1998: 175) suggests that "the consultant sells their own skills and knowledge, but these attributes come bundled together with the consultant's personality, interests, values and creativity".

This implies the presence of personal agendas. Edward Navis (1990: 13) offers a colloquial reflection working more effectively with clients. His brief paper is written from the perspective of a practising consultant aimed at helping other consultants improve their commercial relationships.

His focus is on the importance of reading a client's motives for using consultants, and being sensitive to clients, use of consultants as a means of exercising power in their organisations. The wise consultant, opines Navis, is equipped to identify and cope with the undisclosed agenda of clients. Despite his work centring on clients, he provides the following insight into personal legitimising by disclosing how he, as a consultant, mobilises his own agenda. He states:

"The very first step is to recognise that hidden agendas are a normal part of human behaviour and in fact make up a good part of our motivations for everyday actions. They should not be judged as sleazy or dishonest; they are quite common. I feel that one of the reasons I enjoy conducting seminars (and keep them at about 25% of my practice) is a love of standing in front of a group of people. I enjoy the attention. While this may sound egocentric, remember that there are others with similar needs who have become serial murderers; I think I've made a good choice."

His sentiment here could be labelled 'bridgebuilding'; he has attempted to forge a link between his audience and the line expressed in his paper. The mention of hidden agendas implies that his audience will readily identify with his example and thus

accept the thrust of his message regarding client behaviour. The very fact that he uses hidden agendas in the consulting arena as the linkage adds weight to the finding within personal legitimising that the deployment of hidden agendas is prevalent in the activity of management consultants.

In summary

The above explored the involvement of individual consultants in the dynamics of management consulting firms, and the implications for personal legitimising.

It noted the centrality of professional people (individual consultants) to the operation of the firm suggesting challenges in managing them as the most vital resource of the enterprise. It recognises the scope of influence that consultants have over their firm's strategy through their ability to manoeuvre clients. Finally, it intimates that the implementation of personal agendas is prevalent in management consulting practices.

The following builds on from this and examines literature concerned with the personality traits of consultants.

6.2.3 Personality traits

The previous section drew attention to the high scope for personal influence possessed by consultants. The comparison continues by investigating the personality and traits of consultants.

Assertions of qualities

The literature is replete with assertions of the qualities desired of consultants (for example, Bobrow 1998: 42; Boakes 1997: 1).

Robert Craven (1998: 38), in a light hearted look at consultancy style, expresses his personal view for a practitioner audience. He draws attention to two issues around the nature of individual consultants. First is that, despite the hypotheses of meritus qualities, individual consultants are far from members of a homogenous group. He notes nine distinct styles of consultant behaviour. Second is the opinion that a consultant's style is evident in the way they do what they do. This is an experientially derived reflection, so further insights into it need to be treated with care. Actual consultants' behaviour is less well represented in literature. Geoffrey Kitt (1997: 1) offers a glimpse. Kitt, a former President of the Institute of Management Consulting and director of a management consulting firm, proffers the following view.

"I am firmly of the view that it is the responsibility of the client to manage the consultant, not the other way round. Some of the client management that I have observed being carried out by consultants might be more aptly entitled manipulation!"

The term 'manipulation' alludes to the pursuit in practice of covert influence. His brief article, which is a short address to would-be consulting practitioners, pursues this theme no further.

Consultant competence and behaviour distinguished

Covin and Fisher (1991: 11) report other research into the skills, knowledge and abilities required of consultants. They comment that, whilst identifying areas of desirable competence, these studies fall short of outlining effective behaviours.

The authors describe an inductively based study to identify behaviour, setting the context around a successful consultant-client relationship. Their research was conducted on consultants (as distinct from clients). Its findings offered little in relation to personal legitimising. I account for this partly through the structure of their study and partly through their reporting of findings.

Their inductive work was based around very specifically stated research questions, namely:

"1.   list several examples of both effective and ineffective consultant and client behaviours,

2.   list the major reasons they feel consulting efforts succeed or fail,

3.   provide biographical information by responding to several structured questions." (Covin and Fisher 1991: 12)

Data was obtained by analysing responses to 27 written questionnaires completed by active consultants. The researchers synthesised the data into families of effective and ineffective behaviour. They then tested these with consultants, seeking to validate the insights. Routes to data analysis are not made specific. However, the method outlines only these two steps. Therefore they have limited possibility to develop

insight by returning to either field or data A journal article also gives little space for the consultant's examples of effective and ineffective behaviour, the emphasis being given to the reporting of findings and recommendations. The researchers note three families of what they term critical incidents. These are 'maintaining a professional orientation', 'communicating with the client organisation', and 'gaining commitment from the client organisation'. Within these they give examples of effective and ineffective behaviours. These are descriptive and abridged. For example, effective behaviour included that the consultant "was punctual for meetings and in written work" and "dressed and behaved consistent with the client organisation" (Covin and Fisher 1991: 14). To illuminate their critical incident families and examples, the researchers include brief, but unedited narratives from the original questionnaires. These narratives show the mobilisation of personal judgement and initiative by consultants in their cultivation of clients. One example:

"It was raining and I had to fly from Maryland to South Carolina to meet with a client. All commercial airline flights were running behind schedule. I knew I could not be late - the meeting was scheduled far in advance and I was expected to be there. I decided to charter a flight rather than risk hurting my relationship with the client." (Consultant in Covin and Fisher 1991, 13)

This has more vibrancy than the abridged form of the consultant "was punctual for meetings and in written work". The above also raises questions about the nature of the relationship with the client, the type of work the project involved and the approvals process for being able to charter a flight. All of which merit exploration through further discussion with the consultant.

The specific research agenda, and the decision to fracture and group data, thus leaving it at a descriptive level, accounts for differences between Covin and Fisher's work and personal legitimising. The narratives upon which their work is based look

encouraging as data for generating conceptual insight through grounded theory method. Instinct draws me to believe that adoption of grounded theory may have brought the researchers closer to personal legitimising than their method has achieved.

Consultants as 'persuaders'

Boston Consulting Group founder, Bruce Henderson offers a personal perspective on the qualities of effective consultants. This comment is made in the context of a consultant conducting an assignment. It centres though on a consultant's persuasive abilities.

"Persuasiveness is the second fundamental requirement for the consultant, who must not only have insight but also must know how to gain acceptance for it. Persuasiveness depends on rapport. Rapport, in turn, is founded on a variety of consultant-initiated activities and can, therefore, be within the consultant's control. Consultant rapport can be aided by the fact that consultants are a class of business people motivated to seek client approval far more than they are governed by the need for peer approval. To be persuasive, consultants must:

- Be able to use all of the thousands of channels that are simultaneously available for any two human beings to communicate with each other. Words have their own power to lead and mislead, but gestures, postures, and mannerisms are fundamental. They transcend reality.

- Understand the complexity in the seemingly cynical aphorism, "Acting is just lying with the body."

- Apply the insights being developed (use the client system better than the client does or can)." (Henderson in Hagedorn 1982: 52)

Henderson clearly sees selling, persuasiveness and rapport as necessary in assignment delivery. Essential to this line of argument, persuasiveness involves subtlety and guile. By implication, consultants are equipped for selling, irrespective of whether they have a sales role or not. Having noted the presence of a consultant's persuasiveness in a client relationship context, it is possible to suggest that such may also be present in their interaction with colleagues. Henderson's contribution to the recognition of personal legitimising is his strong belief that an effective consultant is, by nature, a persuasive individual.

Edgar Schein (1987: 79) introduces the notions of social economics and social theatre as a route to explaining both the importance and practice of human interaction in management consulting activity. His text, Process Consulting, is a consideration of his own perceptions integrated with selected research from other sources. He approaches the subject from the point that it is necessary to facilitate engagement through what he terms 'face work', which includes body language and manner, in order to be an effective process consultant. He views the management of personal image as part of a consultant's armoury, and a commercial consideration. To illustrate this, Schein draws attention to the language of description.

"To introduce this topic we need to reflect on how our language gives us clues as to what it 'really' going on. What do we mean by terms such as tact, poise, deference, demeanour, humiliation, embarrassment, and saving or losing face? Why do we describe social events or situations as 'scenes', and talk of feeling 'cheated' in social relations or say that we need to 'pay' attention when someone is talking to us or that we need to give people their 'due'?"

Schein's approach is to point out the importance of interpretative and engagement skills around human interface within effective process consulting. He moves beyond the description of activities to the expansion of the 'acting' theme mentioned by

Henderson. In so doing, he implies the ability to engage requires the sensitivity to read a situation and a repertoire which includes, but goes beyond the choice of words. And, fundamentally, that the deployment of this repertoire is a deliberate act.

Finally, to return to the individual differences between consultants mentioned earlier. Charles Harding's (1992: 60) work into the business development activities of consultants identified four categories of approach, 'builders', 'artists', 'miners' and 'sellers'. These are derived from the assimilation of data from fifty representatives of consulting firms. The method of data synthesis isn't clear and his narrative is dominated by his interpretation, rather than by indicators from the data, so it is difficult to integrate this with personal legitimising. The point of its inclusion is Harding's reflection that both contextual conditions and individual attributes impact on a consultant's style of approach. Personal legitimising accommodates this. It recognises personal choice throughout. Properties of the six categories and the components of organisational tolerance account for contextual issues and individual characteristics.

In summary

This subsection explored the traits and characteristics of individual consultants, and the link between these and personal legitimising.

It noted the difference between the consultants' qualities that are desired and those observed. It also noted the relative absence of research into behaviours. Research into behaviour intimated personal legitimising, though research method obscured insight beyond this. Persuasiveness was reported as a core ability of consultants, and one that is necessary for the effective conduct of assignments. Persuasion here embraces an overall manifestation of purpose, in rhetoric, appearance and manner.

Finally, individual differences, which are accounted for in personal legitimising, were shown as a determinant of consultants' behaviour.

The next subsection examines the management of consulting firms and the individuals within.

6.2.4   Management

This explores the association of personal legitimising and literature on the management of management consulting firms.

Degree of individual autonomy in consulting firms

Henderson (see Hagedorn 1982: 52) makes a point about management as applied within a management consulting firm:

"the basic paradox is the requirement to manage the unmanageable - namely a professional service organisation."

Expansion of this comes from Laura Empson's doctoral research, a study of London based management consultants Kinsley Lord.[3] Her thesis followed the path of mergers and acquisitions (Kinsley Lord was a party to the latter). One output from her work is a management teaching case. The case contains narratives from Kinsley Lord consultants, but offers no synthesis of data or recommendations. There are, however, strong parallels between the Kinsley Lord indicators and those in my research. For example, a Kinsley Lord director comments that "consultants were given considerable autonomy" and "all consultants were expected to sell work and operate relatively independently". (Empson 1997) This suggests organisational tolerance which is incorporated within personal legitimising. In particular, the scope resulting from the culture and role dimensions.

Empson notes the ability of the firm to accommodate very distinct individuals rather than the 'clones' that are purported to make up the fabric of larger firms. Also the haphazard marketing management I had noticed in the personal legitimising study was evident in Kinsley Lord as one of its founders notes:

"In the early days, the marketing and selling process was sporadic in the extreme. We chased after everything and milked our contacts. We had a marketing meeting once a year." (Empson 1997: 7)

Kinsley Lord was a smaller consulting firm, similar to the contexts of my study. The above sensitises me to organisational size and organisational life cycle as possible determinants of the strategic settings within which personal legitimising applies. The implications of Empson's data is that the Kinsley Lord operational characteristics do not represent the only recipe for management consulting firm management. Unfortunately, further interrogation of the data, given interesting themes like 'milking contacts', is difficult. Finally, the consequence of the firm's own operational style is made evident from the perspective of one of Kinsley Lord's founders looking back at the firm's early years.

"Our strategy formulation process was much less of a Porter model and much more of Mintzberg emergent strategy approach. We responded to opportunities as they arose. In a small consultancy, if one person has the energy to pursue something then he or she can shape the strategy of the organisation." (Taylor in Empson 1997: 7)

The recognition of the strategy process is made by an individual who was instrumental in the management of consultants. Personal legitimising acknowledges that 'granting of freedom' to consultants results from aspects such as the role and rank of individuals, but is also dependent on the firm's culture and consultant's 'nous' as two less obvious factors. Implicit in Empson's data is the individual's capability to shape opportunities through the 'energy to pursue'. This emerged in personal legitimising. Strategy, as a consequence of cumulative effort, which is the sentiment that Empson reports, is also in accordance with personal legitimising.

Although appearing as 'sound bites', her data has strong accord with data from which personal legitimising emerged. It reinforces the link between individualism, creativity and autonomy that has been brought out earlier.

Rebekah Maupin's (1990: 6) study of the aftermath of a work re-design programme in the management consulting arm of an accounting firm implies how in an organisation run on the 'finders, minders and grinders' model[4], giving more scope to the 'minders' showed a link between perceived control and enthusiasm. She reflects:

"It appears that the choice to become involved and the opportunity and/or freedom to apply work group concepts creatively gave the employees the assurance that they could control the application of work groups. This control would allow them to adapt the programme to their own unique situations. When employees felt that they had control over their work environment, they tended to express a greater desire to be successful. The thought of being associated with an exceptional work group seemed to increase individual pride. Once the momentum to change took place, work groups tended to form their own unique work group culture. It seemed that they developed their own group philosophy in order to maintain momentum towards improvement."

The study is a reflection on a specific change to the structure of work, and as such is limited in its reach towards personal legitimising. However, it suggests that sense of control leads to enthusiasm of input, which as earlier comments have noted contributes to the magnitude component of a strategy vector. Autonomy, as stated earlier gives choice over the direction component. The above suggests it is 'a good thing' in terms of engaging with staff.

In summary

This subsection started by noting the challenges of managing management consultants. The data suggests these are prevalent irrespective of the size of consulting firm. Literature then revealed the 'individual freedom' property of a consulting firm as an important management decision.

Literature supported the personal legitimising view that the actions of individuals influence the organisation's strategy. Personal legitimising noted that such actions can result from freedom afforded to the individual by management, but also freedom the individual is able to create for him or herself. Additional evidence for the former was reported. Finally, the literature suggested that autonomy, which gives freedom on the direction of endeavour, also encourages the enthusiasm for endeavour.

The next subsection explores literature on the relationship development processes within consulting.

6.2.5 Relationship development processes

I have noted perspectives on personality traits earlier, and discussed such in relation to personal legitimising activity. This in turn was built on the recognition that individual consultants are the hub around which management consulting firms operate and develop. This explores literature around relationship development, most of which focuses on the relationship between consultant and client.

Consultant and client relationships

I suspect the reason for the high emphasis on the consultant client relationships in the literature to be a reflection of this being the conduit to commercial success. It is the relationship which most obviously generates assignments and income. The inherent vulnerability of studies focusing on a more definite understanding of this type of relationship is that they immediately place constraints on the power of researchers to recognise the holistic world of consultants and the subtleties thereof. Such focus impeded the revelation of processes and behaviour which could inform the understanding of personal legitimising.

Within the consultant-client relationship literature are texts which are assertions of process. These are aimed mainly at practitioners with the purpose of educating and improving the client development activities of consultants, a point emphasised by Camal Gallouj (1997: 5). Some are conjecture, and some are more empirically based but without offering a clear explanation of how their recommendations have been arrived at. The vulnerability of this first group is that they give opinion on 'how things should be' with perhaps too little emphasis on understanding why current practice is the way it is. Such texts may have a contribution to make, but need appropriate treatment in this 'comparison with theory' context. This characteristic is exasperated by the relative newness and rapid growth of the management consulting

industry. Its youth relative to other occupational areas means there has been less time in which to conduct substantive empirical work to underpin recommendations. Its growth, though, heightens the appetite for understanding and perhaps a less exacting audience.

A study conducted by Edvardsson (1990) involved an inductively based work to generate further comprehension of the consultant client relationship. This was achieved by 15 in-depth interviews with purchasers of consultancy services, the synthesis of which was discussed in relation to other models of management consulting. In detail the outputs of the study, as reported, have no discernible relationship with personal legitimising. The theory is neither supported nor challenged. There are several reasons for this.

Edvardsson's research concentrated on the clients, using client interviews as the main data source. Whereas personal legitimising did include research into clients, this data was coded and woven into the theory generation from the consultants' perspective. Edvardsson's work, although inductive, is guided by initial research questions. The researcher specifically sought to examine purchasing behaviour and processes. This pre-determined research impacts on any resulting explanatory insight, generating concern over a direct comparison of findings. Finally, what Edvardsson reports is the synthesis of the clients' data, not the data itself. Given difficulties in output comparison, a pre-determined agenda and lack of access to Edvardsson's data, its contribution to my own study is very limited.

Relationship insights

One particular result of Edvardsson's work has direct relevance to personal legitimising. I quote:

"Our data suggest that the buyer is less interested in the service itself and more in the individual service provider/consultant and his or her knowledge, experience, reputation and, most importantly, whether he or she inspires confidence. Experienced buyers purchase the services of individuals in whom they have confidence, not those of consultancy companies. Some are afraid that well-known and expanding consultancy companies will send inexperienced and even, in the context, incompetent consultants, unless a prior agreement has been reached on specific individuals. These results are in line with what Gummesson found, ".... the client is buying confidence"." (Edvardsson 1990: 29)

The importance of the individual consultant rather than the firm is noted, and reinforces the perspective offered earlier. The main contribution from the above is the importance of the consultant projecting confidence. Edvardsson's work does not report processes used to accomplish this. Nevertheless, it reinforces that the 'conveyance of impressions' is a requisite ability of consultants.

Guy Gable (1996: 1175) studied the consultant client interface, and worked towards the creation of a model of client success when engaging external consultants. His study involved using literature around consultant engagement to develop a model which he tested by survey on consultants and clients. The survey results led to a refined model. A combination of his research method and tightly bounded research area means his work offers no direct contribution to the anchoring of personal legitimising. Tangentially to this, the reason for Gable's work may prove interesting. The need to study success at the client consultant interface relates to the growing role of external consultants in contemporary management and the vagaries associated with the promotion and purchase of a highly intangible service.

Gallouj's (1997) survey based research into the relationship between consultants and clients notes the asymmetry of information in favour of the service provider. I found

comprehension of his research method and results difficult. This leads to my tentative dissection of its contents. Gallouj reports on the notion of 'process based trust'. In doing so, he suggests how confidence is generated in the context of uncertainty identified in the previous paragraphs.

"Well-established relations thus create some routine, which results in the creation of norms or reciprocity, and the development of mutual expectations which will provide the foundations for exchange. This acquires a strong social dimension: "goodwill develops in recurring exchanges, repeated economic relations become overlaid with social content which carries a strong expectation of trust and abstention from opportunism"." (Gallouj 1997: 13)

I interpret the above as the consultant using a favourable power differential in a relationship. I see consultants tuning behaviour to suit the situation. Confidence in a relationship grows through a sequence of behaviour which generates confidence. Opportunism for the consultant exists because it is managed in such a way that clients don't recognise it. For personal legitimising this accords with 'sequential impressioning' as a strategy by which consultants shape their working environment. In particular, the 'multi-method' property which notes that sequential impressioning involves different media and methods. In addition, it acknowledges the 'building on' property which is concerned with the cumulative nature of the actions within sequential impressioning. Gallouj does not report in detail of the nature of recurring exchanges, but acknowledgement of sequential impressioning seems clear.

Chris McGivern (1983) reports an inductive investigation into the nature of relationships between consultants and their clients. Again, the scope of the investigation was restricted to the activity under question being defined as the consultant client relationship. The resultant hypothesis suggested that an 'interdependent' relationship was likely to be an important factor in successful

consulting assignments. Testing was achieved through dialogue with consultants and their clients, and the synthesis thereof. His conclusions are largely reflective rather than being the product of an obvious analytical approach. However, his work highlights two points which I believe relevant. McGivern (1983: 381) writes:

"One somewhat surprising feature of the accounts from both consultants and clients was the lack of emphasis on outcomes - i.e. what had been achieved as a result of their working together. Whilst it could be expected that to some extent the consultants would have been at least as much concerned with the quality of the process of the consulting relationship as with its achievements, this would seem to be a less predictable interest for clients. And yet they appeared to give considerable weight to such qualitative issues. Very few references were made to tangible results by the clients, even though they were being asked about the reasons why they believed their work with the consultants had been successful .... Success in this sense was, for the client, a result of the relationship being characterised by certain qualities - particularly this consultant's manifestly high level of personal commitment - rather than his technical expertise or problem-solving skills. The consultant was committed, he said, because he felt 'free to be himself' and could 'identify' with the client."

