

Using a third party in business-to-business (B2B) communication: towards a terminology framework

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Terms associated with customer-related messages include *referral*, *reference*, *customer reference*, *endorsement*, *third party (customer) endorsement*, *testimonial* and *recommendation*. One might expect such terms to be clearly distinguishable from each other, yet this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, definitions provided by the academic community are sometimes vague, inconsistent or contradictory and explanations of these, as used by the marketing practitioner, ambiguous. This seeming lack of clarity would suggest that further conceptual and empirical work is needed to present more precise explanations of

- the meanings attributed to the various terms,
- their usage by the marketing practitioner,
- their contribution to the business marketer's communications activities and
- their effect on customer behaviour.

We present a review of existing work, propose a terminology framework and suggest initial research to refine the framework and improve understanding of the use of customers as a third party in business-to-business (B2B) communications.

Key words: B2B communication, customer, reference, endorsement

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Introduction

The emphasis of this paper lies in the discussion of communications messages in which a third party is used to enhance the effect of messages transmitted by the business marketer to their target audience - this might be via direct exchanges between a salesperson and customer representative or involve more indirect and impersonal communications. In many cases the third party might be an existing customer, but it could also include experts, suppliers, previous employers, shareholders, board members, etc.

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- the meanings attributed to the various terms,
- their usage by the marketing practitioner,
- their contribution to the business marketer's communications activities and
- their effect on customer behaviour.

This first part of the paper examines existing understanding and practice in which a third party, a customer, is used in some way in a communications message. A key point underlying the discussion that follows is the premise that by *using* a third party (in our case a customer) the business marketer has some capacity, however great or small, to determine aspects of the message.

Why bother dotting the 'i' or crossing the 't'?

Precision is important in the definitions attributed to terms because these terms are used as codes, as shorthand signals of more detailed meanings. To facilitate shared understanding and enable the exchange of ideas, it helps if human beings are "on the same wavelength", where one engages in dialogue in which the parties involved attribute the same meaning to the words or terms used to communicate ideas and information. Without precision of definition and consistency in the terminology used, the capacity to develop understanding amongst the academic community or guide the marketing practitioner is compromised. We underline this point by

- identifying the various terms used to *signal* instances where a third party, a customer, is used by the marketer in communications messages,
- examining the definitions currently in use and which might be attributed to these terms.

Understanding amongst the academic community and examination of practitioner use of customers in communications messages is associated with terms such as *customer references*, *referrals*, *endorsement* and *testimonials*. Whilst customer referencing has been in widespread use amongst business marketing practitioners for some time, it has only recently attracted academic curiosity (Ruokalainen, 2005; Salminen, 2001; Salminen and Möller, 2004 and 2006). This interest has included the examination of

- conditions under which *customer referencing* is used and forms that it might take
- success factors associated with various forms of *customer references* (such as reference visits)
- *customer referencing* in high risk situations (such as high tech/new business start-ups).

Salminen and Möller (2006) provide a useful inventory of "practices" in which a customer might feature in a marketer's communications messages. Although they initially consider referencing in a broad way, their work centres principally on *customer* referencing and terms that they use to indicate different types of customer referencing include those which are

- internal: seminar presentations; reference information; reference databases
- external: reference visits; articles/descriptions; press releases; promotional material; seminars/conferences; internet; requests to promote they how it might be used in B2B communications.

A point to note here is that internal practices such as reference information and databases would not be relevant to an examination of communication activities, rather these would be a resource that could be drawn upon for internal presentations and to support the various external practices. Interestingly Salminen and Möller (2006) do not identify advertising as a practice associated with customer referencing, although business marketers do use this medium in order to feature customers in communications messages. Whilst this practice might exist, much of the understanding associated with featuring customers in advertisements has been developed in consumer markets and is identified by the terms *endorsement* and *testimonial*. If these (reference, endorsement and testimonial) are the terms used to signal various activities in which the business marketer might use a third party (a customer) in communications activities, then we need to be confident that the definitions attributed to them are consistent and clearly distinguishable.