Interpreting the above, the clients' perception of the process, and how the consultant conducts him/herself throughout that process seems a major determinant of relational strength. This reinforces the view expressed earlier that confidence in a consultant represents an accrual of actions, as explained in sequential impressioning. It also introduces the claim that good relationships depend on the empathy/chemistry between consultant and client, and the freedom for natural expression which it affords.

This reinforces Peter Block's (1981: 31) proposition, recorded earlier, that authenticity is vital for those active in consultancy. One could conjecture from this and the above that being perceived as authentic is an effective result of a skilfully derived act. In relation to personal legitimising, the point about a personal affinity between consultant and client was evident in my research data, but did not form part of the emergent theory. I reflect that this is because personal legitimising is concerned with how personal agendas are mobilised in this context whereas personal empathy is more likely a motive (that is, 'why') behind personal legitimising or a previously unidentified property.

In summary

The foregoing sought comparison between relationship development processes in the management consulting literature and personal legitimising.

High expectations of finding comprehensive links were unfounded for several reasons. Much literature was directive and not grounded in contextual practice. Research method differences obscured the ability to compare. The infancy of the sector also meant comparatively little empirical is available.

However, the four areas of learning are as follows. First, the perspective from which a study is undertaken is a vital consideration in comparisons. Two, research seemed to be limited on the consultant-client relationship from the outset, hence limited in its explanatory scope. Third, the 'multi-method' 'building-on' properties of sequential impressioning were in strong evidence. Fourth, the personal empathy dimension in the literature is not directly explained in personal legitimising. Most likely this is because wanting to work with someone is more of a motive or driver behind behaviour than the behavioural process itself.

Power asymmetry has already been recorded as a characteristic of the consultant-client relationship. The final area within management consulting literature in this comparison builds from this. It analyses publications around power, influence and conduct.

6.2.6 Power, influence and conduct

This section compares management consulting literature which embraces issues of power, influence and conduct with personal legitimising. Earlier excerpts noted the presence of consultants' persuasive abilities. Literature (see Hattersley 1998: 24), Sturdy (1997: 513) emphasises the importance of presenting arguments appropriately in order to secure client commitment. In so doing it emphasises the choice prevalent in personal legitimising and influence tactics, especially the 'justifying' element of retrospective justifying. What follows seeks to explore these themes further.

Influence and uncertainty

Vincent-Wayne Mitchell (1994: 313) undertook an assimilation of relevant literature to help generate a perspective on reducing the risks associated in the purchasing of consultancy services. His recommendations are induced from literature in related areas and from practitioner oriented texts written by consultants. Useful is Mitchell's view on why risk-reduction is an important consideration for purchasers of consultancy services. In particular he notes:

"Purchasers can sometimes articulate their problem or perhaps more correctly, they can articulate their problem, as they perceive it, but in some cases they are unable to do so. If consultants are truly professionals, then diagnosis of the problem is their responsibility, not that of the purchaser." (Mitchell 1994: 336)

It appears that the context demands consultants to be influential, given their role of conducting a diagnosis and communicating this with the purchaser. It could follow that if a diagnosis was incorrect, the consultancy response to it would have shortcomings. Research indicates that the dynamic involves a progressive tailoring of the solution by consultants as more is understood about the problem. A study

reported by Flemming Poulfelt (1997: 66) supports this. It reported that in 50% of cases there was a major difference between the problem which the consultants were called in to solve and the phrasing of the assignment after the initial discussions between client and the consultant.

Consultants and ethics

Mitchell's and Poulfelt's work to a degree legitimises the need for influencing skills in a consultant, in order to facilitate a client's understanding of the correct diagnosis, wherever in a project that might occur. Some of the personal legitimising strategies such as sequential impressioning, voluntary championing and retrospective justifying can apply without personal agenda as the main concern.

This use and possible abuse of freedom introduces a literature stream around consultant ethics.[5] Poulfelt's exploration of ethics literature seems rooted in what may be described as 'organisational folklore'. He reports:

"Whether they deserve it or not, it is notable that consultants and their business morals have been questioned and caricatured. Statements such as "The new witch doctors" (Economist, 1989) or "Consultants are people who borrow your watch to tell you the time - and then walk off with it" (Townsend, 1970) have often been quoted. A headline like "They change colour according to the environment" (Bøgelund, 1994) indicates a certain unreliability." (Poulfelt 1997: 66)

He upholds that 'opaque contexts' characterise the work situations of consultants, so the ethical element becomes an important part of the profile of the profession. The main thrust of his hypothesis is that the responsibility for ethics is jointly held by consultant and client.

He notes seven ethical dilemmas which have been reported in the literature. Two out of the seven themes have direct relevance to personal legitimising. These are 'professional effort vs. client interest', and 'client's needs vs. organisational needs'. The espoused notion of 'the client's needs come first' is challenged by research cited by Poulfelt which found otherwise. The 'client's needs vs. organisational needs' theme raises the issue of how differences in priorities between the different interest of stakeholders in a particular project might be reconciled. Underpinning this is the recognition that, in contrast to the more established professions, management consulting is largely unregulated.

"There are no institutional requirements regarding ethics in management consulting in contrast to other professions. This means that ethics is a relatively individual phenomenon. Only members of professional organisations are formally required to obey certain professional code of conducts as defined by the association. However, an organisation has only few means to sanction unethical behaviour among its member firms. In addition, most professional consulting associations represent only a minority of the total number of consulting firms and therefore of consultants."
(Berg & Poulfelt in Poulfelt 1997: 67)

It is noted that some of the strategies within personal legitimising are both necessary and appropriate providing client concern remains the primary focus, the justification for these being the complexities of problem diagnosis that consultants face. Should other agendas (including personal) be super-imposed, these strategies turn to serve the interests of others. The literature suggests that much scope exists for so-called 'unethical behaviour' in the management consulting arena, and such behaviour is present.

Consultants' influence through 'performance'

Consultants' use of 'performance' to influence clients is noted earlier. This seems a growing theme of interest in the consulting literature. Theo Schuyt and John Schuijt (1998) compare the practice of consulting with insights into transition rituals derived from cultural anthropology. Their method is an exploratory reflection based on literature and experience. They see strong alignment between their view of how consultants work and writings around ritual They state:

"Cultural anthropologists emphasise the symbolical value of rituals in time of important change. With organisational changes, cultural aspects - symbolism, magic, rituals - also play a central role, as we hope to have shown. The consultant surrounds the organisational change with rituals. First, he coaxes all those involved into a ritual situation, structures the change with clear rules and closes the process when the new situation has stabilised." (Schuyt and Schuijt 1998: 2)

They approach the subject from the context of sequential phases of a consulting project, and from the ethical standpoint that the consultant is working in the best interests of the client. Their contribution is that they attempt to broaden perspectives on nature of influence that a consultant employs. The authors refer to the novelty of their research, and comment why such fresh insight has not been forthcoming from other sources. The use of ritual in the practice of executing consulting assignments may also be applied in other directions by consultants, that is in the pursuit of priorities other that the client's best interest. The authors intimate as follows.

"We are aware of the many other symbolic roles consultants may play in preparing for change, coping with post-change confusion and anxiety, and even in sustaining status quo or preventing change." (Schuyt and Schuijt 1998, 5)

I read competence around the area of symbolism and ritual as manipulative tools that consultants develop skills in. The research makes no investigation or comment as to the legitimacy, ethics, and direction of such techniques.

A similar cross cultural perspective is offered by Harvey Blustain (1992: 44). He likens the activities of consultants to Shamanism. He describes Shamans as 'the collectively constituted category of religious specialists who cure illness and solve problems through their supernatural powers. His view is rooted in personal experience of both shamanism and management consulting. He identified five shamanistic competences and integrates his perspective of consultants and their work with clients to these. He argues the complexities and insecurities of the contemporary trading environment are changing the relationship between consultants and clients. Blustain's view is that, whilst technical solutions to client problems remain necessary, they are an increasingly insufficient exploration of consultant effectiveness. This draws us back to the earlier points about process being a main determinant of perceived outcome. The mystical power of consultant behaviour also prevails in the industry terminology and minds of its members. As Charles Harding (1992: 59) reports "few metaphors are more persistent in the professional services than that of rainmaking. To be called a rainmaker is the highest accolade for a member of an accounting, architectural, legal or consulting firm." The term 'rainmaker' is attributed to an individual capable of creating and winning consulting projects.

The metaphor theme is picked up by Timothy Clark and Graeme Salaman (1996: 85) with the suggestion that the work of management gurus within the consulting arena resembles the performance of a witch doctor. Though the authors make the distinction between the activity of management gurus and that of management consultants in general, my attraction to this perspective was the power to influence through a staged performance.

Various authors contribute to the importance of this phenomenon. Mats Alvesson (1994: 544) suggests that "clients rely on mental pictures of the phenomenon (service) concerned". Legge (1994: 6) and Alvesson (1993: 1011) both see successful consulting enterprises as essentially "systems of persuasion". Starbuck (1992: 731) notes that clients make judgements as to the value and quality of the service on the basis of "generic symbols of expertise". Work in this area draws out the overlap between management consulting and knowledge intensive firms, suggesting a link for further development. Clark and Salaman (1998: 19) pursue the idea of impressioning further and identify four characteristics of the consulting context as the reasons why it is evident in practice. They look at intangibility, interaction, heterogeneity and perishability of consulting services and extend this into presence of impressioning on the manipulation and regulation of images relating to client perceptions. The authors comment on the seeming attraction of consultancy approaches and ideas (such as TQM, re-engineering, JIT)[6] to clients.

"We suggest that attention deserves to be given less to the ideas themselves and more to the performance in which these ideas are presented. We seek to illuminate the work and role of these consultants in terms of their performances, thus drawing attention to qualities of the interaction between consultant and 'audience'. Furthermore, we argue that this performance has many of the qualities of a witchdoctor's performance in terms of knowledge, role and behaviour. At the heart of the performance there lies a concern for, and an emphasis on, the irrational, emotional and symbolic aspects of organisation." (Clark and Salaman 1996: 104)

Consulting and impression management

The above and earlier views suggest consultants are performers. Comparisons with transition rituals, shamans, and witchdoctors carry a similar sentiment about the

complexity of method involved in exerting influence. This supports the category and properties of 'sequential impressioning' within personal legitimising.

Clark (1995) extends the use of metaphor, employing the dramaturgical metaphor to explain the 'impression-management' of consultants. In his book, 'Managing Consultants - Consultancy as the Management of Impressions', he views impression management as a core feature of consultancy work.

"If consultants are to be successful and convince clients of their quality and worth a core feature of their work must be to manage the way in which these 'images' of their service quality are formed. Since these evaluations are based upon a client's experience of the interaction process it is natural that this will be where consultants' impression management activities will be concentrated. In this sense the art of persuasion is at the core of management consultancy work." (Clark 1995: 132)

Clark argues the case for the dramaturgical metaphor, saying that existing representations of consultancy fail to capture the consultant-client interaction process. Whereas Clark introduces a broader perspective to the nature of a consultant's influence in a similar manner to Schuyt and Schuijt, Blustain and his work with Salaman, he offers a clearer outline of method by which his views emerged. The empirical foundation to this work is detailed interviews with 60 consultants and 25 clients. Both sets of interviews sought to examine the detail and dynamics of the client-consultant relationship. With consultants he organised interviews around the following issues:

- the methods of obtaining assignments;
- the conduct of the assignment;
- the identification of problems and their solutions;
- a profile of consultancy in terms of its history, staff experience and range of services offered.

With clients, the focus was on:

- the process by which consultancies were chosen for particular assignments;

- the conduct of the assignment;

- the identification of problems and their solution;

- a historical profile of the organisation's use of consultants.

His method of data analysis and theory synthesis is less clear. In moving towards his suggestion of the dramaturgical metaphor as the most appropriate explanation he reflects on Morgan's[7] work on the applications of metaphor in an organisational context before considering the perspectives of Burke, Goffman and Mangham. (Clark 1995: 107)

I don't intend to draw personal legitimising into a debate on metaphor. Clark has offered a conceptual insight around the idea of impressions management. As yet, he hasn't offered insight into the processes with impressions management, which I believe would be of great interest to personal legitimising. He has chosen to take his work in a different direction and aligned impression management with his beliefs on the role of metaphor in the management of meaning.

As the preceding paragraph shows, he is not alone in this. I believe the reason is that conventional marketing description is so remote from capturing the essence of management consulting that the appetite for conceptual explanation is high. Analogies like those reported help fill a gap between theory and practice. We may have to wait for the acceptance of these before attention gravitates towards the processes that are contained therein.

Impressioning is embraced and explained within personal legitimising. As such, it perhaps goes further in conveying how impressioning work, as distinct from the why

impressioning takes place or how it could be described, which is the thrust of the above.

One glimpse of the practicalities of marketing is afforded by Latour (quoted in Legge 1994: 4). He discusses the processes within impressioning as distinct from the concept itself. Suggesting how consultants develop a strong rhetoric, Latour states, "This involves such techniques as linking claims to statements already the client believes in (or unlikely to dispute); 'stacking', that is arranging statements hierarchically so that each statement adds something to and builds from the former; 'captation', that is, controlling the client in such a way that she draws the conclusions the scientist (or consultant) wishes to be drawn."

This aligns well with sequential impressioning. Captation, that is controlling the client, is explained as 'nous' within personal legitimising. This exemplifies a likely harmony between personal legitimising and a further exploration within the area of impressioning.

In summary

This final group of management consulting literature offered several perspectives of relevance to personal legitimising, with one condition. The condition is that the work around power, influence and conduct is rooted in the interaction between consultant and client. Insights that we read into the consultant-client relationship may only be inferred to a consultant's wider group of relationships, the context to which personal legitimising is germane.

The subsection noted the opacity of consulting context and suggested influencing skills as a legitimate requirement for an individual consultant to work in the best interests of a client. The ethics debate sensitised us to be aware that other agendas

are capable of entering the frame. This would see the deployment of otherwise legitimate techniques along different avenues. This aligns with personal legitimising.

Finally, literature which sought to explain the nature of consultants' influence was introduced. This relied heavily on metaphor. Clark's work on impression management came close to personal legitimising. However, his decision to direct his endeavour towards the dramaturgical metaphor, as a higher order of conceptual explanation, and away from the identification of specific processes and strategies for impression management lengthens the distance between the two propositions. The literature around impression management endorses elements of personal legitimising. The emergent grounded theory offers a more detailed insight and is probably best positioned underneath the conceptual debate around metaphor.

6.3 Comparison of personal legitimising with professional services literature

6.3.1 Introduction

This section compares personal legitimising with relevant literature from the professional services arena.

Early work by Evert Gummesson (1978: 109) revealed characteristics of professional services marketing, which can in turn be explained by personal legitimising. He noted the importance of clients buying confidence (impressioning), actively building the image of the firm ('building on' property of sequential impressioning) and the dangers of over assertive or insistent marketing (nous). Similarly, Schon (1983: 275) conducted empirical work to lead him to posit that professional practitioners think about why they are doing, while they are doing it. Thus re-emphasising the personally considered choice of actions present in management consultants' behaviour. They help provide a bridge from the previous exploration of management consulting literature into professional services.

6.3.2 Defining professional services

Patrick Forsyth (1992: xi) suggests whilst there are some readily identifiable characteristics which define professional services workers, there is a distinction between the more traditional professions and more recent inclusions. He distinguishes between the 'Professions' (capital 'P')[8], for example, lawyers and accountants, and other professionals (lower case 'p'), for example, management consultants and computer programmers, within an explanation of professional services. Yet despite this distinction, he offers one explanation for the professional service worker:

"their service includes an element of advice, which depends in turn on their professional expertise and, sometimes, objectivity; and that time is a basic resource of their business".

Forsyth gives management consultants as one of thirteen specific professions, including capital Ps and lower case ps. Similarly Bente Lowendahl notes management consultants as one of fourteen professional services mentioned in this summary.

She views a professional service firm as having the following characteristics:

"1.   It is highly knowledge intensive, delivered by people with higher education, and frequently closely linked to scientific knowledge development within the relevant area of expertise.

2.   It involves a high degree of customisation.

3.   It involves a high degree of discretionary effort and personal judgement by the expert(s) delivering the service.

4.   It typically requires substantial interaction with the client firm representatives involved.

5.   It is delivered within the constraints of professional norms of conduct, including setting client needs higher than profits and respecting the limits of professional expertise." (Lowendahl 1997: 20)

The essence of the professional service firm and professional service work seems clear. And whilst writers acknowledge differences between those occupations that constitute the professions, unifying characteristics seem stronger than differences.

My review of the professional services literature gave rise to three particular issues in respect of personal legitimising. Although these issues are mostly driven by the

perspectives of commentators on the professions. These three are managing professional services firms, marketing in the professional services firm and the behaviour of professionals. These are investigated in turn.

6.3.3 Managing professional services firms

David Maister argues the case for unifying the activities of professionals under the one heading of professional services (Maister 1993, xvi).

Following this amalgamation, Maister then deconstructs this into a spectrum with three points, on the basis of operational characteristics of firms.

Maister labels these three points as 'expertise', 'experience', and 'efficiency'. He suggests that within the 'expertise' context; "a client with a large, complex, high risk, and unusual problem will appropriately seek out the most creative, talented, or innovative individual or firm he can find - at almost any cost." (Maister 1993: 21) The 'experience' practice has clients that recognise the problems they face have been dealt with by other companies, require less customisation, and are probably not a crisis issue. The 'efficiency' model is distinguished by clients who have problems they know can be handled competently by a broad range of firms. Maister's view is that every aspect of a practice group's (professional service firm) affairs is affected by its position on this spectrum.

The contribution of this to personal legitimising is the establishing of a 'contextual home' for the research. I agreed instantly with Maister's distinctions, seeing the firm with which most of the data was generated as primarily an 'expertise' consultancy. Maister's expansion of the characteristics of an expertise firm shows not only the presence of personal autonomy but alludes to its importance for the continued prosperity of the firm. He believes the focus of the effort in the expertise firm is a

problem diagnosis rather than execution. Its solutions are highly customerised rather than pragmatic. Price sensitivity is low and capable suppliers few. He offers this opinion of its management style.

"Practice development would tend to revolve more around building the reputation of individuals rather than the firm. Decision making would be by consensus, and management (to the extent that it existed) would largely be accomplished by inspiration. The autonomy of the individual partner would be among the most supreme virtues of the firm, with little use made of formal internal structuring. No individual or group of individuals could be said to 'own' the firm." (Maister 1993: 23)

I see Maister's distinction as being related to the personal scope afforded to an individual within an organisation. This associates with the characteristic of 'organisational tolerance' which has come to the fore in the discovery of personal legitimising. The further towards the 'expertise' point on Maister's spectrum an organisation appears, the greater the degree of organisational tolerance afforded to its individuals. His views are founded upon high experience with professional service firms as an academic or consultant. However, the method used to develop the insight is not made clear.

Lowendahl (1997) develops categorisation within the professional services further. Her aim is to explain the need for different strategies depending on the nature of the professional services firm, and to suggest what those strategies might involve. She cites Maister's contribution (Lowendahl 1997:112) but develops the theme by offering a relationship between strategic focus of the firm and its resource base. This is shown in figure eighteen below.

Figure eighteen: Individual priorities and different professional firm strategies (Lowendahl 1997: 128)

	Client Relations	*Problem Solving*	*Solution*
Priority	Autonomy	Learning, Innovation	Job security
Risk aversion	Low	Medium	High
Goal setting	Individual	Team	Firm
Primary goal	Pleasing the client	Enhancing competence	Sell or develop solutions
Authority	The client decision maker	Professional expert	'The boss'
Reference group	Client	Academe/peers	Firm
Status/Rewards linked to	Client satisfaction, Retention	Creativity, Challenging project won and completed	Loyalty, New solutions, Sales
Demand from organisation	Challenging clients, Autonomy	Challenging projects, Expert colleagues	Org. Support
Degree of autonomy preferred	High	Medium	Low
Primary conflict resolution mode	Exit	Voice	Loyalty
Ideal resource base	Team Based	Organisationally controlled resources	Individually controlled resources

Lowendahl believes that whereas most professional services firms start as small enterprises and rely on the competence, reputation and networks of its members, as professional services firms grow they may develop into team based creative problem solvers, and maybe then into efficient deliverers of professionally based solutions.

Lowendahl's framework is the result of a more structured inductively oriented study into the strategic management of professional services firms than Maister's. Both offer a more insightful taxonomy of professional services firms than the straightforward 'capital P' – 'lower case p' distinction. Their frameworks introduce an ability to form an opinion of the suitability of firms' strategic management at various stages of evolution, growth or activity type. It suggests that while personal legitimising may exist in professional services firms, its nature and extent is influenced by the firm's context in relation to these framework characteristics. For example, if a firm is small, expert and operates in Lowendahl's 'client relations' mode, then the high autonomy afforded to individuals suggests a very high degree of organisational tolerance meaning a correspondingly high degree of personal agenda being incorporated really without question.

These categorisations introduce a perspective that was not clearly evident in the management consulting literature itself. Schein (1990: 262) offers three models of consultancy service, "content experts, doctors and process". Lundberg (1994: 5) expands these types into broader characteristics in terms of consultant – client relations. Both, though, fall short of the organisational structure insight offered above.

Management of professionals

Having intimated how individual scope alters with the style of the firm, Lowendahl and Maister introduce some of the man management issues within the professions. Lowendahl's research leads her to state:

"There appears to be a strong tension in most firms from professionals attempting to pull the operation of the firm in the direction of their individual priorities, and

demanding more freedom and less submission to collective goals." (Lowendahl 1997: 127)

Lowendahl's research doesn't offer insight into how professions attempt to align the direction of the firm with personal priorities. This is because her work is primarily concerned with the strategic management of firms rather than the behaviour of those within. But her data does allude to both implicit and explicit forms of personal legitimising.

"Managers develop more routines in order to control 'the mavericks' and leverage solutions. Professionals find more creative ways of avoiding repetition, and make ad hoc decisions even in situations where procedures do exist." (Lowendahl 1997, 128)

She (1997: 62) uses the metaphor "management as herding cats" to describe the challenges of managing professionals. Maister continues on this theme. He suggests, "in a professional firm, you can manage only what the professionals will *let* you manage. To get anything whatsoever done, professionals must voluntarily approve and accept new accountabilities. They must willingly vote (or at least constant) to give up their jealously guarded autonomy. They must *agree* to be managed." (Maister 1997: 56)

With regards to motivation Maister identifies challenge, autonomy, and relevance as being the determinants. He makes reference to the nature of people attracted to the professions.

"The typical professional is apt to describe him or herself in the following way: "I am the type of person who gets bored easily. I hate doing repetitive sorts of work, and always like to seek out new challenges". They require continual challenge and personal growth to retain their interest, and are impatient when they do not receive it.

From their need to achieve self-respect by receiving the respect of others, it follows that professionals value both autonomy in their work and involvement in policy decisions, whether on engagements or firm-management matters. " (Maister 1993, 168)

Much of this sentiment supports the insights from the management consulting literature. This in turn suggests that personal legitimising may have currency in the broader realm of professional services.

Strategy development

The components articulated above impact on Maister's views on effective strategy development. He believes the role of professional service firm management is to facilitate strategy rather than to direct it.

This introduces the interplay between organisational and personal strategies. Maister sees high incidence of professionals having their own individual strategy, and asserting this as a major component to the overall firm strategy.

Lowendahl (1997: 159) acknowledges this symbiosis as an inherent characteristic of professional services firms seeking both staff and clients. She states,
"at the core of this logic lies the recognition of the fact that knowledge intensive firms have to compete in two markets simultaneously, namely for the most competent people as well as for the most attractive contracts and clients. In fact, competitiveness in these firms is as much about getting the right people to come and stay as it is about getting the right clients to buy the service."

The importance of individuals' own influences in the strategy development process is further emphasised in research. Stevens et al (1998: 113) examined the factors that

impact on the choice of strategy within professional services. They neatly side-stepped a point that does not fit with their best medicine, with the phrase "beyond internal politics and personal preferences of the principals at least four factors influence the choice of strategy selected".

Their work is an assertion of believed good practice. In order to pave the way for their 'rational' strategic factors of resources, distinctive competences, stage in life cycle and competition, acknowledgement of the arrationalities of the real world has to be given.

It follows that the consequence of the above personal and strategic management characteristics of the professional service firm is an emergent, rather than a planned strategy. This permeates personal legitimising. It is demonstrated with the displacement activity within opportunistic accommodating and sequential impressioning, the territorial qualities of all six categories, and the dynamic of nous with organisational tolerance. Shepherd (1997: 25) makes a pertinent observation from a study of marketing within the accounting profession, positing that "strategy development starts with an assessment of the firm's momentum".

Momentum is the culmination of individuals' singular actions. This reminds that strategy in this context is a consequence of earlier endeavour. This point and the recognition that such endeavours are executed by individuals, relates to personal legitimising's assertion that consultants are able to shape the dynamic of their organisation without this being consciously identified by their managers.

6.3.4   Marketing professional services

'Minimal' marketing with the professions recognised in the literature

Philip Kotler and Richard Connor were amongst the pioneers of marketing for professional services. In 1977 they wrote a prescriptive paper, 'Marketing Professional Services', which recommends a more structured and deliberate marketing approach for professional service firms. The evidence for their views is unclear, but their opinions were offered in light of increasingly competitive markets within the professions. In order to create a platform for their assertions, they comment on their observations of marketing practice within the professions.

"A large number of professional firms practice minimal marketing. They avoid or minimise conscious development of a marketing programme. The firms feel that they will attain their objectives by rendering the best quality service to existing clients. They reason that a high quality of service will lead to satisfied clients, who will place their new business with the firm. Furthermore, satisfied clients will recommend the firm to others, thus leading to a substantial inflow of new clients." (Kotler and Connor 1977: 72)

Care is needed in looking too deeply into data, given its undisclosed foundation and its age. But perhaps in an enthusiasm to offer a cure, the writers have overlooked some of the reasons which have led to the institutionalisation of the behaviours reported. One might suggest that as successful enterprises, such professional firms should be advised to perpetuate the light touch as deliberate marketing management. One might also proffer that 'best quality service' is too simplistic a label for what professionals really do to develop a following.

Helen Day and Hiram Barksdale (1992: 86) undertook an investigation into the attributes of effective professional services firms in securing work in the business to business arena. The research involved a battery of open ended questions by survey and follow up interview to twenty architectural and engineering consultants, and seventeen client firms. They sought to determine:

–   what criteria do clients use in selecting firms for the short list?

–   what criteria do clients use to evaluate the quality of service being provided?

–   what factors contribute to clients' feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service provided?

Answers were recorded and analysed, and researchers looked over the data for emergent patterns. Although the researcher states that no prior assumptions were made as to how participants would or should answer the questions, their work imposes the structure of a three stage process on a commercial transaction. However, their findings fit with the notion of personal legitimising. They write:

"An analysis of the responses indicated that four major dimensions appear to underlie the selection decision: (1) perceived experience, expertise, and competence of the provider; (2) the provider's understanding of the client's needs and interests; (3) the providers' relationship and communication skills; and (4) the likelihood of the provider conforming to contractual and administrative requirements."

This connects with earlier data which emphasised the importance of 'impressioning' skills in the consultant client relationship. Their specific scope, combined with their research perspective being the client (title of their paper, 'How Firms Select Professional Services') probably accounts for the lack of more intimate illumination of personal legitimising in a method that involved the synthesis of openly generated data.

Paul Bloom (1984: 103) writes on the effective marketing for professional services. In an assertion derived from what the author terms 'extensive interviews and discussions with a diverse group of professional service market practitioners' (method of synthesis unstated) he identifies seven marketing 'challenge's for the professional services firm to embrace. He draws attention to 'buyer uncertainty', 'converting doers into sellers' and 'allocating time for marketing'. The implication of his view in these three areas on personal legitimising are as follows.

First, buyer uncertainty reflects an asymmetrical balance of power in the consultant client relationship in favour of the consultant. Personal legitimising would see the naivety of buyers as an ingredient that could favour the deployment of personal preference. My research has not included this point in such a direct manner. Personal legitimising notes two aspects of power (role and rank) as co-determinants of the scope that an individual enjoys, organisational tolerance, as I have termed it. It could be argued power asymmetry could be a more useful component of organisational tolerance than rank. A distinction between management consulting and Bloom's context is that the latter embraces situations that involve the expert-layman nature of a professional dealing with a member of the public, for example the doctor-patient relationship. Such exaggerates the asymmetry.

Second, the issue around converting 'doers' into 'sellers' talks in support of the views expressed earlier by Weittreich. Bloom states:

"Traditionally, professional service organisations have left selling almost exclusively in the hands of those senior people who exhibit an interest and a flair for it ('finders'); project management and technical tasks have been left to others ('minders' and 'grinders'). But increasingly, these organisations are finding it necessary to get broader participation in selling. Clients and patients generally prefer to be courted by the persons who actually perform the services. Customers usually

feel uncomfortable buying from people they will never see again or from officials who only sell." (Bloom 1984: 107)

He implies that placing more selling emphasis on the 'doers' involves more selling being accomplished by those without a flair or affinity for it. One could hypothesise that 'doers' are more likely to remain closer to their personal comfort zone of limited selling technique than those with greater flair. This suggest that when it comes to selling activity, personal preference may be more likely to be followed. Consultants may be apprehensive about the personal challenges involved in anything other. Indeed, this view is reinforced by the work of Chris Argyris (1991: 100). Argyris suggests professionals' dominant learning style involves improvement along an existing direction. So called 'single loop learning'. The contrast, and the style less well represented by in the professions is 'double loop learning'. In the latter an individual questions the soundness of an existing direction. Such constitutes a challenge to their 'master programme' rather than a refinement of it. Personal legitimising noted the dominance of the single loop dynamic which is the stronger in all but voluntary championing and support mustering categories of behaviour.

Third, the 'allocation of time for marketing' issue is explained by a president of a marketing consulting firm in Bloom's paper.

"There's never an end to chasing. You're always torn between working and replacing. You must maintain a delicate balance."

This tension suggests making the most of situations (capitalising) as the most reasonable strategy in the context. Bloom (1984: 109) recommends that professional firms can mix service provision and marketing, and mix pleasure seeking and marketing. In this way, he asserts, firms don't sacrifice billable time on marketing. He explains,

"The former approach involves taking advantage of opportunities to sell one's services while actually providing other services. this can often be done in a subtle manner, such as when accounting firms use tax experts on audit teams to give them an opportunity to discuss their more specialised services with clients. Firms can also use this type of cross-selling of services to a degree through the recommendations made by professionals in final reports or closing presentations ....The old technique of mixing pleasure selling and marketing still has value in today's more sophisticated marketing environment. Firms can accomplish much by having professionals spend some of their leisure time socialising with prospective and existing clients, patients, or referral sources at restaurants, country clubs, political groups, civic organisations, churches, alumni gatherings, and trade association meetings".

Though directive in nature, Bloom draws attention to the use of methods which both fit with the nature of the individual and involve a subtlety that is undetected by those with whom the methods are used. He sees expediency as a reason for their presence, this being a solution to the 'time for marketing' challenge.

Bloom's work highlighted why personal legitimising may happen as well as discussing the scope for it. But as a directive paper we may only conjecture as to the practical viability of the specific suggestions of how to integrate business development with a social agenda.

Management of marketing

Earlier, the literature drew attention to why heavily systematised and formulised management approaches find trouble in contexts like management consulting. The management of marketing is included. Personal legitimising includes the category of 'pseudo endorsing'. This is where an individual accepts a duty then consciously

provides insufficient attention to its implementation such that its energy fizzles out. The literature offers similar indicators. Morgan and Piercy (in Morgan 1990: 284) revealed that those responsible for marketing within accountancy and law firms encountered significant internal barriers in their attempts to achieve the implementation of marketing plans. One interviewee expressed frustration thus: "I do all the right things in terms of research and analysis of the market, internal audit, designing innovative marketing strategies, writing carefully prepared plans ... and nothing happens." This data, at a descriptive level can be offered up to pseudo endorsing should future endeavour be concerned with extending the reach of the theory beyond its immediate context.

There is more research available on the marketing of professional services. Methodological differences render the outcomes of some of little bearing on personal legitimising. Contextual distinctions with this broad school of professional services make comparison unilluminating in some cases. For example, Morgan and Piercy (1991: 95) undertook a survey based research into the UK accounting and law professions to determine business to the implementation of marketing. The study involved analysis of questionnaires received from 128 accounting and law firms and follow up interviews. The research method which centres on a reasonably large sample size at the expense of depth of insight militates against the findings being obviously sympathetic to grounded theory work. This is exacerbated by the prevailing partnership governance and constraints on marketing activity by the professional bodies in accounting and law. These characteristics do not apply to management consulting.

6.3.5 Behaviour of professionals

Much data on the behaviour of those in the professions mirrored the sentiments from the comparison with management consulting literature (see Bloom 1992: 50; Harding

1992: 60). It sees individual's activities being a function of their personality and style. It echoes the frustrations of this as an impediment to people being 'developable' into sales and marketing uniformity. Anurag Sharma's (1997: 791) work has won its way into this comparison on the strength of its ability to recognise and explain the gaps between personal legitimising and what I have discovered in the literature comparison. Sharma conducted a conceptual investigation into the translation of agency theory into the professional services context. He referred to published research from both fields to build a theoretical insight into how a propensity for professionals to behave opportunistically, at the expense of clients' interests, appears. His investigation is channelled along the single track of professional and principals and is concerned with the furtherance of a particular school of thought, agency theory. He introduces three aspects of direct interest to personal legitimising.

First, he urges far greater study of behaviour in the management consulting arena. Such insights are necessary to weave into the propositions he has generated.

"There is much need, for example, for researchers to conduct quasi-anthropological field studies to explore the internal workings of such professions as accounting, advertising, investment banking, and management consulting. These management-relevant 'modern' professions largely have been ignored in the extensive literature in sociology, where the concern has been primarily with traditional ('socially useful') occupations, such as law and medicine." (Sharma 1997: 792)

Second, he also recognises that such work may be problematic to achieve, intimating this as a barrier to its accomplishment to date.

"I recognise that empirical testing of my propositions will not be without challenges, for the relationships between firms and their professional service providers usually

are confidential and access to practitioners and to potentially sensitive data is likely to be difficult." (Sharma 1997: 791)

Third, he is able to introduce some insights that challenge the believed altruistic orientations of those engaged in professional work.

"Quasi-anthropological fieldwork in the tradition of Chicago Sociology, concerned more with the importance of firsthand experience of everyday life than with the synthetic conceptions about the role of professions in society, has undermined steadily the view that the professions can be trusted to control their work without taking advantage of such control. Writing about the medical profession, for instance, Berlant (1975) questioned the altruistic motives apparent in the code of ethics, and he argued that the professions' underlying goals was economic monopoly. Similarly, upon examining solicitors in Cardiff, in the United Kingdom, Thomas and Mungham discovered that although "the profession formally states that client's interests should be, and are, put before its own ..... the self interest of solicitors is a more helpful way of viewing this group"." (Sharma 1997: 765)

Grounded theory has its roots in the Chicago School of Sociology. It is pertinent that method from that source revealed the pursuit of self interest in a similar manner to that revealed in personal legitimising. Thus far I have felt frustrated by my attempts to find literature of relevant and ready comparison to personal legitimising. I see Sharma's comments as a belief that if little exists, such ought to become an investigative priority.

6.3.6 In summary

The above notes several factors of relevance to personal legitimising. The contextual distinctions of different forms of professional service firm, and their impact on the degree of freedom for individuals is explained. The competition for staff as well as clients introduces a management complication, as does the individualism that seems prevalent in the sector. Strategy is recognised as a consequence of individual enterprise, whether that individual operates with managerial approval or not. Reasons for the ineffectiveness of over-structured approaches to marketing management are offered through the components of personal legitimising. Self interested behaviour within the profession is noted from several sources in the literature, but no comprehensive theoretical explanation is offered. Finally, the rarity of literature in full accordance with personal legitimising is explained.

6.4   Knowledge intensive firms

6.4.1   Introduction

This section of the literature comparison focuses on texts concerning knowledge
intensive firms or derivatives of that label.

Management consulting has been shown to be a subset of the professional services
sector, which in turn is a component of the knowledge intensive firm field. The
review of management consulting literature earlier drew attention to work on
knowledge intensive firms as its foundation (for example, Hussey in Sadler 1997:
220). This section further explores the link between personal legitimising and what
should be considered as very closely related to the study's substantive area.

However, I realise that the comparison is moving further from the specific situation
that gave rise to personal legitimising. The points below are those that contribute to
the understanding already developed in this chapter, and those I feel are relevant to
the new theory's context.

6.4.2   Explanation of knowledge intensive firms

Karl-Erik Sveiby (1992: 170) offers an explanation of what characterises a
knowledge intensive organisation.

"It is an organisation where the majority of the employees are highly educated, where
the 'production' does not consist of goods or services but complex non-standardised
problem-solving. The problem-solving process involves a lot of information
processing (not necessarily computerised) and the end result is normally a report or

process delivered orally or as hard copy. The customers are treated individually and often called clients or patients.

The four main distinguishing features of the production are:

- Non-standardisation
- Creativity
- High dependence on individuals
- Complex problem-solving.

The companies are in any of the knowledge industries like management consulting, computer software, technical research, advertising, law, medicine, architecture and so on. The sector is sometimes called professional services or business services but they have counterparts in the public sector, such as many of the highly specialised governmental bodies or specialised hospitals or research organisations. They also exist within big organisations as departments for R&D or laboratories."

Sveiby's view led to a reconsideration of the contextual conditions I believed were at the root of personal legitimising. Whereas in section 1.2.3, I had noted 'high dependence on individuals', aspects like 'highly educated people, complex problem solving, creativity and non-standardisation' are not recognised. Yet I reflect that the people who participated in the study did exhibit such qualities. He continues to proffer a view why knowledge intensive firms merit research attention.

"The companies in the knowledge industries are thus well worth attention – for one thing they are probably the fastest growing organisations in the world today. That they have been unnoticed so far is probably because they are so obscure, small and hidden in statistics as service companies."

As well as sensitising me to a refinement of the scope of personal legitimising as a substantive theory, his views add weight to the importance of studies in this area.

6.4.3 Management of knowledge intensive firms

Sveiby (1992: 174) offers perspectives on the management challenge of the 'knowhow'[9] company. First, he acknowledges the earlier views of Maister and Lowendahl in managing such enterprises.

"The successful companies in the knowledge intensive industries have had to tackle the problems of managing 'difficult', highly skilled employees wanting to do their own thing as well as demanding customers wanting tailor-made solutions every day. In fact, it is an integral part of the lives of their managers."

Then, as an aid to understanding, he offers a framework for categorising those who work in such organisations, as a means to furthering understanding. See figure nineteen below.

Figure nineteen: Categories of personnel in the 'knowhow' company

		Low	High
Professional knowhow	High	'The professional'	'The leader'
	Low	'The clerical staff'	'The manager'

Low   High

Managerial knowhow

The distinction between the 'professional' and the 'leader' is useful. Sveiby writes:

"We have probably all encountered the typical professional. He (it is mostly a man) is intelligent, brilliant, arrogant and absent-minded. He loves his job and is a workaholic when it comes to problem-solving. But he hates the company 'bureaucracy' and is seen constantly arguing with the management over this bill or that expense, he is never on time and no one seems to know where he is right now. He is loyal to his organisation only if he can feel proud of the professional level of it. He is both unable and unwilling to manage other people; he likes working in teams but only if they consist of skilled professionals. He is interested mainly in the freedom to develop his own professional skills and the status of the profession.

The leader is the driving force of the knowhow company and is more or less irreplaceable. He or she has often founded the company and is almost always an ex-professional who has developed managerial skills and interests. It is very rare to find an accountancy firm, theatre, engineering firm or advertising agency not led by an ex-professional."

The importance of this distinction, and the presence of leadership is brought out by Sveiby as he talks about the power network in a knowhow company.

"This informal (power) network hierarchy exists in any organisation – be it industrial or service or knowledge-intensive. The difference is that in the knowhow company the informal network is so much more powerful than in any other kind of organisation. This is because the informal power is normally in the hands of the professionals, who have a lot more power than the workers in the factory or the white-collar workers in the office. The leader must thus understand the informal forces of the knowhow company to be able to manage it.

In the knowhow company the professionals are the high-status people, the more skilled in the profession, the more influential. Unfortunately, the 'guru' is generally not the best manager of the company. However, he or she may have the greatest power in the organisation because the other professionals listen to him or her. The 'guru' is also very often the person with the best contacts in the industry and the highest billing rate.