A review of terms (and their definitions)

Referral

Whilst our principal interest lies in practices associated with reference, endorsement and testimonial, we need to address the term referral and word-of-mouth communication to eliminate these from the principal focus of our discussion. In its simplest form, *referral* can be described as “the act of directing someone to a specialist for consultation”. The most obvious association with such referral would be in the medical sense, yet it has also attracted considerable interest in the business context. This is because being directed “to a specialist for consultation” is ignored and attention is focused simply on “the act of directing someone”. In a marketing sense this could involve for example

- a service station referring customers to a car body repair workshop
- a customer directing other customers to a particular product or organisation.

Referral behaviour amongst customers has interested marketing practitioners and academics because of its association with word-of-mouth (informal, non-commercial, person-to-person) communication - this being known to affect purchase decisions (Arndt, 1967; Buttle, 1998). Interest in word-of-mouth has grown in recent years because of the facility to engage in such informal communication via the internet (e.g. blogs or online communities). Marketers use the term positive and negative word-of-mouth, yet word-of-mouth simply represents the communications channel through which the message is transmitted. The person from whom the message emanates is signalling/communicating a marketing organisation’s ability or the reliability of its products. So in this sense the use of the terms word-of-mouth communication and its connection with referral behaviour as used by marketing academics and practitioners, is perhaps incorrect and could cause confusion. Other problematic uses of the term “referral” are evident in more specific B2B marketing literature. For example, Salminen (2001) and Salminen and Möller (2004) distinguish between the terms reference and referral, quoting from a marketing glossary to explain that a referral is a “sales technique of using a person’s name (usually a current customer) to introduce oneself to a prospective customer” (Clemente, 1992, p 488 in Salminen 2001, p 299 in Salminen and Möller, 2004). The sales person is not directing the attention of a customer (current or prospective) to a specialist. Rather, it could be argued that this sales technique is in fact a *reference* in its simplest form, i.e. the act of referring to someone or something. This point takes us to customer reference, a term which interests us in particular.

Reference, customer reference

Salminen (1997) is one of the first to attempt to present an overarching definition of the term reference as it appears to be used in business markets, suggesting that it can be understood to mean

“the supplier’s relationship to its existing or former customer that can be evaluated by that customer in terms of the supplier’s product, service, management or cooperation performance”, p.17.

The author codifies this definition with the term *reference*, yet the definition has obvious associations with customers. One could therefore conclude that if this definition is to be widely understood and consistently used then some additional word (such as *customer*) should be added to the term reference. Irrespective of whether it might be more clearly signalled by using the phrase *customer reference*, Salminen’s definition has been used and presented in subsequent work associated with customer referencing (Jalkala and Salminen 2005; Jalkala and Salminen 2006; Romanainen and Salminen 2007; Salminen and Möller 2004) so one might conclude that it is accepted and has the potential to provide a commonly understood explanation of the term reference and practices associated with it in business markets.

Whilst the use of the definition has expanded, there are, however, other explanations attributed to the term reference, particularly where this is linked to customers. Ruokalainen and Igel (2004) for example, use the terms *customer reference* and *reference customer* interchangeably. These are not specifically defined, instead meaning is inferred by explaining to the reader that “the term reference business means using the work done for a customer, to assure another customer”, p 673. Cornelsen and Diller (1998) examine references in the context of customer valuation, defining reference as communication which is

- direct, private, oral and interpersonal between two or more persons about a supplier or his products
- positive, negative or neutral. (p.209)

A key point of distinction here compared to the preceding definitions is that the marketer is not party to this communication. This definition is arguably a more precise explanation of what academics have previously codified as “referral behaviour” (see our earlier discussion).

In discussing Salminen’s (1997) reference definition we suggested that its use and presumably therefore acceptance appeared to be expanding. This however, does not appear to be the case, because Salminen and Möller (2006) define a reference in a B2B marketing sense as

“an indirect proof, based on some practical or concrete evidence, like product, service or systems delivery, of a supplier’s capability” (p5).

The definition originally presented in 1997 (and used in subsequent work) and the above meaning attributed to the term *reference* draw from the business marketing context and are arguably equally applicable to a customer reference as it is to any other type of reference which might prove a supplier’s capability. The point of contention, however, is which definition is now accepted as explaining reference?

Endorsement

Inconsistencies in definitions are also apparent when one looks at work on endorsement. For decades now, marketing academics and practitioners have been absorbed with ways in which to enhance the effect of advertising messages. The use of endorsement in advertising has attracted considerable attention from those involved with consumer marketing (Dean and Biswas, 2001; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; McCracken, 1989). This interest has, amongst others, addressed issues associated with the spokesperson featuring in advertisements (in which endorsement messages are used) such as

- selection of a spokesperson whose image best fits the meaning to be conveyed in the advertising message
- the degree of congruence between the characteristics of the spokesperson and attributes of the product being endorsed, and
- the credibility of the spokesperson.

Whilst we acknowledge the considerable contribution made in a number of areas with regards endorsement in consumer advertising, our focus for the moment centres on the term endorsement itself.

As with the preceding discussion of referencing, the starting point for our examination of endorsement has got to be an understanding of prior studies and assumptions that underpin these studies, as subsequent research would typically build on existing knowledge and/or address weaknesses contained within it. A surprising discovery on reviewing work published in relation to endorsement and marketing communications is the almost complete absence of a definition of the term *endorsement* itself. Instead, attention is centred on the type of third party used to deliver or to whom “public approval” might be attributed and who might feature in an advertisement, with the marketer’s choice of third party essentially being made up of customers, experts or celebrities. Whilst Sternthal et al. (1978) allude to possible meanings, describing ways in which the marketer might feature consumers who “present testimonials on their satisfaction” or might seek “the seal of approval from independent...agencies” (p.285), one of the few works which appears to provide an explicit definition of endorsement is that of Dean and Biswas (2001). Yet even in this instance, the definition is linked to a specific type of third party. Dean and Biswas (2001) attribute the following meaning to third party organisation endorsement

“product advertising that incorporates the name of the third party organisation (tpo) and a *positive evaluation* of the advertised product that is attributed to the (tpo)”. (p. 42)

As we have noted, a marketer might opt to feature a celebrity, customer (actual or fictional) or an expert for endorsement purposes, with Dean and Biswas (2001) suggesting that a third party organisation is most closely linked to *expert* endorsement. Interestingly, although the authors are quite clear in their definition, this does not prevent others from misrepresenting this definition. Wang (2005) attributes the following to Dean and Biswas’ (2001) published definition of endorsement, “third party opinions or evaluations about products that incorporate the name of the third party and a *positive or negative evaluation* of the product that is attributed to the third party”, (p402). Wang has removed the specific link to organisations as the type of third party upon which Dean and Biswas’ work was based and has introduced the notion of negative as well as positive evaluation. This latter point not only misrepresents Dean and Biswas’ work but is inconsistent with the basic meaning of endorsement i.e. public backing or approval.

From our discussion so far it is apparent that there are different terms used for what could be viewed as essentially the same practice for example, customer reference in business-to-business (B2B) communications vs. customer testimonial in business-to-consumer (B2C) communications. There are also differing definitions for the same term, e.g. reference and explanations for others which do not appear to be entirely correct e.g. customer referral. Obviously language, its use and interpretation varies, but if, as marketers, we wish to further understanding by drawing from research and practice in different contexts (e.g. B2B vs B2C) then it is important that there is a level of consistency in the codes used and the meanings attributed to these. We now go on to propose a framework for terminology that might used to express various forms of third party involvement in communications messages.

**Laying out the terminology framework
Towards essential meanings**

One of the principal causes of confusion is the inclusion of additional attributes on top of what should be the basic definition of a term. Adding attributes to a definition might help one researcher to be more precise within the scope of his or her paper, but it increases the discussion over the terms in use across papers, and it reduces the comparability of the various research papers that are produced over time in this field. This paper proposes that each term be defined by a clear and essential meaning, and that other words be placed before or after it as required to refine the essential meaning of the term or to narrow the scope of the research paper.

In order to find the essential meanings of the terms listed at the beginning of this paper, we searched for the Latin, etymological and dictionary meanings of the verbs and nouns related to them. The discussion that follows is a distillation of these meanings (see Table 1 for a comprehensive list) and for the purposes of clarity, we examine first the verbs and then the nouns.