The knowhow company thus very often finds itself in the dilemma of having the most powerful person as an unable and unwilling leader. The knowhow company with the unwilling professional as the leader is most often not managed at all. The 'leadership' consists of letting the professionals do what they want in terms of exciting new experiments or new programmes. I call this kind of unmanaged company an 'agency'." (Sveiby 1992: 180)

The distinction between Sveiby's 'agency' and 'knowhow company' relates to the element of organisational tolerance in personal legitimising. Agencies offer greater organisational tolerance because of a more laissez faire management culture.

I have given prominence to Sveiby's views. His work provides an overview of some of the strategic issues in the management of knowhow companies, and within this an encouragement that more research in this area is undertaken. The justification for this comes from a belief that existing management approaches are inappropriate in this context. He gives this illustration.

"All management theories up till now are based on the simple fact that the formal boss has an automatic advantage by being in control of the information flow, so he or she always knows a little more and has a better overview. But suppose that this is not the case? Suppose that your subordinates are better informed than you are, have better relations with the key customers than you have, have closer networks within

the organisation than you do and – how awful – they are even more intelligent than you and they know how to show it." (Sveiby 1992: 185)

It is the conceptual level rather than the detail level of his work that merits its prominence in this comparison with personal legitimising. Above, he is suggesting that new insights into management are both expected and necessary. His work does not drill down into the articulation of specific processes and the relationship between them. It does not appear on an equal plane to personal legitimising. It makes clear why insights like personal legitimising are needed.

6.4.4 Culture in knowledge intensive firms

Mats Alvesson (1995: 39) undertook an inductive study of a Swedish based computer services and consulting organisation. He explores the role of organisational culture in a knowledge intensive firm.

"It appears that in many knowledge-intensive companies there are attempts to create environments and attitudes which result in the development of socio-emotional ties amongst employees with each other and to the company (Kanter 1983). Such workplace environments and ties counteract an interest in more narrow instrumental rewards such as salaries and, to some extent promotion (Alvesson and Lindkvist 1993). Kunda (1992) and Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) also consider that many employees were characterised by strong emotional ties to their company. (Alvesson: 1995: 343)

This supplements the data in personal legitimising which notes that people worked in consulting firms for more intrinsic benefits that salary. Alvesson than explores how the 'attraction' elements of culture becomes a management conduit.

In a study of a major American high technology company, Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) emphasise that for many employees "'culture' replaces 'structure' as an organising principle and is used both to explain and guide action" (p 72). They consider that the formal organisation is not, per se, particularly important. Kunda (1992) maintains, however, that certain elements of bureaucratic control remain in place, even when normative control is predominant. Desirable behaviour is primarily achieved as a result of normative regulations which focus on the individual's experiences and ideas rather than on a direct focus on control of behaviour." (Alvesson 1995: 344)

Alvesson's insights make the non-systematic approach to management more palatable. Earlier, it could be viewed that an absence of bureaucratic control in small consultancy firms, as demonstrated by this and other research, to be a cure of anarchy. It this were true, managers' enthusiasm for personal legitimising might be tempered, given the theory demonstrates how people influence and avoid control. Alvesson suggests that operating principles prevail through cultural norms.

In other work, Alvesson (1994: 539) looked at the relationship between organisational context and culture, and individual activity. He introduces the concept of 'habitus'. He explains,

"If one has the right habitus – internal dispositions that are applied according to the field's organisational conditions and cultural conventions – this creates the foundations for successful action in that area."

Alvesson appreciates that habitus is hard to explain and recognise. Habitus is concerned with qualities assimilated over time that become tacit. It is the ability to 'fit in' with situational conventions. It goes beyond the language and symbols expected of a credible participant. It is more connected with the ability to cement

these with the appropriate manner. Habitus is about flexible qualities, not formal rules. As Alvesson states "the habitus makes possible the 'correct' usage of conventions and norms rather than mechanical adherence to them." (Alvesson 1994: 539)

The appeal of habitus to personal legitimising is its relationship with the strategies involving implicit behaviour, organisational tolerance and nous. The dynamic quality of habitus sees an individual acquiring the appropriate finesse with experience. Organisational tolerance noted the presence of an individual's reputation/credentials as a component of their operating freedom. Habitus reflects such a relationship. The consequence of operating within organisational tolerance and the deployment of nous is an unquestioned freedom to operate. Alvesson comments on the possible application of habitus, saying that there is "no ulterior motive behind the hidden qualities of the habitus", leaving judgement in its use to the individual. This, together with the knowledge that habitus is not contextually restricted (it can work in the domains of clients and colleagues), demonstrates a harmony with personal legitimising. It shows possibility through plausibility. It takes 'impressioning' and both broadens its reach and introduces conditions around its appropriateness.

6.4.5 In summary

The substantive literature comparison concluded in a review of insight into knowledge intensive firms. It introduced other possible factors, like highly educated people, and creativity as possible determinants of personal legitimising's current scope. It also demonstrated an increasing need for understanding in this area. Sveiby's work reinforced the need of new managerial perspectives and Alvesson drew attention to the use of organisational culture as an attractor and regulator of individual behaviour. Finally, the concept of habitus came to light as an existing

umbrella for much described by personal legitimising, though habitus itself is not offered as a multi-level explanatory theory.

6.5 Comparison of personal legitimising with relationship marketing literature

6.5.1 Introduction

This section compares personal legitimising with published work around relationship marketing. This is the first of two emergent themes from the substantive literature review. Relationship marketing is currently a topical area for marketing audiences. It is concerned with the myriad of relationships, networks and interactions which, as Evert Gummesson and colleagues (1997: 11) point out, "have been at the core of business since time immemorial".

Relationship marketing merits inclusion in the literature comparison for two reasons. First, it is a vibrant subject in contemporary marketing theory. Personal legitimising impinges on the conduct and management of marketing. It makes sense to consider the most recent thinking in these areas. Second, the literature in the substantive area showed the importance of relationships between consultants and clients.

The purpose of this is to conduct an overview of linkages between the two areas. However, as relationship marketing is outwith the substantive area of study, it is indicative rather than thorough in scope.

6.5.2 Distinctions between personal legitimising and relationship marketing

The search revealed little of direct similarity to personal legitimising. The reasons for this follow.

Relationship marketing debate is at a conceptual level

The position of most relationship marketing writing appears to be at the level of conceptual insight and theory building. Gummesson et al (1997: 14) suggest relationship marketing represents a paradigm shift in marketing thought. Discontinuity from the marketing mix and neo-classical economic approach. Such a discontinuity gives marketing academe permission to challenge perceptions and opinions about its domain. Gummesson poses this question.

"Does the current interest in RM imply that a number of marketing theorists are finally beginning to catch a glimpse of marketing reality? Is it too embarrassing to admit that marketing professors have been preoccupied with a mass marketing and consumer goods-based marketing management theory dealing with a special case of marketing? Or have they been seduced and dazzled by a set of neat mathematical and statistical formulas from neoclassical economics and from marketing research handbooks? Could it be that we are now beginning to observe the essentials of marketing?"

This implies that marketing academe is using relationship marketing to play 'catch up'. A sentiment expressed further by Keith Blois (1997: 370).

"Just as Moliere's Monsieur Jourdain was surprised to learn that he had been talking prose all his life, so many firms will be surprised to learn that they are involved in 'relationship marketing'!"

The debate is at the general theory perspective. Way above the consideration of this specific research context. I use the term debate advisedly. The paradigm shift referred to earlier has instigated responses. This has attracted a critique and development by writers such as Stone and Mason (1997) and Coviello and Brodie

(1998). The point here is that the effort is primarily being expended at this '"grand theory" level. While this persists, commentators may be unlikely to look in detail at more focussed areas within the relationship marketing field.

Relationship marketing takes an organisational perspective

The importance of the perspective around which theory is constructed has been discussed earlier. Relationship marketing work seems to focus on the organisational. Personal legitimising is a theory from the perspective of the individual.

An example of the conceptual level and organisational centred status of the relationship marketing debate is Gummesson's thirty relationship types (Gummesson 1999: 20). Here a formal theoretical explanation is offered which suggest thirty relational types (categories), each belonging to one of three sub-core variables, "macro, market and nano" relationships. The structure of the theory is clear, but its broad general reach and organisational standpoint render comparison with personal legitimising unenlightening.

Relationship marketing is currently concerned with structure

In his discussion of basic social processes, Glaser (1978: 102) distinguishes between structural processes and psychological processes. He sees the former as the context which abets or facilitates the latter. The point is that structure and process are different, whilst they may be linked they are not directly comparable. Relationship marketing seems currently concerned with structure of process. Witness Gummesson's identification of thirty relationships and Hunt and Morgan's work (1994: 19-27) on the structure of relationship management.

Gronroos talks about the importance of a process management perspective (Gronroos 1996: 6) as distinct from a functional perspective. Yet empirical research is yet to illuminate much of the behaviour and activities within this.

Relationship marketing – in emergence

In services marketing the term 'relationship marketing' traces back to Leonard Berry in 1983 (Bitner 1995: 246). The roots go back further into the network approach and industrial marketing (Gummesson et al 1997: 10). It is only in the last ten years thought that the term has become a recognised locus of theoretical insight.

Accepting that the status of research into any subject is transient, it is perhaps with added gravity that when Gummesson (1997a: 421)recently projected developments in relationship marketing as 'work in progress'. It is perhaps too early to hope that work under the relationship marketing umbrella would be as specifically detailed to relate to personal legitimising.

6.5.3 Links between personal legitimising and relationship marketing

Given the above we should not be over-critical when gaps in relationship marketing insight and research endeavour are brought to our attention. See Beaton and Beaton (1997: 57); Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson (1994: 1). Management consulting after all has only recently emerged as an area of study in its own right, and similar gaps in its research endeavour are pointed out (see Schuyt and Schuijt 1998: 4).

The literature does reveal glimpses of the linkages that further research may reveal between relationship marketing and personal legitimising. For example Gummesson (1997b: 271) relays his own experience as a management consultant, noting the importance of one's personal image and networks within the dynamic of the trade.

This intimates sequential impression through the use of "symbol" (appearance) and "experience" (encouraging network relationships).

The call for a deeper understanding of the nature of relationships is endorsed by studies such as Grayson and Ambler's (1997) investigation into the dark side of long-term relationships in marketing services. Here the authors challenge relationship marketing at a "grand theory" level and offer substantive evidence that long term relationships do not universally have positive outcomes. The point being that within this overall theory are contextual variances that have yet to be understood and accounted for.

My belief is that the characteristics of management consulting enterprise make it one of the most attractive candidates and exemplars of relationship marketing tenets. This view is explained by Blois (1997: 375). Blois uses Boisot's three dimensional representation of the variables 'codification, diffusion and tangibility' (CDT) with regards to information and its dissemination from organisation to customers. The thrust of Blois' argument is that different areas of the CDT create differing challenges on the application of relationship marketing. These include the appeal to both parties of a relationship, and the degree to which the recipe for relationship can be replicated in an organisation. He believes that relationship marketing is perhaps concerned with the CDT space in entirety, namely the domain of organisations. This may be too broad a construct for effective application of general relationship marketing principles, given such diverse circumstances.

He provides an example of this by referring to the CDT space occupied by consulting type organisations.

"The region where the product is intangible; no or little codification or diffusion has occurred. In such circumstances, the product's quality is strongly related to the

personality of those involved in creating it; this would be typified by organisations

such as advertising agencies where the only assets are the staff and typically where to

the customers one or two people (e.g. the Creative Director) are almost 'the agency'.

Certainly when senior staff leave such organisations they often take existing business

with them. The behaviour of such individuals may be self-centred and is frequently

opportunistic – their customer's behaviours in following them simply being their

response to their perception of the near uniqueness of the individual's capabilities

and not necessarily because 'a relationship' exists." (Blois 1997: 375)

It should be noted that Blois uses CDT space to distinguish between areas such as

management consulting and the traditional professions, which tend to form the

cornerstone of professional services literature. I mention this to temper temptation to

view professional services homogeneously in respect of participants behaviours.

What I deduce from his study is that if relationship marketing practice is believed to

be in advance of theory, (the point made earlier by Gummesson and Blois), and

theory is currently at the level where it is concerned with overall explanation, then

relationship marketing practice in specific contexts is even further ahead.

Manipulation in long term relationships

Gummesson (1994) offers the view that "marketing as a manipulative, short term

activity is in contrast to life support process". He states "Relationship marketing sees

marketing activities as part of a larger context, inside as well as outside the company,

which shall be beneficial to all parties in the long run, preferably also in the short

run."

One deduces that a system in which manipulation dominates is unsustainable in the

longer term. Moreover, the presence of manipulation in any degree is not to be

applauded. In the study of personal legitimising, I witnessed manipulation. Chapters four and five of this thesis demonstrate it. Manipulation was also acknowledged in the management consulting literature. The difference between personal legitimising's data and the relationship marketing standpoint must be explored. First to explain the term 'manipulating'.

"Manipulate: to control or influence (something or someone) cleverly, deviously or skilfully" (Collins Concise English Dictionary 1992: 806)

There are three reasons for the distinction between the two.

First, earlier in this thesis the power asymmetry in the consultant client relationship, favouring the former was noted. Scope exists for consultants to manipulate. Extrapolating Blois' earlier CDT discussion, manipulating ability in a management consulting firm is perhaps a necessity. Manipulation may imply disadvantage to the second party, but this need not be the case. In expert-layman situations, where the client is in receipt of intangible benefits, or where the determination of price needs to involve search and switching costs as well as the amount paid, it is feasible to view manipulation as a guiding down the route to mutual benefit.

Second, I have attempted to paint manipulation in a favourable light. However, my data did reveal consultants' pursuit of self interests, sometimes at the expense of other parties. This is empirically grounded at a micro level. Its focus is the individual. Gummesson chooses his words to outline a conceptual perspective for an organisational context. Both scale and underpinning differ.

Third, I worked in my research context for four years generating and analysing data. It is not a longitudinal study, and beyond knowing the organisation grew in that time, I can make no prediction about the future prosperity of the enterprise as an

aggregation of individuals whose behaviour I have studied. In short my study does not reveal whether manipulative actions are life sustaining. Merely that they are present.

6.5.4 In summary

This subsection has compared personal legitimising to relationship marketing literature. It explained the reasons for the importance of considering the relationship marketing literature. These are the current momentum behind relationship marketing and the importance of relationships to consulting firm operations.

It found little from the literature of similarity to personal legitimising. At the same time, only one aspect was identified which at first glance seemed contradictory. The subsection explained both the lack of integration between theory and literature, and the reasons for the one apparent contradiction, the notion of manipulation.

The differences or gaps between personal legitimising and gaps were explained as attributable to four factors. First, the conceptual level at which relationship marketing thought is being developed. Second, its focus on 'organisation' rather than 'individual'. Third its current affinity with structure of relationships rather than behavioural processes. Fourth, its relative youth.

I believe relationship marketing is of importance to the activities of management consultants, and vice versa. Some examples of behaviour which could intimate personal legitimising are present in the literature, These were at the level of "description" which would require coding and comparison to integrate them within the grounded theory.

The one area of seeming contradiction between relationship marketing and personal legitimising was around the term 'manipulative'. These were explained by difference between contexts, empirical standpoints, and temporal dimensions.

I expect over time, with more empirical studies across a range of settings, the links between relationship marketing and personal legitimising will grow. This concludes the comparison. The next section looks at the second emergent area of interest to personal legitimising, the literature on issue-selling.

6.6   Issue-selling literature

6.6.1   Introduction

This final strand of the literature review compares the grounded theory personal legitimising with the issue-selling literature. Issue-selling is the second of the two themes of interest emergent from the earlier substantive area comparison. Similar to the treatment of relationship marketing literature, this review is indicative rather than comprehensive.

It starts with an explanation of the term issue-selling.

6.6.2   Explanation of issue-selling

Issue-selling is about the approaches used by individuals within organisations to influence their colleagues. The attraction to this literature resulted from the recognition that much to do with personal legitimising is about relationships with an organisation, and the use of those relations as a conduit to the execution of personal preference.

I traced the literature back to 1980, and research published by David Kipnis, Stuart Schmidt, and Ian Wilkinson.

Their initial research involved an inductive study whereby 165 people, mainly in management positions, were asked to describe an incident in which they succeeded in getting either their boss, co-worker or a subordinate to do something they wanted. The authors identified fourteen categories of behaviour:

- clandestine
- personal negative actions

- administrative negative actions
- exchange
- persistence
- training
- reward
- self presentation
- direct request
- weak ask
- demand
- explained rationale for request
- gathered supporting data
- coalitions.

The researchers believed their work pioneering, noting that:

"... many of the tactics reported by the respondents have received little mention in the organisational literature (e.g., the use of deceit, self-presentation, and clandestine tactics." (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980: 443)

The researchers then, through questionnaire to 754 employed people, sought to synthesise the fourteen factors into a smaller group. They emerged with eight:

- assertiveness
- ingratiation
- sanctions
- rationality
- exchange
- upward appeal
- blocking

- coalitions.

6.6.3 Comparisons and cross linkages between personal legitimising and issue-selling

Kipnis et al's eight factors relate well to personal legitimising. I represent this in a matrix between the strategies explained in personal legitimising and the eight dimensions of influence. See figure twenty below.

Figure twenty: Personal legitimising categories mapped against eight dimensions of influence

	Opportunistic Accommodating	Sequential Impressioning	Voluntary Championing	Support Mustering	Pseudo Endorsing	Retrospective Justifying
Assertiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ingratiation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Sanctions					✓	
Rationality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exchange	✓	✓			✓	✓
Upward Appeal			✓	✓		✓
Blocking					✓	
Coalitions				✓		✓

In arriving at this representation, the following should be observed. The ability to map depends to a degree on my interpretation of the meaning of labels used for the eight factors. Contextual differences are noted, both in substantive area and scope of

influence. Personal legitimising includes influence outwith the organisation. The absence of a fit between a personal legitimising strategy and a dimension does not mean that such would not occur, it just means the combination was not present in my data.

There are no clear patterns in the relationship between the two theoretical insights, other than personal legitimising acknowledges the presence of the other. The reason for this can be explained partly by the above points and partly by a reflection of the distinctions between the two theories. The eight dimensions are tactical grouping but at a more descriptive level. Such tactics, as the matrix shows, exist within personal legitimising, but personal legitimising is a more conceptually developed representation. The single stage questionnaire approach used by the researchers to identify the eight dimensions prevents the generation of conceptual insight beyond coding and incidence analysis.

Personal judgement in issue selling

A study by Robert Giacalone and Paul Rosenfeld (1986: 321) looked at individuals' propensity for self presentation and self promotion in organisations. Their survey work, coupled with an assimilation of other research, noted the following.

"Individuals do not indiscriminately engage in self promotion, but tailor their self presentations to fit the demands of the situation. Although self promotion occurs in many area of formal and informal social relationships, it appears to be particularly prevalent in cases where individuals encounter others who are higher station than they are. Because others may react negatively to the overt use of self promotion and view the individual as conceited or a braggart, this self presentation tactic needs to be well hidden in order to prevent it from back-firing. Finally, in cases where the risk of

self promotion being detected is high, individuals often react by presenting the appropriate face – modesty."

The study links with the personal legitimising characteristic of the tailoring of approach to the situation. Personal legitimising identified six strategies through which people mobilise their own agenda. Giacalone and Rosenfeld, in noting that people tailor their approach and self promote more positively when detection was less likely, endorsed personal legitimising's view that a range of strategies can exist which an individual will select on a contextual basis. Also, that covert as well as overt influence is part of the armoury.

Categories of influence in the literature on issue selling

Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor and Goodman (1997: 17) used Kipnis et al's approach as a platform for further insight. They noted that other researchers had found independently dimensionatised influence tactics, such as those already discussed, appeared to be used in interdependent ways. Farmer et al sought to test the strategic use of influence behaviour.

They looked at influencing tactics in three groups, 'hard', 'soft', and 'rational'.

A hard strategy was reflected by influence tactics of assertiveness, upward appeal and coalition. Hard strategies may be described as those where the influencer perceives he or she controls meaningful reinforcement for the target. This may be done either through direct control of rewards and punishments in return for compliance or non-compliance, or may be mediated through manipulative threats. A soft strategy was formed from tactics of ingratiation and exchange. They involve less aggressive and more psychologically manipulating means. With a rational strategy, influencers

appeal to or try to invoke instrumental justification on the part of the other party. Logic and reason are included therein.

The study was based on hypotheses, themselves drawn from induction reasoning from the existing literatures.

"Hypothesis 1a:	Perceived power differentials between subordinate and supervisor will be negatively related to use of a hard strategy.
Hypothesis 1b:	Leader – member exchange (LMX) will be negatively related to use of a hard strategy.
Hypothesis 1c:	Machiavellianism will be positively related to use of a hard strategy.
Hypothesis 1d:	External locus of control will be positively related to use of a hard strategy.
Hypothesis 2a:	Self-monitoring will be positively related to use of a soft strategy.
Hypothesis 2b:	Level of education will be positively related to use of a soft strategy.
Hypothesis 2c:	Machiavellianism will be positively related to sue of a soft strategy.
Hypothesis 2d:	External locus of control will be positively related to use of a soft strategy.
Hypothesis 3a:	Level of education will be positively related to use of rational strategy.
Hypothesis 3b:	Being located at a different workplace than one's supervisor will be positively related to use of a rational strategy."

(Farmer et al 1997: 24)

The research involved analysis of questionnaire based self reported behaviour of 225 employees in one organisation. The research results generally upheld the hypotheses. The point of my including the hypotheses is to make clear that, through the use of these hypotheses and a single stage questionnaire method, the researchers were only capable of learning about these aspects of influence.

The study sheds light on what kinds of strategies individuals use, and what the personal, demographic and relational antecedents of these strategies may be. But the study does not indicate the circumstances in which different strategies are used, or the flexibility of individuals in their use of same. Contextual factors, believed to be important predictors of upward influence were precluded from the study as a consequence of the research method employed. For example, previous investigators (see Kipnis et al 1980) had suggested that the objective of an influence attempt was a determinant of tactics. The researchers note that neither do their three strategies reflect the entire population of influence strategies, nor can any assumption be made on the hierarchical relationship with each other. They suggest that an important goal of future research should aim to map these strategies while placing more emphasis on the underlying processes by which individuals organise and generate influence-related cognitions, and place less emphasis on generating 'inclusive' typologies that do not fully account for the complexities of influence decision. Personal legitimising is the latter. It is a grouping of six inclusive typologies, which perhaps share the same shortcomings indicated in Farmer et al's work. However, personal legitimising is clearer on the extent of each category. Properties have been identified which go beyond the study reported above, which was only able to comment on links between strategies and the predetermined properties, and are reflected in the hypotheses.

Inclusion of power theory to issue selling

Philips (1997: 43) sought to expand Farmer's work. He comments that the study is limited by the under-developed conceptualisation of power. It is too narrow.

"Upward influence is certainly affected by the personal characteristics and resources of the individuals involved, but it is also an organisational phenomenon, a fact that the conception of power used by researchers should reflect. A more complex and developed view of power will provide the necessary tools to disentangle the complex fabric of power and influence in organisations."

Phillips introduces theories of power and, through rhetorical reasoning, seeks to expand Farmer's contribution on influence strategies. In more detail, his interpretation of power is based on a framework of four dimensions by Hardy (1994). The relationship between these and influence strategies follows.

Dimension one – decision making power

"The first dimension of power, defines the relationship between supervisor and subordinate. The supervisor has the legitimate right to make certain decisions leaving the subordinate to convince him or her that a particular path is best or most convenient. The first dimension of power explains the basis of the relationship between supervisor and subordinate and why the subordinate may want to influence the supervisor. The degree of difference in this dimension provides an indication of the difficulty of upward influence attempts; the more formal authority and control of resources that rests with the supervisor, the more other sources of power must be mobilised by the subordinate."

Dimension two – non-decision making power

"The second dimension of power plays a dual role. On the one hand, it highlights that supervisors can manage situations to make particular outcomes impossible or unlikely by putting in place rules or processes that exclude unwanted outcomes. On the other hand, if a supervisor requires the participation of subordinates to make or implement a decision, this dimension explains one way in which subordinates may have power. This aspect of subordinate power appears in both the hard – subordinates can refuse to co-operate, and soft strategies – subordinates can offer assistance in future endeavours where the subordinate has nondecision-making power."

Dimension three – symbolic power

"The symbolic dimension of power seems to me to be of particular importance in upward influence. By managing understandings, actors create a milieu where others make a preferred decision or take a desired course of action without any direct application of decision-making power. This dimension of power is largely absent from the current typology of upward influence strategies, despite its intuitive appeal. Clearly, subordinates are in a position to shape information and interpretation, and this activity would constitute an additional upward influence strategy."

Dimension four – systemic power

"Fourth, the power of the system has a profound effect on the ability of subordinates to influence superiors. The organisational framework within which members act provides differential resources to different actors and it evolves and changes over time. These resources are available to actor due to the nature of the system, not through the actor's planned activity. This background of asymmetrical power

relations changes over time and, as Farmer et al point out, provides greater opportunities for upward influence at certain times."

A study of the links between Phillips' view and personal legitimising notes the following.

Decision making power is evident in voluntary championing and retrospective justifying. In voluntary championing the acquisition of territory can be achieved by the presentation of rational argument to superiors who control resources. Within the factor of retrospective justifying are logical appeals, albeit after the event, with the aim of securing organisational permission.

Non-decision making power is present in opportunistic accommodating, sequential impressioning and pseudo endorsing. With opportunistic accommodating and sequential impressioning, people facilitate their agenda by putting in place their own processes. Pseudo endorsing involves a similar putting into place of their own processes, but this time to impede the progress of an initiative they deem too low a priority.

Symbolic power seems present throughout personal legitimising. The characteristic of managing understanding by tailoring information and its projection is present in the data underpinning each of the six strategies.

System power likewise applies across the theory. Within support mustering, often the systemic characteristics provided the opportunity for an approach to be effective. Opportunistic accommodation is dependent to a great deal on contextual and temporal considerations.

A comparison shows a high degree of empathy between the implied contents of the four dimensions of power and personal legitimising. The structure is different, the former having been founded from theory of power literature, the latter having emerged from a grounded theory study in particular context. Even if the four dimensions of power should not be viewed as a forced construct, it is certainly a predetermined one. Phillips' views are hypothetical, and beyond the underpinnings of the research upon which his opinions are based, there is no empiricism here to support.

An additional factor is that the power dimensions present a more holistic representation of influence. Personal legitimising involves influence of not only superiors, but colleagues, clients and other external bodies. Despite Phillips' work being presented in the guise of upwards influence (so positioned because it responds to Farmer's research of the same ilk), the four power dimensions to influence beyond the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

A final point, and perhaps an important one to consider when introducing other approaches on upwards influence, is that personal legitimising, as a substantive theory, has both contextual roots and contextual implications. In his conclusion, Phillips states:

"Examining upward influence strategies from an organisational point of view leads to a simple confusion: context matters. Understanding influence strategies generally, and upward influence strategies in particular, requires careful consideration of the organisational and societal context in which these activities occur. The conditions that make a particular strategy more or less likely to be chosen, and more or less likely to succeed, are as much contextual as personal and the current work on influence strategies would benefit from a more developed idea of what constitutes context." (Phillips 1997: 46)

Thus far I have followed one track within the issue selling literature. It involved the determination of influencing tactics, their assimilation into a more rationalised group of tactics and then their subsequent grouping into a family of three influencing strategies. Thereafter, through the involvement of power theory, a broadening of the scope. Epistemologically, the inductive input into this school of thought traces back through Kipnis et al's first study, reported in 1980. Thereafter, theoretical insight has been the result of a condensing of the original experimentally derived tactics through deduction, using experiment and other literatures. The path currently finishes with a reasoned proposition but one which depends on imported perspective and no fresh empirical insight.

This next part of the comparison between personal legitimising and the issues selling literature follows a different channel.

Upward influence, claiming behaviour and impression management

Jane Dutton and Susan Ashford (1993: 397) developed a framework for describing and studying issue selling in organisations. This framework draws on three different theoretical perspectives: issue selling as upward influence, issues selling as claiming behaviours, and issue selling as impression management. Recognition not only of a framework, but also its foundations is useful. The authors note the link between issue selling and strategy.

"A focus on issue selling also builds on recent themes in strategy process research. It emphasises the emergent nature of strategy patterns and explains how individuals and coalitions in the selling process can cause a realised corporate strategy to depart from the intended one." (Dutton and Ashford 1993: 399)

Dutton and Ashford used three literatures, 'social problem theory', 'impression management' and 'upward influence', to generate seventeen propositions about issue selling. There are four contextual elements of these propositions.

First, the research context of 'middle managers in organisations' is substantially different to the management consulting arena from which personal legitimising emerged. Second, issue selling in this context concerns dialogue between subordinate and superior, thus is narrower than the strategies embraced with personal legitimising. Third, the propositions have been achieved from the assimilation of existing theory and extrapolate established concepts. Fourth, there is no additional empirical insight offered by the authors in support of the propositions. They are untested. This noted, over-reliance on these propositions in this comparative exercise would be unwise. The similarity between the propositions and the result of Phillips' introduction of power theory is evident. Concluding sentiments are also consonant.

In extending the nature of the research at a later date, Dutton and Ashford worked with Regina O'Neill, Erika Hayes and Elizabeth Wierba on an assessment of how middle managers assess the context for selling issues to top management. A research project involved interviews with 30 randomly selected middle managers in a telecoms firm. The resultant data was coded and synthesised according to standard practices for qualitative data analysis, following the guidelines of Miles and Huberman, and Glaser and Strauss (Dutton et al 1997: 411). The coded characteristics were clustered into themes, which are reported below.

1.   Sellers pay attention to characteristics of the target when assessing a context favourably for issue selling.

2. An organisation's competitive and economic pressures both favourably influence people's willingness to engage in issue selling, they also shut down issue selling attempts due to associated uncertainty and negative consequences associated with the discretionary behaviour.

3. Organisational change was viewed as both favourable and unfavourable for issue selling; favourable from the point of view of opportunity, and unfavourable because of uncertainty.

4. Organisational culture was viewed as simultaneously favourable and unfavourable for issue selling; the former because of the supportiveness of culture and cognisance of its norms, the latter because of its conservativeness.

Despite epistemological guidance from Glaser and Strauss, this is not a full grounded theory. Grounded theory represents three levels of conceptualisation. This has two. It shows perspectives of perspectives. There is little attempt to integrate, although the researchers' concluding view that 'middle managers read of the context is likely to be fluid and dynamic' may be getting closer to the essence of the main issue being resolved in the study. The study starts with a clear statement of the process under investigation, i.e. issue selling, which might restrain the emergence of important perspectives. Two researchers worked on the data coding and compared results, aiming for consistency. This suggests an approach which involves incidence of description, rather than theory building and the mobilisation of the researcher insight. Memoing and theoretical sampling are not referred to in the methodology. I mention this, not in order to be critical of this research, but to explain why, given the espoused method and area of interest (understanding the earlier similarities between ingredients of issue selling and personal legitimising), the difference between this research and personal legitimising is great.

More covert methods of justification and influence are now being reflected in broader management literature. The Machiavellian factor mentioned in Farmer et al's work seems to be gaining in general currency. At this early stage though, the literature could perhaps be forgiven for being stronger on description, for example:

"we could certainly demonstrate simple mechanical, clerical techniques, such as judiciously leaving people's names off circulation lists." (Stone and Pashley 1998: 193)

.... and opinion ....

"I have no doubt, having spent a lifetime around academics and business people, that each contributor will use Machiavelli as a catalyst, as an excuse for riding personal and particular hobby horses." (Thomas 1998: 63)

Whilst personal legitimising goes some way further towards a theoretical explanation of covert methods of influence, the above at least provides further evidence of the presence of such in practice.

6.6.4   In summary

The final element of this section summarises the comparison between personal legitimising and the issue selling literature.

Recognising that issue selling is to do with the approaches used by individuals within organisations to influence their colleagues, variances in the labels of the literature were noted. Most issue selling research seems to focus on the relationship between supervisor and subordinate, which is narrower than the scope of influence embraced

by personal legitimising. One literature, which introduced the dimensions of power, had the ability to apply beyond internal relationships.

The term, issue selling, also suggest a process in which the seller is aware he or she is being sold to. This is only one element (the overt processes) of personal legitimising. Much personal legitimising happens covertly. This is not an issue covered strongly in the issue selling literature, although power theory, upward influence, and impression management embrace covert influence.

As intimated earlier, literature around issue selling draws heavily from other disciplines. Links with power theory, social problem theory, impression management, upward influence, organisational strategy, persuasion, conflict and negotiation, attitude formation and the image theory element of decision making are present. When, in the process of comparison, ideas are introduced from these literatures and questions asked of personal legitimising, it is alarming how naked personal legitimising appears in its present form. There are many questions still to be answered. However, personal legitimising has two main strengths in relation to the literature on issue selling.

First, personal legitimising is empirically based. Much of the literature surrounding issue selling is reasoned hypothesis. Researchers in that area call for more research activity and for contextual awareness to have a more prominent role in the development of issue selling insight. Personal legitimising goes some way to contributing towards both.

Second, there are strong linkages between personal legitimising and the ingredients of the issue selling literature. As demonstrated in the previous pages, differences in method of derivation and context from which derived must be taken into account in understanding the relationship. It is perhaps conjecture, but maybe personal

legitimising could be further enriched by the import of existing theories from the related fields of research noted above.

6.7   Review

This concludes the literature comparison.

The purpose of this chapter is to align existing literature to personal legitimising. Given this, the literature comparison sought to neither defend nor enrich the theory of personal legitimising. It aimed more to recognise linkages and account for differences.

The main focus for the comparison was management consulting literature. This was because personal legitimising is offered as a substantive theory. Its current explanatory powers relate to the context from which it was derived. In addition to literature categorised as management consulting, input was sought from the professional services and knowledge intensive firms literature. To help ensure epistemological considerations were embraced in the comparison, a categorisation framework was used as a template through which literature was viewed. The framework considered research method and whether publications primarily dealt with process or with structure.

This was followed by an investigation into themes of interest stimulated by the comparison between personal legitimising and the body of management consulting texts. The two emergent themes adopted were relationship marketing and issue selling literature.

The strategy moved to consider a representation of material from both these fields. The purpose of this part of the comparison was to conduct an initial investigation into the linkages between personal legitimising and these two schools of study. Other themes of interest were evident in the research, but investigations into those is beyond the scope of this study.

The preceding pages in this chapter have compared personal legitimising to existing theories and research output. Each element accounts for the proximity of other theoretical insights to personal legitimising. The main points are also summarised as the literature comparison develops.

These points are reintroduced in the next and final chapter of this thesis, chapter seven, 'Findings and implications'.

Notes:

[1] Ashford M. (1998) 'Con Tricks: the Shadowy World of Management Consultancy and how to make it work for you', London, Simon & Schuster

[2] Page A (1996) 'The Diary of a Change Agent', Aldershot, Gower

[3] Thanks to John Ritchie at the University of Durham Business School for bringing this case study to my attention.

[4] The 'finders, minders, grinders' model makes the distinction between those who sell the assignments (finders), those who manage them (minders) and those who deliver (grinders).

[5] This claim is supported by journal articles covering the ethics in consulting and the publication in 1995 of 'Ethics and Consultancy : European Perspectives', Kluwer Academic Publishers, p 51.

[6] TQM – total quality management. JIT – just in time. Both are management processes which have been enthusiastically promoted by consultants and adopted by organisaitons.

[7] See Gareth Morgan's 'Images of Organisation', London, Sage, 1995.

[8] Keith Macdonald in his exploration of the professions, The Sociology of the Professions, Sage, 1995, focuses on the established disciplines within the genre. He is primarily concerned with the nature of professional projects and their relationship with society.

[9] 'Knowhow company' is Sveiby's re-labelling of 'knowledge intensive firms'.

7 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter discusses the findings and implications of the research around personal legitimising. It draws on the content of the previous chapters and examines this with regard to the practitioners and researchers.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first (7.1) evaluates the grounded theory of personal legitimising and comments on its links with other literatures. The second (7.2) discusses the implications in respect of two communities, practitioners and research. The former centres on consultants and their managers. The latter focuses on academe. The final section (7.3) reflects on the research methodology used in this project and attempts to document the major learning points that the process sensitised me to.

7.1 Personal Legitimising

7.1.1 The grounded theory – personal legitimising

This project has revealed the grounded theory of personal legitimising. In summarising personal legitimising, three aspects are important. These are its meaning, scope, and stage of development. These are dealt with in turn.

Personal legitimising explained

Personal legitimising is how individuals successfully arrange their working lives to suit personal agendas. The theory has two sub-core variables. The first is concerned with how individuals align organisational and personal priorities. The second is how they defend a territory of activity in the face of pressure to increase the gap between organisational and personal agendas. The theory involves six separate strategies for achieving personal legitimising. Four are concerned with the 'aligning' sub-core variable, and two with 'defending'. Personal legitimising is an example of a strategy family grounded theory.

The theory includes the distinction between those personal legitimising strategies which are implicit and those that are explicit. Implicit strategies are followed by individuals without recourse to management permission. Explicit strategies involve the approval of others. The distinction between the two is explained by the cutting point of organisational tolerance. Organisational tolerance is concerned with the degree of autonomy afforded to the individual as a consequence of their rank, role, credentials/reputation and the prevailing culture. An individual operating within organisational tolerance is able to use implicit strategies for personal legitimising. A diagram showing the theory follows. (See figure twenty one below).

Figure twenty one: The substantive grounded theory 'personal legitimising'

Error! Not a valid link.

In addition to the six categories and the properties therein, two further aspects of personal legitimising were identified. First is the impact of 'nous'. Nous is the personal astuteness to identify the opportunity for personal legitimising and the ability to deploy the appropriate tactics to achieve it. The data suggest an individual's nous increases with contextual experience. Second is 'accommodating'. This is about the consequences of thwarted attempts at personal legitimising.

Scope of Personal Legitimising

Personal legitimising is offered as a substantive theory. This means its explanatory powers are only asserted for the context from which it has been derived. This context was originally defined as management consulting. As the study has progressed I realised both how imprecise this definition is, and also the importance of understanding the characteristics of the context when offering a substantive theory.

Researchers (see Sturdy 1997a: 518; Robertson and Swan 1998: 544) comment on the differences within the management consulting sector. I explained the characteristics of this particular context in chapter two, pre-understanding. Having emerged from this research process, I believe I was correct to attempt this contextual explanation, but similar to pre-understanding in other aspects of the research, my definition is not complete. The literature review sensitised me to other contextual aspects, such as the intelligence and creativity of the individuals concerned.

Maister and Lowendahl suggested that contextual distinctions are not best represented by the discipline within the professionals, for example whether a firm is a management consultancy or a chartered surveyor. They advocate categorisation in accordance with the characteristics of the individual firm. This leads to the

possibility that my research context may be more closely related to some other professional services firms than some management consultants. This might explain why my research findings were recognised by other types of consulting firms than management consultants. Data from two design consultants and a market research consultancy was readily incorporated into the emergent theory and helped saturation during the theoretical sampling phase.

I deliberately approached literature in the substantive area in three stages. I started with management consulting (MC) texts, moved onto those concerning professional service firms (PSFs), then finally to knowledge intensive firms (KIFs). The definitions in the literature showed that in each case the former is a subset of the latter. Some literature from both professional service firms and knowledge intensive firms seemed to integrate well with personal legitimising when offered up to it. This suggests, as a substantive theory, personal legitimising's explanatory scope might be represented as shown in figure twenty two below.

Figure twenty two: Personal legitimising encompassing some of management consulting, professional service firms, and knowledge intensive firms' activity
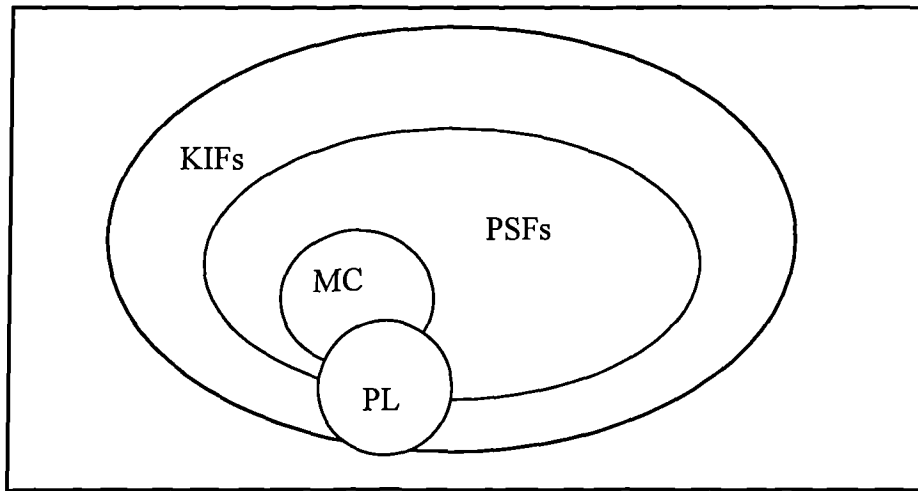
Key: PL = explanatory power of personal legitimising

MC = management consulting sector

PSFs = professional service firms sector

KIFs = knowledge intensive firms sector

The overlap between personal legitimising and other areas is defined by consequence of contextual characteristics. This centres on the context of management consultancy. I cite the Management Consultancies Association's definition of the occupation as "the rendering of independent advice and assistance about management issues" (Rassam 1998: 3). The literature comparison causes me to reflect on the characteristics noted in chapter one and refine them as follows:

- the individuals are intelligent, professionally qualified and competent;
- individuals enjoy variety and are creative;
- the firm and its staff have financial targets;
- individuals have the dual role of delivering and selling work;
- the service is non-standard. It involves customisation and is heavily dependent on the knowledge and intellect of the supplier;

- firms are likely to be free from a great deal of bureaucracy.