Term (v)	Latin Origin	Translation	Meaning
refer	referre	carry back	mention, allude to, direct attention to, trace or attribute (something) to (a cause or source) ¹
testify	testificare	bear witness	give evidence as witness, serve as evidence of, proof
endorse	indorsare	put on back	confirm, approve
recommend	commendare	commend thoroughly	put forward with approval as being suitable for a role; advise course of action.

For our future research on B2B communications, we want to investigate those communications messages in which the marketer uses a third party (the third party being an individual or organisation other than the two principals involved in the communications message).

Marketer → Message → Target audience

¹ Salminen and Möller (2006) also presented this same final definition of the verb “to refer” in their development of a theory of referencing.

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Third party

In this sense, the verbs *to testify*, *to recommend* and *to endorse* indicate an activity that is performed by the third party featured in the message, whereas *to refer* implies no participation of the third party. On the contrary, the verbs *to testify*, *to recommend* and *to endorse* do not necessarily require any activity on the part of the marketer. When an existing customer recommends a supplier to a potential customer, the supplier would probably also call this action a customer recommendation, irrespective of whether the supplier was involved in the production and distribution of this recommendation or not. Using the agent of the verb as a distinguishing parameter leads to the main node of the terminology framework (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 The agent (active party): marketer or third party?

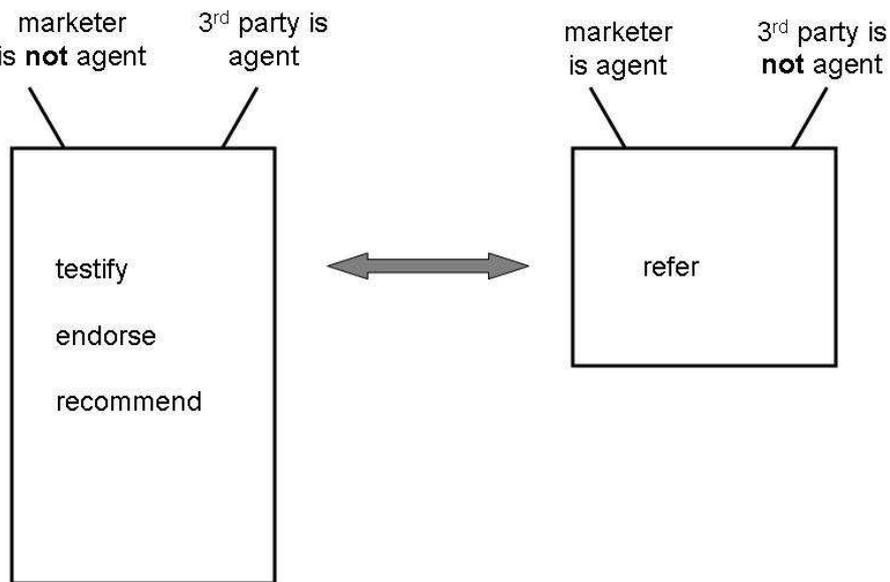
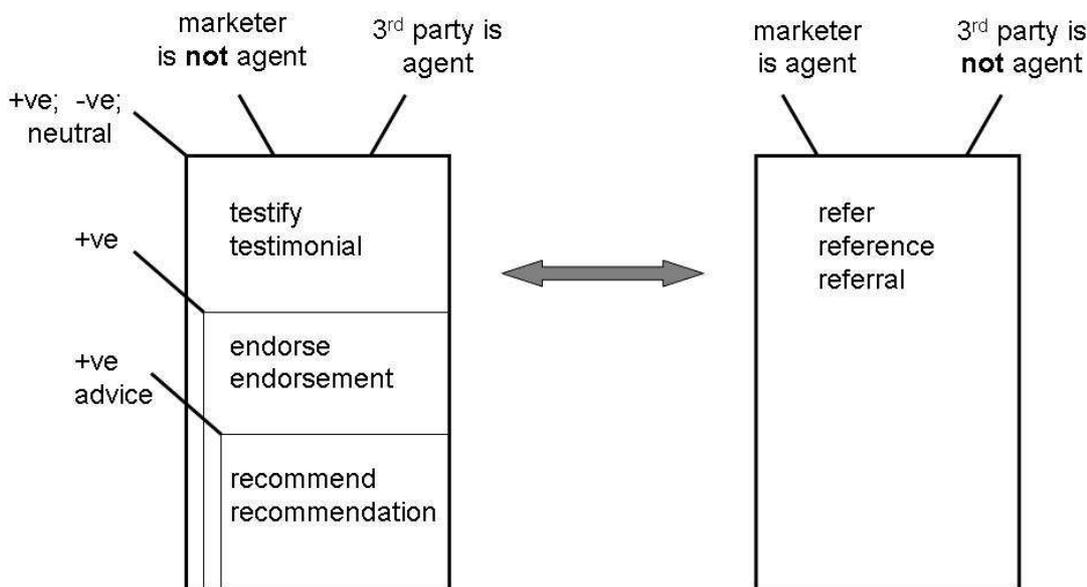