These prescribe the contextual boundaries of personal legitimising as a substantive theory. It is behind my reviewing of the substantive scope of the theory. Having initially considered personal legitimising as relevant to management consulting firms, I now view it as applicable to small consulting enterprises.

Current status of personal legitimising

Personal legitimising is offered as an emergent grounded theory. It accounts for the variation in the data generated in the course of this study. However, no claim is made regarding the eventual completeness of the theory. I expect further research to reveal more properties of the categories, or indeed more categories.

7.1.2 Evaluating Personal Legitimising

There are two dimensions to consider in evaluating grounded theory. The application of the method and its output. Lowe (1996: 12) lists six questions that readers of grounded theories should ask. These are: what is the ultimate power of the theory to explain across a range of different context; what are the categories and what are the properties; what basic social process(es) have been revealed; how has the process of constant comparison evolved; has saturation been demonstrated; how has the theoretical sampling process emerged? Chapter three, four and five of this thesis provide the content to respond to the above.

I have previously drawn attention to Glaser's factors for evaluating a resultant grounded theory. A discussion of personal legitimising's robustness in relation to the four factors follows.

Fit

Fit is concerned with the relationship between personal legitimising and the research data. It asks whether the theory fits the data. My answer to that question is "Yes, it does now, from the perspective of individual consultants." This affirmation includes two qualifications.

The first accepts that the original theory of personal legitimising (Haslam 1997: 637) was a satisfactory explanation of the data upon which it was founded. It recognises though, that the original form had insufficient ability to account for the data subsequently involved. The current form of personal legitimising has greater explanatory power.

The second reinforces the importance of knowing from whose perspective the grounded theory is constructed. Earlier in the research process I faced the choice of consultants or clients with regard to the perspective. I decided upon the former. The literature comparison revealed other possibilities. For example, a grounded theory from the perspective of consulting firm management might give higher prominence to the dual challenge of being active in two markets, one for clients and one for staff. However, from the perspective of consultants, the data supports this thesis' claim of the prominence of reconciling personal and organisational agendas. Personal legitimising emerged as the most central issue in the data.

Workability

Workability is about the explanatory power of the theory. It is concerned with the extent of conceptualisation rather than description offered. I have expressed personal legitimising in conceptual rather than substantive or descriptive language. This, though, is not a claim that the theory applies beyond its current context.

The workability of a theory is demonstrated in a theory's ability to predict behaviour in a context. Grounded theory process involves induction and deduction. To accomplish both implies several stages in the generation of data and verification of concepts. The workability of an elegantly presented grounded theory which involved a low degree of iteration in its development might be called into question. I draw readers' attention to chapter three on research methodology and chapter four on the analysis and synthesis of data which shows the high degree of cycling, in support of this theory's workability.

A further point in relation to workability is the structure of the emergent theory. It is in a form (strategy family) that is recognised by those with substantial grounded theory experience. It looks appropriate.

Relevance

Relevance is to do with the importance of the theory in the lives of those concerned. The two aspects which denote relevance are the evidence in the data and the impact of the theory on practitioners.

The territory embraced by personal legitimising afforded a greater coverage of the data than any other core variable considered. I aimed to make my research questions non-directive in order to generate a broad picture in the data and not force the destination of the study. I would refer readers to the confusion I encountered midway through the project as evidence of such expanse of data. A review of the open code labels (appended) would suggest similar.

With regard to the relevance of the theory I draw attention to the next section of this chapter and the previous chapter, literature comparison. Section 7.2 discusses the implications of personal legitimising on practitioners and researchers. Personal legitimising raises issues for both. The literature comparison revealed a gap in the

documented research that can be filled by personal legitimising. Theoretically it introduces a new understanding around a subject which empirical data says is important.

Modifiability

Modifiability is concerned with the ease with which additional insight can be accommodated with the theory. This is important in the consideration of emergent and substantive theories.

All grounded theories may be expected to be modified as new insight is revealed. It is the impact of that modification on the theory which is the important issue. This is to do with the inherent robustness of the theory structure. For example in 1997 I published my first insights into personal legitimising. I offered an adequate theoretical explanation of data I had generated. However, as data generation extended, the constraints involved in this form of theory acted as an impediment to it being able to accommodate fresh data. During one stage of the research, as documented in chapter four, I found it impossible to integrate new theoretical insight into personal legitimising without resorting back to first principles and re-doing the coding and early synthesis.

I believe that the current form of personal legitimising has an inherently more stable structure. I should be able to accommodate new insight without imposing on the data. Its structure involves the core variable of personal legitimising, the two sub-core variables of aligning and defending, and the six strategies as categories. Common properties amongst categories have created the additional grouping of categories under the heading of implicit and explicit. This made me aware of the possibility of this theory evolving into a paired opposites representation where each category is mirrored by an opposite approach. As personal legitimising is now offered as a collection of strategies, the addition of other strategies is relatively easy.

This theory does not have process claims which might necessitate it having a major re-design.

7.1.3 Personal legitimising in literature

Chapter six documented the comparison between personal legitimising and literatures within the substantive area, relationship marketing and issue selling. As stated the purpose of the literature comparison is to relate relevant published theory to personal legitimising as a means of integrating the new theory with documented knowledge. The main points from the literature comparison are summarised under ten headings as follows.

Personal legitimising introduces a new theoretical perspective to the literature

No equivalent to personal legitimising in the literature was identified. As an integrated explanation, personal legitimising offers new insight. However, ingredients of personal legitimising were present in the literature, giving the comfort of linkages.

The methods used by other researchers inhibit the comparison with personal legitimising

The absence of a full explanation of personal legitimising in the literature can, to a large degree, be accounted for by methodological characteristics. First, personal legitimising is concerned with process. It explains "how" things happen. The "what", "why" and "consequences" are embraced to a degree, but are not the focus. Therefore other research which focuses on anything other than process is not directly comparable. Second, personal legitimising is the behaviour of consultants. Research which considers the perspective of organisations, managers or clients may inform but is not equivalent. Third, the theory is the result of research that started with

inductive method. I attempted to keep investigation free from any specific research agenda. Research that is concerned with a pre-determined question and/or hypothesis carries that characteristic in its findings. Associated with this is this study's characteristic of writing in the language of practitioners rather than adopting the conventional management lexicon. Fourth, personal legitimising is empirically based. It is neither a conjectural explanation nor a prescriptive assertion. Literatures of both these types had little to offer the theory given their own lack of clear foundation. Fifth, personal legitimising is a grounded theory. It has a level of conceptualism, two levels above descriptions or narrations which might also be labelled as inductive investigation. Comparison between work of different conceptual levels is particularly challenging.

'People' (consultants) are central to the management consulting firm

The literature draws attention to the importance of consultants to the management consulting firm. This may appear trite, but the consultants are the route to income generation, product development and client acquisition. They are also mobile. Consulting firms are recognised as participating in the market for clients and the market for staff resource. This not only emphasises the importance of the consultants' perspectives in managing a consulting enterprise, but draws attention to their power of influence.

Presence of self indulgent behaviour demonstrated in the literature

A theoretical explanation concerning self indulgent behaviour is currently absent in the substantive literature. However, indicators showing consultants' self indulgence are clearly evident. This included indulgences that are covert as well as overt. This acknowledgement of the presence of personal preferences in the actions of consultants demonstrates the likelihood that a theoretical explanation of the actions is

merited. Self indulgence is an underpinning characteristic of personal legitimising and all its categories.

Organisational tolerance reflected in the literature

Personal legitimising includes the cutting point of organisational tolerance. Organisational tolerance accounts for the scope afforded to an individual to take action without explicit management permission. This grounded theory shows organisational tolerance combines aspects of rank, role, personal credentials/ reputation and prevailing culture. Similar is evident in the literature.

Explanations of power and power theory accounts for some of these issues. The literature also suggested power asymmetry could be a consideration in respect of organisational tolerance. Studies of the culture of different types of professional service firm draw attention to the link between this and the freedom of those employed. The other insight from the literature is the concept of "habitus" (Alvesson 1994: 539). Habitus relates to the ability of an individual to fit in with the contextual convention and regulations. The literature suggests that successful individuals recognise this and take steps to accord with the prevailing culture and personal qualities such as credentials and reputation.

'Nous' recognised in the literature as a dynamic capability

This colloquial term expresses the astuteness of individual consultants to select appropriate actions to suit the particular context. This is supported by the issue selling literature which notes people weigh up the likelihood of success before taking action.

Personal legitimising revealed that an individual's nous develops with experience. There may be innate attributes too, but the research data shows that contextual

exposure enhances an individual's ability to achieve a desired result. The concept of habitus relates closely with nous. Theoretical explanations of habitus note the actions therein are acquired over time and become instinctive. This supports the personal legitimising component that one's ability for and opportunity to personally legitimise similarly develops with experience.

Impressioning present in the literature, but in different forms to that demonstrated in personal legitimising

The literature reinforced personal legitimising's view that impressioning is an important and deliberate aspect in the behaviour of consultants. The consulting literature is primarily concerned with the dramaturgical metaphor and comparisons with mystic ritual, rather than how impressioning takes place. This distinction is important. The literature acknowledges the significance of impressioning in this context and moves its attention towards comparative interpretations rather than how impressioning takes place. Researchers are so inclined because of the otherwise inadequate explanations of the behaviour of consultants in the literature. Personal legitimising compliments, rather than contradicts.

Impressioning is a recognised aspect of behaviour in social sciences literature (see Gofman 1959: 28; Mangham 1986: 127). Recently, impression management has raised itself up the marketing agenda. The impetus seems to be its ability to capture the phenomenon of contemporary services marketing. However, the view exists (Fisk and Grove 1996: 2) that the debate is too preoccupied by issues such as the drama metaphor, at the expense of its application. Personal legitimising is concerned with application, and maybe contributes to the answering of that criticism.

Impressioning is also evident in the issue selling and upwards influence literature. However the literature around impressioning is direction specific. For example, the management consulting literature looked at impressioning in the relationship

between consultant and client. The upwards influence literature is focused on subordinate and boss. Personal legitimising sees selective impressioning as a method applicable to any relevant audience.

The implicit impact of personal legitimising on strategy is partially represented in the literature

Personal legitimising notes the emergent nature of strategy in this context. This is echoed in the literature. Where I believe personal legitimising makes further contribution is its recognition that such impact on the direction of the firm results in part from activities that management has little awareness of.

The theory distinguishes between those implicit and explicit methods. The former receive no advance management scrutiny yet their consequences have to be accommodated by the enterprise.

Justifying represented in the literature, but not integrated

Literatures on issue selling and upwards influence discusses routes by which individuals seek to promote and justify their actions. Empirical research and the reasoned hypothesis of others, linked these methods with the six categories of personal legitimising. This was especially evident in relation to voluntary championing and retrospective justifying. This may be because these strategies involve explicit means, hence are more obvious by nature.

Contextual definitions, as a boundary of relevance to a substantive theory

Section 7.1.1 explains the relationship between personal legitimising and the three elements of the substantive area; management consulting, professional service firms, and knowledge intensive firms. The literature comparison drew attention to the

ambiguity that exists in the definition of the contexts. This led me to a view that a substantive area may be best explained by the characteristics (properties) of the context rather than the context's label or title.

In summary

The above summarises the relationship between chosen literatures and the emergent grounded theory personal legitimising.

As a substantive explanation it introduces new insight. Its linkages with documented contemporary theory, though, are evident. Differences between this new grounded theory and literature can be explained primarily by methodological variance. The next section builds from this and examines the future implications of personal legitimising.

7.2 Implications for Practitioners and Researchers

This section considers the implication of personal legitimising on practitioners and researchers. It starts with the former.

7.2.1 Implications for Practitioners

This sub-section discusses the implications of personal legitimising for practitioners. Practitioners include those who run management consulting firms and the consultants therein. The implications fall within three main themes; human resources, strategy and marketing management.

Human Resources

Personal legitimising is concerned with an individual's ability to mobilise his or her personal agenda in the organisational context. In articulating this I make no claim that organisations should suppress this.

Both this and other research (see Maister 1997: 25) noted that consultants work for more than financial reward. Many years ago, McGregor (1960) noted that whilst insufficient remuneration was a de-motivator, the converse was not true. Maybe it is through the bestowing of personal scope that job enrichment can be affected. It is reasonable to view the opportunity for personal legitimising as a management approach to motivate and engage those within the organisation. More contemporary work on motivation notes the presence of self regulation as an important ingredient. They also suggest an individual's job satisfaction is more situational than dispositional. Researchers also note the variance of an individual's satisfaction over time (Büssing 1998: 466). This suggests the importance of management both creating and modifying scope for an individual as a motivational imperative. Büssing (1995) also reports the strong interrelationship between life at work and life

outside work with respect to motivation and work satisfaction. Personal legitimising acknowledges that link. Maister (1997: 61) comments that within professional service firms the two standard operational imperatives for a practitioner are income generation and adherence to professional standards. His view is that providing an individual complies with the expectations of these two areas, the firm's management are content. Maister's comment is grounded in a reflection of practice. Such could imply practise is the result of professional service firm managers' tacit understanding of the above motivational issues.

The importance of individual practitioners to the management consulting, or any other knowledge intensive firm has already been discussed but merits restatement here. The continued engagement of appropriate individuals is a core issue in this context. One could deduce that the scope for personal legitimising is the price the firm has to pay in order to retain its existence.

The availability of individual freedom is influenced by operational context. The literature noted that different operating contexts demand different generic strategies and management approaches for professional services firms. The human resources implication is that it is possible that different individuals within the same organisation will be afforded different scope. For example, a team of people responsible for the development of a new approach are likely to have more freedom than those engaged in the delivery of a standard service. A management issue is how such differences are accommodated within the one organisation. The other dimension to this is the impact of time. Maister (1993: 28) notes the evolution in the professional service firm arena from the imprecise to the standard. If we follow this product life cycle logic, an individual operating in one area of work will see his or her overt personal scope in the organisation reduced over time, as that area of work becomes more routinised.

One of the fundamental management issues around personal legitimising is that some of the strategies are covert. Opportunist accommodating, sequential impressioning and pseudo-endorsing are applied by individuals without the expressed permission of their firm. Recognising the temporal dimension to personal scope and the comments on motivation, it is logical to conjecture that an individual might become more progressively active in the covert methods of personal legitimising as the inherent scope afforded to them by their organisational context declined.

There are broader people orientated implications too. As employment patterns in many economies move towards greater reliance on knowledge based working, more skilful organisations could view the components of personal legitimising as enablers of empowerment. The strategies, now recognised, could be facilitated as a means to help retain critical human resources. The literature suggests that one of the attractions of covert strategies to individuals is the sense of satisfaction they achieve in 'getting away with it'. This draws attention to the management subtlety that might be necessary in embracing personal legitimising in a deliberate human resources strategy.

Strategy

Quinn (1980) reports the strategy of logical incrementalism. Here, direction emerges as a cumulative consequence of previous actions. The influence which an individual within a professional service firm has on his or her firm's strategy was noted in the literature and evident in this grounded theory. An individual's choice on what to do and what not to do has a consequential impact on the future status of opportunities. The categories of voluntary championing and support mustering bring such choice to the attention of management. With this comes a degree of managerial control over strategy. For example, management may refuse an individual's request to initiate an activity with a particular client group if they believed this was at odds with the espoused direction of the firm.

The main issue of concern is the covert methods of personal legitimising, in particular sequential impressioning. The covert methods involve the application of personal legitimising technique without recourse to management. Sequential impressioning carries the property "building on" which reflects Quinn's notion of logical incrementalism. It is also the densest part of the study. These show the power to influence strategy without management permission and a high incidence of such. The data indicates consultants appreciate the impact of their actions. Sequential impressioning is a conscious act. The concern for managers is finding the firm delving off down some avenues at the expense of others, without being party to the decisions.

Marketing Management

The third main practical consequence of the theory is marketing management. The data perhaps reflects a tension between attempts to formalise marketing procedure and a recognition of the individual nature of marketing practice in this context. Brownlie (1991: 30) called for a more empirically grounded understanding of marketing management. Yet the literature around professional services is replete with directives on how firms should approach their marketing more systematically. One could deduce that if such formalised approaches were appropriate they would have been adopted by practitioners some time ago, negating the opportunity for commentators to assert their value. Personal legitimising provides insight into why formalisation is so troubled in reality.

The other consequence of personal legitimising on marketing management relates to the impact of personal style on marketing method. In the course of personal legitimising an individual deploys tactics of his or her choosing. Logically, and supported by the research data, an individual's marketing competence is built around

a technique of familiarity and personal affinity. Consequently, one might expect organisational marketing style to be disjointed.

In summary, the purpose of the above was to consider the practical relevance and implications of personal legitimising. All the managers involved in my study were practising consultants too. Writers (see Kubr 1996: 496; Hussey 1998: 223) suggest that professionals can be the worst managers of consulting firms. So perhaps insight into personal legitimising is especially valuable.

My opinion is that the most important aspect of practical application is at the interface between the management of human resources and organisational strategy. The challenge of facilitating working environments that people find engaging, and retaining control over strategy is growing. The insights provided by personal legitimising may help managers understand the processes involved and their consequences more comprehensively. Recent empirical investigation into the professional services by Timothy Morris and Ashly Pinnington (1998: 85) found strong evidence of misalignment between human resources policies and organisation's strategic contexts. This maybe emphasises the task ahead.

No guidance is offered as to how managers and consultants should use this awareness of personal legitimising. This would be highly dangerous. As Weiss (1998: 389) reports, "an empirical science cannot tell anyone what he should – but rather what he can do". The fruit of this study has been to identify an important behavioural construct. It is not described in entirety in the literature which means that this study brings it to a conscious level for practitioners. Practitioners alone must judge how to run their affairs. They must weigh up the theory's efficacy in their context and act accordingly. Ignorance, though, may not be bliss.

7.2.2   Implications for Researchers

This sub-section looks at the research implications arising from the personal legitimising study. Several research avenues arose. A brief description of them is below.

Raising personal legitimising from substantive formal theory

The first avenue is the elevation of personal legitimising to the status of formal theory. A formal theory involves a conceptual explanation of a power beyond a specific empirical context. All formal theories are dependent on initial substantive insight (Layder 1993: 43). Personal legitimising is already expressed as a non-substantive language. However, as Glaser notes such expression requests only an adequate start to a formal theory, not a formal theory itself (Glaser 1978: 145).

Such evaluation would involve theoretical sampling in other contexts. Perhaps looking to broaden the reach of the theory by moving incrementally from its current empirical locus. I believe it would be interesting to seek insight into the behaviour in the broader school of knowledge workers.

Developing grounded theory from the clients' perspective

My investigation into the behaviour of clients was suspended part way through the study. It appeared as the least attractive alternative. Nevertheless, coded data and an initial theoretical representation exist. This could form a platform for renewed impetus in this direction.

Developing grounded theory from consulting firm managers' perspective

The literature comparison drew my attention to the possibility of conducting grounded theory research from the perspective of managers of consulting firms. Managers of consulting firms were included in the personal legitimising study, but they accounted for a proportion, rather than the whole, of the sample. Personal legitimising is concerned with the behaviour of consultants. It is their behaviour as consultants that became prominent, recognising all the managers were active consultants foremost, and helped shape the eventual theory.

The aspect of the literature which triggered this possibility relates to the centrality of people (consultants) in a consulting enterprise. Maister (1993: 189) reminds us that a professional service firm competes in two markets simultaneously, one for clients, the other for staff. Early in the grounded study I identified 'recruiting' (the process of selecting and inducting consultants) as an important issue. At this time data generation was concentrated on the directors of the pilot study firms.

'Recruiting' did not merit inclusion in the final theory. Its importance became diluted by more pressing concerns when the sampling extended from consultants with management/directorial responsibility to those consultants without, and clients. The importance of recruiting though was mentioned in this chapter's previous comments on the practical relevance and implications of personal legitimising. I am perhaps unduly confident that a study of consulting firm managers would see 'recruiting' represented in a resulting grounded theory. I acknowledge this bias. However, it is not without foundation.

Further grounded theory investigation around sequential impressioning

During the data synthesis phase I had to abandon promising research avenues in order to undertake more focused theoretical sampling around what I believed to be

the core concern of those involved. The data suggested that concern was (the then labelled) 'personal preferencing'. Having facilitated the discovery of grounded theory from the data, I return to those possibilities and remain confident in this selection.

However, the richest category in the final theory is sequential impressioning. I generated more data around this than any other part of the theory, sufficient data perhaps to consider sequential impressioning as a core variable. This is not to claim it is of greater importance than personal legitimising, for it is a component of personal legitimising. It is a reflection of the insight I believe a study of this current category could reveal. Miles and Huberman (1994: 62) opine that field working comes in layers. The longer a person is active in an environment, the more layers of insight appear to surface. I could have pursued digging deeper into sequential impressioning, but chose to close down in order to concentrate on the main theory.

The explanation of personal legitimising in chapter five included a deeper insight into sequential legitimising than any other aspect of the theory. For example, within the property "multi-method" a classification of three different types of activity was evidenced by the data. This property explained that the processes by which sequential impressioning happens could be categorised by 'associating', 'signalling' and 'experiencing'. The data also began to demonstrate relationships between these. Within the realms of personal legitimising this insight into sequential impressioning is rich enough to illuminate levels below the properties of the category. The literature review also endorses an interest in sequential impressioning. Research by Clark (1995) asserts that management consulting is concerned with the management of impressions. Having supported this empirically, his interest takes Clark in the direction of the dramaturgical metaphor, and not towards an explanation of the behaviour by which impressions are managed. Literature on issue selling overlaps with work on impressions. The connection was noted by some researchers. However, the thrust of the issue selling research is relationships within the

organisation. Clark's work on impressions centres on the consultant client interface. Sequential impressioning, I believe, applies in both directions. In summary, there is a momentum of interest in the area of impressions and impressioning, coupled with clear gaps in our knowledge to suggest further research would be advantageous.

Above, I have advocated four research initiatives. All are concerned with the generation of theoretical insight. I would expect all to involve grounded theory research. I have appreciated the power of grounded theory to provide conceptual understanding. I recognise my disposition towards the method. I have avoided suggesting that further research could involve the verification of the integrated hypothesis presented in personal legitimising. Deduction might usually be achieved by quantitative method, but verification already exists within grounded theory strategy.

Further to this I remain cautious about the feasibility of attaining insight through a broader sample but less intrusive method. Several researchers (see Morgan and Piercy 1991) have successfully penetrated areas of professional activity by such method, but the sentiments on access to the professions expressed by Sharma (1997: 791) dampen my enthusiasm for a separate verification project. Perhaps it is the accuracy of Mitchell's (1995: 165) view that so little empirical work exists in the area of professional services that enables higher volume survey methods to generate new insight.

The first of the four research directions above involves the further development of personal legitimising towards a formal theory. This is a logical step and also one that acknowledges that my current representation of the theory is not definite. As noted earlier in sub-section 7.1.3, I expect the theory to be modified by the integration of new data. The three other areas represent specific opportunities I believe merit attention. I would recommend all be approached as substantive investigations using this existing data as points of departure. With all, enthusiasm for the 'grand plan'

should be tempered by the sentiments of Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 22). Commenting on the dynamics within the field of qualitative enquiry, they believe the search for grand narrations will be replaced by more local, small scale theories fitted to specific problems and situations.

7.3   Reflection on research methodology

This final section acknowledges my five year acquaintance with grounded theory. Its purpose of this is twofold. First to demonstrate my learning and research method. Second to make other researchers aware of possibilities and pitfalls in their own adaptations of the method. During this study, I've gone from ignorance of the method to being able to offer views based on my experience with it. I have seven main issues to report.

7.3.1   Facilitating intimacy

Grounded theory is an intimate method. In order to build appropriate theory the researcher ideally needs close proximity to the issue under investigation. This involves three considerations, access, data sources and pre-understanding.

I believe good grounded theory is access critical. Impediments in efforts to achieve good access are to the detriment of the final product. Considerations in facilitating access are well noted (see Altheide and Johnson 1998:302). I was undoubtedly fortunate with personal legitimising. I had achieved access prior to the 'proper start' of the study and was able to embark on the work from the position of being a paid advisor to the firm. A major consideration with access and grounded theory is the duration over which access is necessary. I felt I had outstayed my welcome. Hindsight leads me to recommend researchers to negotiate periodic involvement over a longer time frame than I initially requested. My approach was to seek two weeks initially and then look to the organisation's goodwill to extend. I underestimated the duration of access I would need. This created somewhat of a challenge as the study moved into its third and fourth years.

Earlier I reported that most theory is built on narratives (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 126). One school of opinion suggests this is because such data is easy to

acquire. Care must be taken in being lulled by expedience at the expense of insight. Chapter three on research methodology included recognition of tacit knowledge. As tacit knowledge is often taken for granted by individuals, it may not be present in their accounts. This dependency on verbal data is further tempered by the degree of honesty that the subject is prepared to offer. A major attraction of grounded theory is its ability to accommodate any form of data. I believe my study is conventional with its dependency on interviews. As I've noted earlier, I am attracted by the call from McAuley (1998: 721) for researchers broaden their vision on what constitutes data. Grounded theory lends itself to such enlightenment.

In chapter two I noted my pre-understanding. I took the step of writing this down before I started the research. As a novice researcher this was useful. It made me aware of both the presence and the importance of pre-understanding. However, my pre-understanding was encompassed not in what I consigned to paper in chapter two, but by what research data and literature reminded me of as the study progressed. I feel that chapter two's main contribution to the study was drawing my attention to what pre-understanding actually is, and what it feels like to work with it.

7.3.2 The importance of context and perspective

As the research progressed, the importance of really understanding the research context became more apparent. This is based on two factors.

First relates to the ability to raise the level of a theory towards formal from substantive. Initially I believed my research context could be described by the readily accessible label 'small UK management consulting firms'. This does not provide insight which could help the expanding of theory to cover other substantive areas. I became aware of this when, through the course of theoretical sampling, I found it easy to interpret data from two apparently different substantive areas, market research consultancy and design consultancy. I started to consider the common

characteristics such as intelligent people, high degree of autonomy. I am reinforcing a point I've made earlier. A substantive area is probably best defined by the properties of its context than a single descriptive label.

The importance of perspective was brought home to me by this project's loss of momentum part way through. The term 'perspective' relates to the definition of the character at the centre of the theory. In 1997 I abandoned research from the perspective of clients. This was after data generation, coding, embryonic theory development and two conference papers. This was largely fruitless as far as the final theory was concerned. I appreciate that early on in a study one might need to consider possible candidates for the central character. I took too long. The main reason was that I did not initially grasp the importance of deciding whose behaviour the theory explains.

7.3.3 Conceptual awareness in grounded theory

My early codes and memos demonstrated an initial difficulty in looking at data conceptually. Conceptual awareness is key to grounded theory. The method involves the researcher using typically three levels of conceptualisation in order to offer a theoretical explanation. The initial coding represents a perspective on the source data. Categories result from the synthesis of such perspectives. Core variables exist at a level above categories.

It probably took me twelve months to make the shift from descriptive to conceptual representation. This was in the context of a 'grounded theory friendly' support environment. Researchers, especially those working 'minus mentor' need to consider what steps they need to take to enable this emphasis in their own work. Options include reading well constructed theory, reading other grounded theory, or the route I took, which was to experiment with the technique and receive feedback from my supervisor.

7.3.4 Design for induction and deduction

Grounded theory usually starts with induction. As patterns emerge research design needs to move the process through theoretical sampling and saturation, thus shifting the emphasis towards deduction and theory verification.

The two issues I experienced were the judgement of how much data to generate before attaining some degree of theoretical insight, and the scope for the deductive stages in the research design. I generated too much data before I sought theoretical insight. It is easy for researchers to believe that data generation is a positive enterprise. The comfort of action may serve to complicate the inevitable important step of doing something with the data. If I was slow to generate an initial synthesised explanation of the data, fortunately I was able to maintain access to enable my insight to be subsequently refined. This ability to return to the field, and the cycling of insight is key.

Care must also be applied to the definition of a projected 'analytical rules' or determinants within which a theory is constructed (Glaser 1978: 120). Furthermore researchers must ensure their own rules don't obstruct the emergence of theory. My initial codes and memos were too structured to enable ready comparison. I am interested in the use of computer based method to offer an audit trail back through memos and codes. I stop short, though, of seeing this as a route to driving theory generation. It was useful for me to record who I interviewed and when, during this project (see sub-section 3.1.4). I didn't use this chart to encourage me to spread the interviews around more evenly. It is the emergent theory itself which should fall under the main scrutiny.

7.3.5 Accepting ambiguity

The previous point leads into the recognition that a grounded theory researcher needs to be tolerant of ambiguity.

The method states the inclusion of open coding, comparison, memoing, sorting and theoretical sampling. The intensity, direction and sequencing of these is a personal choice. A researcher will enter a project without the ability to predict what he or she will discover, and without a specific map of what is involved in getting there.

7.3.6 Methodological enhancements

I have followed orthodox grounded theory. I used the principles originally developed by Glaser and Strauss and subsequently reinforced by Glaser. I employed manual methods for coding, writing and sorting. I depended heavily on narratives for data.

During the study I became involved in a grounded theory study group and also presented papers on my research at conferences. Both contributed positively to the study as chapter three has described. My view is that initiatives like these are useful providing the researcher remembers he or she is responsible for the data and theory. These are not routes to the abdication or surrogacy. Neither are they shortcuts in the process. They should be approached as additional means of stimulus and data.

7.3.7 Using grounded theory for insight across disciplines

A major strength of grounded theory is its ability to present insight untainted by the conventional taxonomy of organisational interpretation. Personal legitimising is an example. It is not a theory specifically about marketing. Its ultimate concern is neither management nor organisational behaviour. It involves and impinges on all.

This became clear with the broad scope of literature that demonstrated a relevance to the theory. I believe that such freedom is to be applauded, even if it created challenges in relating literature to an emergent theory. Perhaps it is this ability to operate easily at the intersection of conventional disciplines that affords grounded theory its following. Holbrook (1997) for one believes that research at the intersections and within the overlaps of conventional disciplines is more likely to forward understanding than diligence along one path.

This ends my views on grounded theory research method. It also concludes my description of the five year journey towards an understanding of personal legitimising. A brief note overleaf completes this thesis.

7.4   In conclusion

I have enjoyed both method and subject, though not with equal intensity throughout the project. I have found the experience of grounded theory enlightening. Miles and Huberman (1994: 17) venture that the result of grounded theory research might be banal. I find this highly unlikely. Given that a grounded theory is concerned primarily with processes, has empirical foundation, involves original insight at a conceptual level which is verified, is derived from the perspective of a particular participant, and contains statements of constituent parts, its accurate representation in extant theory must be doubtful. If grounded theory articulates what people instinctively believe then we should not be surprised. Its foundation is in peoples' explicit and tacit knowledge.

I hope that this document has achieved its three objectives. These were, first to introduce the emergent substantive grounded theory, personal legitimising. Second, to report the implications of this theory to practitioner and research communities. Thirdly, to reflect on my learning on research methodology as a result of this process. Thank you for giving it your attention.

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APPENDICES

The following is appended:

- Labels of open codes generated in the study.

OPEN CODES

This appendix lists the open codes generated in the study. The source relates to the reference identities of the people interviewed with the exception of the following:

> AP = active participation phase of project
> PO = participant observation

The following excludes selective coding and codes generated in theoretical sampling interviews later in the study.

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Reflecting	AP	01/01/95	thinking about success and failure of marketing
Personal Preferencing	AP	01/01/95	personal preferencing as method of decision making
Befitting	AP	01/01/95	the appropriate style for a firm such as this
Aiming	AP	01/01/95	marketing goal - the business has aims
(Markets) Picturing	AP	01/01/95	grasping dynamics of the market and data on firm
Pigeonholing	AP	01/01/95	this is being pigeonholed by the market - perhaps?
Being Comfortable	AP	01/01/95	choosing marketing methods because of comfort
Linking	AP	01/01/95	value of linking with business schools
Informalising	AP	01/01/95	ability to know about client needs informally
Copying	AP	01/01/95	photocopied form for sales management technique
Writing	AP	01/01/95	use of written word in creating reputation
Personal Contacting	AP	01/01/95	the major source of new work
Reassuring	AP	01/01/95	role of the brochure
Evidencing/Tangibilising	AP	01/01/95	credibility to sell the idea to colleagues
Advertising	AP	01/01/95	the impression you give to a client
Customer Life	AP	01/01/95	thinking in terms of stages of a finite life
Building	AP	01/01/95	work dominated by existing clients
Establishing	AP	01/01/95	setting up with a specific purpose in mind
"Bush Telegraphing"	AP	01/01/95	word getting around in the market
Doing Marketing	AP	01/01/95	firm active with some marketing initiatives
Extending	AP	01/01/95	process of incrementally building
Capitalising	AP	01/01/95	making the most of an opportunity
Reacting	AP	01/01/95	dynamic of the market
Recruiting B	BB	02/05/95	type of person the firm chooses to employ
Courting B	BB	02/05/95	period of getting to know people before employing
Believing A	BB	02/05/95	personal beliefs of how firm should operate
Influencing B	BB	02/05/95	degree to which beliefs are inculcated into firm
Associating C	BB	02/05/95	name dropping - referring to other organisations
Focussing B	BB	02/05/95	distraction that senior staff endure
Helping C	BB	02/05/95	can relatively easily agree on marketing actions
Complicating B	BB	02/05/95	dismissing ideas due to difference to own systems
Evaluating B	BB	02/05/95	degree to which marketing activities are judged
Networking B	BB	02/05/95	activities that people do to create relationships
Shaping C	BB	02/05/95	how employees are shaped (opinions and skills)
Prioritising B	BB	02/05/95	status given to marketing activities

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Strategising A	BB	02/05/95	how management selects tactics for efficiency
Championing B	BB	02/05/95	driving of marketing on behalf of company
Researching A	BB	02/05/95	focus on one section, so competitive advantage
Systematising A	BB	02/05/95	how much sales and marketing are systematised
Creating B	BB	02/05/95	scope which exists for developing services etc.
Copying B	BB	02/05/95	source of ideas and inspiration for marketing
Attracting	BB	04/08/98	impact of the style of the business on clients
Expecting	BB	04/08/98	expectations of colleagues
Researching	BB	04/08/98	commitment of firm to branch of market
Endorsing	BB	04/08/98	providing basis for publicity/PR events
Feasibility	BB	04/08/98	how management select tactics for efficiency
Hatching	BB	04/08/98	gestation or giving birth to a new idea
Courting	BB	04/08/98	employer/employee time to get to know each other
Coping	BB	04/08/98	mechanics of how consultancy operates
Coping	BB	04/08/98	distraction that senior staff endure
Contextual Characteristics	BB	04/08/98	confidence in the future through experience
Becoming Bored	BB	04/08/98	e.g. newsletters "who cares" - chucked in bin
Pigeon-holing	BB	04/08/98	context/experience specific - repeat business
Hatching	BB	04/08/98	prepared to go through with part shaped ideas
Secrecy	BB	04/08/98	ownership of clients; contractual or smokescreen
Grapevining	BB	04/08/98	networking, who knows who, repeat business
Holding On	BB	04/08/98	claiming a client and holding on to them
Preferencing	BB	04/08/98	personal connections and personal attributes
Identifying	CK	10/10/95	recognising commercial opportunity
Timing B	CK	10/10/95	when the timing is right
Driving A	CK	10/10/95	initiation of extensions
Judging A	CK	10/10/95	getting to the heart of relationship management
Planning B	CK	10/10/95	arranging sales contacts with clients
Courting B	CK	10/10/95	communication and a soft sell
Indulging B	CK	10/10/95	search and selection
Referring A	CK	10/10/95	different clients discussing what the firm does
Avoiding A	CK	10/10/95	staying away from e.g. formal presentations
Informalising A	CK	10/10/95	the mechanism for making decisions
Choosing A	CK	10/10/95	deliberately deciding on a course of action
Resolving A	CK	10/10/95	sorting out issues (with clients)
Encouraging B	CK	10/10/95	giving support to identification of further work
Judging A	CK	16/10/95	deciding on merits of particular marketing ideas
Pairing A	CK	10/10/95	situation of two consultants working together
Evaluating A	CK	10/10/95	a process of looking and deciding
Visioning B	CK	10/10/95	projection of the picture of the future
Courting A	CK	19/05/95	development of employer/employee relationship
Relating A	CK	10/10/95	where the link is between client and consultant
Managing B	CK	10/10/95	transforming a relationship and monitoring it
Predicting B	CK	10/10/95	ability to look forwards to opportunities
Hatching	DMc	05/05/98	unresolved issues whilst new venture started
Owning	DMc	05/05/98	claim on territory - exercising power/possession

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Manipulating	DMc	05/05/98	gaining experience through division
Indulging	DMc	05/05/98	how business reflects individual characteristics
Responding	DMc	05/05/98	obligation of prospective clients to respond
Fronting	DMc	05/05/98	creating presence somewhere - coping with demand
Developing	DMc	05/05/98	recruiting firm-enhancing staff or gap-fillers
Permitting	DMc	05/05/98	some endeavours are not allowed
Group Preference	DMc	05/05/98	everyone's vision for the firm and marketing ideas
Attracting	DMc	05/05/98	cultural elements of business attract people
Promoting	DMc	05/05/98	gaining enquiries through promotion
Permitting	DMc	05/05/98	what you should do, will do
Prioritising	DMc	05/05/98	anything not to do with delivery has suffered
Possessing	DMc	05/05/98	territory and ownership - that's mine!
Vetting	DMc	05/05/98	testing staff in different areas; how they fit in
Evaluating	DMc	05/05/98	evaluating in terms of success and efficiency
Disliking	DMc	05/05/98	psychologically difficult due to dislike
Responding	DMc	05/05/98	responsive to client needs
Innovating	DMc	05/05/98	doing different things during the course of work
Responding	DMc	05/05/98	responding to client needs; reactive not proactive
Personality	DMc	05/05/98	dependence of others on selling ability of a few
Innovating B	DMc	02/05/95	doing different things during the course of work
Recommending B	DMc	02/05/95	business generation from word of mouth
Promoting B	DMc	02/05/95	getting enquiries through deliberate promotion
Challenging B	DMc	02/05/95	difficulty executing specific marketing action
Recruiting A	DMc	02/05/95	how people join the firm
Responding B	DMc	02/05/95	reactive (not proactive) to needs of client
Packaging A	DMc	02/05/95	productising consultancy approaches
Evaluating A	DMc	02/05/95	indicator of success, either formal or gutfelt
Targeting A	DMc	02/05/95	internal performance targets for consultants
Indulging C	DMc	02/05/95	how activities within business reflect individuals
Clienting A	DMc	02/05/95	putting client needs first
Evaporating B	DMc	02/05/95	why things fade away (disinterest, boredom etc.)
Formalising A	DMc	02/05/95	use of systems and procedures
Integrating B	DMc	02/05/95	bringing people into the firm to become part of it
Reflecting C	DMc	02/05/95	how business reflects characteristics of staff
Incidenting A	DMc	02/05/95	events which change shape of company
Rewarding A	DMc	02/05/95	earning rewards by achieving a target
Understanding A	DMc	02/05/95	how well consultant has grasp of management issue
Meeting A	DMc	02/05/95	creation of meetings instead of enquiries
Dedicating B	DMc	02/05/95	provision of sales and marketing resource
Blurring C	DMc	02/05/95	fuzzy boundaries, things not being precise
Being Delayed	JE	01/05/97	client issues getting in the way of work
Asking	JE	01/05/97	how reputation was communicated
Experiencing	JE	01/05/97	prior experience of consultant
Being Appealing	JE	01/05/97	high price setting perception of quality
Differentiating	JE	01/05/97	how consultant came to "sell in" successfully
Flattering with Underestimation	JE	01/05/97	manipulating, convincing client of value for money

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Justifying Value	JE	01/05/97	what consultants do and what client claims good
Fitting In	JE	01/05/97	effective consultants have to fit in?
Sourcing	JE	01/05/97	what sources clients use to find consultants
Latching On	JE	01/05/97	strong relationship once client is happy with firm
Keeping It Going	JE	01/05/97	what you need to do to maintain a relationship
Ongoing	JE	01/05/97	nature of the relationship with the consultant
Understated Advertising	JE	01/05/97	how the firm generates profile
Impressive Handling	JE	01/05/97	handling impressive if firm is understated
Best Kept Secret	JE	01/05/97	powerful appeal - merit in word of mouth
Capability Judging	JE	01/05/97	consultants attempt to extend client contracts
Informal	JE	01/05/97	how the relationship works
Ideas	JE	01/05/97	reality checking and exploring opportunities
Sparking	JE	01/05/97	energy in good client/consultant relationship
Talking	JE	01/05/97	prolonged talks with potential client - no action
Identifying	JE	01/05/97	coming up with a need for consultancy help
Recognising	JE	01/05/97	realising that consultancy help was needed
Selecting	JE	01/05/97	identifying possible providers and choosing best
Moving A	JS	29/08/95	moving premises impacts upon company
Dealing A	JS	29/08/95	coping with work and management challenges
Fizzling B	JS	29/08/95	marketing initiatives fizzling out
Motivating A	JS	29/08/95	
Involving	JS	29/08/95	involving people in the process/decisions
Winning A	JS	29/08/95	the acquisition of the business
Recruiting A	JS	29/08/95	getting hold of staff
Reviewing A	JS	29/08/95	process of evaluating progress
Stressing A	JS	29/08/95	under stress; deliberate, constant or temporary
Covering A	JS	29/08/95	providing for finishing a task when e.g. staff leave
Resourcing C	JS	29/08/95	prioritising and taking time to complete marketing
Possessing C	JS	02/05/95	territory and ownership
Locating B	JS	29/08/95	choice of geographical presence
Attracting B	JS	29/08/95	gaining clients through name and reputation
Under Resourcing	JS	20/08/98	need time to complete marketing work
Winning	JS	20/08/98	winning business
Coping	JS	20/08/98	being able to handle work and issues
Recognising Differences	JS	20/08/98	important to recognise individual differences
Being Conditioned	JS	20/08/98	learning through experience what is worth doing
Involving	JS	20/08/98	involving people in the process/decisions
Enthusing	JS	20/08/98	start with great intentions then disillusionment
Adopting	JS	20/08/98	the firm learns from clients
Fizzling	JS	20/08/98	starting off with enthusiasm then fizzling out
Being Exposed	JS	20/08/98	you've got to drive your own involvement
Coping	JS	20/08/98	being on the back foot - idea of fitting things in
Work Covering	JS	20/08/98	making provision for completion of a task
Being Stressed	JS	20/08/98	short staffed? Can be deliberate
Moving (Changing)	JS	20/08/98	moving premises impacts upon the company
Choosing	JS	20/08/98	choice of geographical presence

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Lip Servicing	JS	20/08/98	talking about it, but nothing happens
Attracting	JS	20/08/98	how business attracts clients through reputation
Reviewing	JS	20/08/98	process of evaluating progress
Recommending	JS	20/08/98	getting hold of staff
Being Friends	JSh	01/10/97	personal dimension to the business relationship
Delicate Relating	JSh	01/10/97	handling a situation with sensitivity
Projecting Confidence	JSh	01/10/97	giving the impression of confidence
Relationship Trans-situational	JSh	01/10/97	relationships lasting a long time
Coping with Complexity	JSh	01/10/97	able to assimilate and work with lots of info
Investing	JSh	01/10/97	putting effort in to help secure client interest
Careful Selling In	JSh	01/10/97	using appropriate methods to sell in
Role Model Scanning	JSh	01/10/97	seeing who the top people are
Appearing Seductive	JSh	01/10/97	presenting a proposition in attractive terms
Being Let Loose	JSh	01/10/97	being given a free rein to operate
Admired by Clients	JSh	01/10/97	being held in high regard
Joint Responsibility	JSh	01/10/97	shared responsibility for the execution of a task
Being Controlled	JSh	01/10/97	consultant controlled by the client
Dealing with Informed Clients	JSh	01/10/97	methods for coping with experienced/knowledgeable
Premiuming	JSh	01/10/97	high price - top end of the market
Being Special	JSh	01/10/97	being distinctive in the service offered
Hardened Clients	JSh	01/10/97	experienced clients wise to tricks and techniques
Whetting	JSh	01/10/97	making a client interested
Being Watched	JSh	01/10/97	keeping an eye on a supplier or customer
Being Understood	JSh	01/10/97	intimate understanding, developed over time
Seeing Through Selling	JSh	01/10/97	being seen as doing the commercial influence bit
Extending	JSh	01/10/97	lengthening contracts and work
Convincing the Unconverted	JSh	01/10/97	overcoming people resistant to, or ignorant of
Leading Into	JSh	01/10/97	paving the way to other work
Handling Oneself	JSh	01/10/97	displaying the manner and disposition
Creating Interest	JSh	01/10/97	having something that's appealing
Selling In	JSh	01/10/97	introducing colleagues to do the work
Being Professional	JSh	01/10/97	conducting oneself to create an image
Peddling Commodities	JSh	01/10/97	selling stuff readily available elsewhere
Being of Use	JSh	01/10/97	contributing positively
Being Experienced	JSh	01/10/97	knowing what's involved
Clients Looking Forward	JSh	01/10/97	client with clear idea of what they want
Helping	JSt	31/05/98	description of joint participation, but not equal
Becoming Intimate	JSt	31/05/98	important aspects of work - secret or critical
Collaborating	JSt	31/05/98	collaborating seen as a benefit by the client
Critical	JSt	31/05/98	some things client does more important than others
Being Chosen	JSt	31/05/98	process of how consultants are chosen
Glitzing	JSt	31/05/98	dimension of style
Reflecting	JSt	31/05/98	the company reflects their standards
Coat-tailing	JSt	31/05/98	consultant riding on the back of firm's reputation
Knowing	JSt	31/05/98	consultants getting to know clients
Labelling	JSt	31/05/98	names used to describe the firm

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Caring	JSt	31/05/98	attribute of well liked consultants
Tailoring	JSt	31/05/98	differentiating - liked by clients
Challenging	JSt	31/05/98	stand up to clients and their preconceptions
Appreciating	JSt	31/05/98	positive reaction to a client
Sincere Selling	JSt	31/05/98	selling in a genuine manner
Originating	JSt	31/05/98	client recognising original thought
Working Hard	JSt	31/05/98	consultants giving the impression of effort
Pestering	JSt	31/05/98	real sales turnoff
Reading	JSt	31/05/98	ability to comprehend a situation
Respecting	JSt	31/05/98	being respected by clients
Inputting	JSt	31/05/98	how consultants continued to client firms
Being Controlled	JSt	31/05/98	trying to maintain control
Wearying	JSt	31/05/98	articulation of customer life
Infecting	JSt	31/05/98	dimension of how consultants contribute to clients
Concern Alleviating	JSt	31/05/98	clients looking after their own reputation
Collaborating	JSt	31/05/98	control - clients like a collaborative approach
Delivering	JSt	31/05/98	fear of results not being effective
Performing	JSt	31/05/98	consultant can impress client by working for them
Being Controlled	JSt	31/05/98	client knows they need to manage a consultant
Profile Building	JSt	31/05/98	consultants being seen to be working on project
Effort Symbolising	JSt	31/05/98	creation of a favourable impression with clients
Projectising	JSt	31/05/98	consultants input having definite start and finish
Being Absorbed	JSt	31/05/98	consultant fitting in with clients organisation
Super Performing	JSt	31/05/98	exceptional levels of performance
Asserting	JSt	31/05/98	consultant asserting himself with client
Stimulating	JSt	31/05/98	source of impetus behind use of consultants
Shaping	JSt	31/05/98	process by which projects take their final form
Ongoing	JSt	31/05/98	continual majority of consultant/client relations
Teaming B	MG	16/10/95	working in teams
Vetting C	MG	16/10/95	deciding what relationships to pursue individually
Fitting A	MG	16/10/95	appropriateness of a course of action to the firm
Monitoring C	MG	16/10/95	evaluating the status of potential customers
Investing C	MG	16/10/95	input of personal effort in stimulating business
Courting A	MG	16/10/95	development of relationships e.g. employees
Motivating A	MG	16/10/95	why people in the firm do things
Educating B	MG	16/10/95	importing knowledge onto clients
Developing A	MG	16/10/95	development of existing clients - repeat business
Leading B	MG	16/10/95	client manipulation
Learning A	MG	16/10/95	picking up information from outside firms
Orienting A	MG	16/10/95	how the firm aligns its activities
Committing A	MG	16/10/95	how much effort the firm puts behind its marketing
Opportunistic B	MG	16/10/95	underlining culture towards business development
Strategising A	MG	16/10/95	process through which the firm decides upon action
Campaigning C	MG	16/10/95	deliberate use of marketing to stimulate business
Involving B	MG	16/10/95	what consultants spend time on
Extending	MG	21/08/98	development of existing clients - repeat business

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Judging	MG	21/08/98	deciding on merits or otherwise of ideas
Overcoming	MG	21/08/98	some things need to be overcome
Intrinsic Motivating	MG	21/08/98	why people in the firm do things
Involving	MG	21/08/98	what consultants spend time on
Being Watched	MG	21/08/98	role of the monitoring system
Formalising/Informalising	MG	21/08/98	process through which firm decides on actions
Associating	MG	21/08/98	importance of the tangible link
Opportunising	MG	21/08/98	spot opportunity and act on it appropriately
Aligning	MG	21/08/98	latching on to trusted sources
Weeding Out	MG	21/08/98	personal judgement being used
Teaming	MG	21/08/98	working in teams for particular tasks
Campaigning	MG	21/08/98	marketing action to stimulate business
Dual Exposing	MG	21/08/98	need for two things to move client on
Investing	MG	21/08/98	personal effort into stimulation of business
Monitoring	MG	21/08/98	evaluating status of potential clients
Befitting	MG	21/08/98	appropriateness of course of action to firm
Impressioning	MG	21/08/98	not being seen to be desperate for work
Experiencing	MG	21/08/98	importance of experience in shaping perception
Courting	MG	21/08/98	development of relationships (employees)
Self Starting	MG	21/08/98	giving scope to people to do their own thing
Learning	MG	21/08/98	picking up information from outside organisations
Orienting	MG	21/08/98	how the firm aligns its activities
Committing to Marketing	MG	21/08/98	how much effort firm puts behind marketing
Choosing	MG	21/08/98	expression of consultants choosing to work
Opportunising	MG	21/08/98	underlining culture towards business development
Leading	MG	21/08/98	client manipulation
Educating	MG	21/08/98	importing knowledge onto clients
Personal Stamping	PO	01/04/95	reconciling personal aims & work responsibilities
Impacting	PO	01/04/95	the impact of work life on home life
Osmosising	PO	01/04/95	process of osmosis in developing the business
Aligning	PO	01/04/95	consultants latching on to ideas and philosophies
Dawning Reality	PO	01/04/95	reality of company hits after initial naiveté
Overlapping	PO	01/04/95	common areas of interest across firms in group
Failing to Complete	PO	01/04/95	people not doing what they say they will
Individualising	PO	01/04/95	people doing their own thing
Bragging	PO	01/04/95	claiming distinctive performance abilities
Exit Stepping	PO	01/04/95	using part time work as step before leaving
Coping with Differences	PO	01/04/95	accommodating individual differences in firm
Evolutionary Opportunism	PO	01/04/95	process of progress stimulating opportunism
Rewarding	PO	01/04/95	what motivates/rewards the consultants
Individualising	PO	01/04/95	personal approaches to things by consultants
Testing	PO	01/04/95	vetting and evaluating people before employing
Teaming	PO	01/04/95	working together on projects in groups
Feeling	PO	01/04/95	the distinction between fact and emotion
Flirting	PO	01/04/95	having a go, but not seeing it through
Owning	PO	01/04/95	people wanting control of their part

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Allowing	PO	01/04/95	what is allowed to happen in the firm
Ring Fencing	PO	01/04/95	claiming what is yours
Social Sharing	PO	01/04/95	common interests as a relationship facilitator
Personal Enjoying	PO	01/04/95	individuals doing something because they enjoy it
Internal Relating	PO	01/04/95	consultants getting on well & working with others
Grapevining	PO	01/04/95	consultants reputations spreading by word of mouth
Own Recipe	PO	01/04/95	consultants have their own way of doing things
Limited Life-ing	PO	01/04/95	recognition that a "recipe" doesn't last forever
Multi Benefiting	PO	01/04/95	do an action with many positive consequences
Justified Marketing	PO	01/04/95	legitimacy of main marketing tools and techniques
Capitalising	PO	01/04/95	making the most of something to achieve goal
Consuming	PO	01/04/95	getting through services considered as a commodity
Work Hobbying	PO	01/04/95	able to make private interests beneficial to work
Handling Critics	PO	01/04/95	coping with internal opposition
Be-fitting	PO	01/04/95	how a firm should behave
Individualising	PO	01/04/95	firm made up of individuals, not clones
Synonymousing	PO	01/04/95	where the individual is seen as the company
"Fronting"	PO	01/04/95	the use of artefacts to create/reinforce an image
Personal Manipulation	PO	01/04/95	management style by manipulation
"Just in Casing"	PO	01/04/95	treating people well - they may be important soon
Flirting	PO	01/04/95	having a go before deciding whether to do it
Personal Preferencing	PO	01/04/95	recognise different capabilities of consultants
Associating	PO	01/04/95	knowing which company you wish to keep
Interlinking	PO	01/04/95	material dependence of various ventures
Avoiding Constraints	PO	01/04/95	sidestepping vulnerabilities of business structure
Building On	PO	01/04/95	making the most of work already complete
Discontinuing	PO	01/04/95	abrupt endings to a way of working
Offshooting	PO	01/04/95	new commercial ventures from one company
Senior Networking	PO	01/04/95	the use of contacts from senior firm members
Long Contacting	PO	01/04/95	keeping in touch with people for a long time
Non Follow-throughing	PO	01/04/95	when proposed ventures fail to get completed
Boxing	PO	01/04/95	process of packaging services to sell
Playing	PO	01/04/95	psychology of viewing work as a game
Driving	PO	01/04/95	what motivates and drives the owners of the firm
Staff Turning	PO	01/04/95	lots of changes in support staff in the firm
Exploring	PO	01/04/95	looking at different methods before changing
Personal Facilitating	PO	01/04/95	how personal aims are achieved viz the business
Ringfencing	PO	01/04/95	creating entities and seeing them as separate
Spinning Out	PO	01/04/95	the establishment of one venture from another
Chinese Walling	PO	01/04/95	separating different ventures which conflict
Feeding	PO	01/04/95	cross-referring business from company to company
"Old Boying"	PO	01/04/95	use of long established contacts to help business
Reputable Sourcing	PO	01/04/95	use of acknowledged sound sources of information
Culture Vetting	PO	01/04/95	ensuring new recruits fit into firm's culture
Doing it Yourself	PO	01/04/95	cultural characteristic of doing it yourself
Informal Clustering	PO	01/04/95	informal groups of contacts in consultancy work

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Jargoning	PO	01/04/95	the use of specific labels common to the industry
Long term Relating	PSt	22/08/98	relationships endure, firm and individuals merge
External Perspectivising	PSt	22/08/98	consultant bringing in specialist knowledge
Extending	PSt	22/08/98	how single job grows into substantial contract
Being Ad Hoc'd	PSt	22/08/98	client using consultant on unplanned basis
Imagining	PSt	22/08/98	suggesting, originating, seeding ideas
Reputation Rippling	PSt	22/08/98	confidence in consultant impacts on client
Informalising	PSt	22/08/98	casual nature of consultant/client relationship
Long Terming	PSt	22/08/98	longevity of relationship between client/suppliers
Jungle Avoidance	PSt	22/08/98	avoiding complexity of many, unproven suppliers
Protocoling	PSt	22/08/98	who has relationship with who (consultant/client)
Relating Intimately	PSt	22/08/98	intimacy involved in smaller firms
Becoming Trusted	PSt	22/08/98	trust has to be earned
Becoming Friends	PSt	22/08/98	milestone in the consultant/client relationship
Extending	PSt	22/08/98	piece of work becoming big contract
Being Vetted	PSt	22/08/98	client assessing suppliers and choosing best
Gaining Credentials	PSt	22/08/98	consultants gaining credentials to impress clients
Fitting In	PSt	22/08/98	ability of consultant to be worked with by client
Applied Introducing	PSt	22/08/98	how consultants introduce colleagues to clients
Over Pushing	PSt	22/08/98	intrusive introductions of colleagues and services
Brash Claiming	PSt	22/08/98	supplier making false, unsubstantiated claims
Being Known	PSt	22/08/98	where people have met consultancy firm
Becoming Protected	PSt	22/08/98	reputation with client so good, no competition
Initiating	PSt	22/08/98	relationships can come about through initiating
Being Tested	PSt	22/08/98	part of vetting before consultant supplying work
Networks, the Virtual Market	PSt	22/08/98	sources used to find out about consultants
Individualising	PSt	22/08/98	reputation of the individual first, then firm
Risk Avoiding	PSt	22/08/98	conservatism - can't afford failure
Trading Off	PSt	22/08/98	personal legitimising, justifying actions
Creating	PSt	22/08/98	important characteristic of a consultant
Being Judged	PSt	22/08/98	client makes judgement of consultants capabilities
Being Chosen	PSt	22/08/98	short list of suppliers
Justifying the Initiation	PSt	22/08/98	sales skills or negotiating patter
Being Motivated	PSt	22/08/98	relating to initiation of relationship
Being Creative	PSt	22/08/98	key attribute of a consultant
Trialing	PSt	22/08/98	form of vetting - testing out consultant
Prudent Judgement	PSt	22/08/98	where client retains ability to make decisions
Performing A	SB	19/05/95	consultants ability to achieve to expectation
Developing A	SB	02/05/95	how consultant-client relationships are maintained
Contributing B	SB	19/05/95	how much each individual should contribute
Contacting A	SB	19/05/95	clients contacting firm for work on personal level
Mushrooming	SB	19/05/95	how projects are expanded in scope since started
Forecasting	SB	19/05/95	ability to predict scale and scope of future work
Optimising B	SB	19/05/95	getting the organisation at its most effective
Coping B	SB	19/05/95	resourcing tasks and work
Developing A	SB	19/05/95	gaining business by maintaining existing clients

Code Label	Source	Date	Description
Delivering B	SB	19/05/95	how much the consultant gets involved in producing
Positioning A	SB	19/05/95	a posture in the market, current and future
Categorising A	SB	19/05/95	putting types of work into boxes
Opportunising A	SB	19/05/95	notion of picking up new work
Fitting B	SB	19/05/95	relationship between marketing and culture of firm
Knowing B	SB	19/05/95	having the answers to market questions
Controlling B	SB	19/05/95	the degree of autonomy given to consultants
Justifying B	SB	19/05/95	ability to furnish evidence in support of action
Selling B	SB	19/05/95	projection of oneself and ones capabilities
Having Freedom	SB	21/08/98	degree of autonomy given to consultants
Optimising	SB	21/08/98	getting organisation at its most effective
Plate Balancing	SB	21/08/98	consultants like variety - juggling clients
Confused Aiming	SB	21/08/98	posture in the market - seeing future clearly
Choosing Comfort	SB	21/08/98	people gravitate towards what is comfortable
Blurring Boundaries	SB	21/08/98	clarity of boundaries between types of work
Extending	SB	21/08/98	one job extending into different areas
Championing	SB	21/08/98	consultants fighting, justifying what they want
Game Playing	SB	21/08/98	helicopter perspective - imagination/experimenting
Customising	SB	21/08/98	adapting the existing (to suit the client)
Clouding	SB	21/08/98	clouding the issue
Exciting/Innovating/Creative	SB	21/08/98	if work is enjoyed, acts as a magnet
Coping with Differences	SB	21/08/98	consultants build external and internal relations
Doing Marketing	SB	21/08/98	active in marketing, not passive
Developing Clients	SB	21/08/98	maintaining existing clients, so further work
Sympathetic Dynamics	SB	21/08/98	call in firm because worked with them before