Figure 2 The agent (active party)



Further investigation of the verbs *to testify*, *to recommend*, and *to endorse* shows that *to testify* can be positive, negative and neutral, whereas *to endorse* and *to recommend* have only a positive attitude towards the object of the phrase. The difference between *to endorse* and *to recommend* seems less dramatic, although *to endorse* suggests a mere support or approval, whereas *to recommend* includes some form of advice.

Having looked at the verbs, we can then add the related nouns and so expand the terminology framework (See Figure 2). Meanings attributed to these nouns are as follows:

Term (n)	Meaning
referral	act of referring someone or something for consultation or review;
reference	recommendation to consult (professional) person referred to the act of referring to something; a letter from a previous employer testifying to someone’s ability or reliability; testimonial from 1895.
testimonial	formal statement testifying to someone’s character and qualifications; public tribute to someone and their achievements; something that serves as evidence
endorsement	action of endorsing; promotional statement; formal and explicit approval; a signature that endorses something
recommendation	something (as a course of action) that is recommended

(For a comprehensive list of meanings, see Table 1).

Defining the basic terms

The most critical part of the terminology framework is the definition of the basic terms in such a way that they could become widely accepted and used by both researchers and practitioners. Based on the findings from dictionaries and apparent common denominators from published research, as a first attempt we dare to suggest the following basic meanings:

- *a third party reference*: a communications message (produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience) that mentions one or more third parties (each of which can be an individual or an organisation other than the two principals involved in the communications message);
- *a third party testimonial*: a statement by a third party (to a business marketer's target audience,) in which that third party testifies the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service, whether that be positive, negative or neutral;
- *a third party endorsement*: a statement by a third party (to a business marketer's target audience,) in which that third party positively supports the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service;
- *a third party recommendation*: a statement by a third party (to a business marketer's target audience,) in which that third party suggests to make use of the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service.

Each of these are using the same basic syntax

a 3rd party [term]

However, note that in the definition of *third party reference*, the marketer is the active party producing the message and making it available to a target audience, whereas in the other definitions the third party is the active party making a statement. The marketing organisation might use such statements in communications messages produced, but does not necessarily have to play an active role in their formulation.

Depending on the purpose of the definitions, we suggest that mentioning "the communications message is being produced by a marketer and being made available to a target audience" can sometimes be omitted if that fact is already clear from the context of the construct. In the same sense, the definition of the third party "being an individual or organisation other than the two principals involved in the communications messages" can be omitted for simplicity. The full definitions are perhaps appropriate for academic documents, whereas the short definitions are more likely to be taken up by practitioners. This leads to short and full definitions such as

- *a third party reference (short)*: a communications message that mentions one or more third parties;
- *a third party reference (full)*: a communications message produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience, that mentions one or more third parties, each of which can be an individual or an organisation other than the two principals involved in the communications message;

and in

- *a third party recommendation (short)*: a statement by a third party in which that third party suggests to make use of the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service;
- *a third party recommendation (full)*: a statement by a third party to a business marketer's target audience, in which that third party suggests to make use of the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service;

One final point to note here is that we have not provided a definition of referral nor does the term feature in the rest of the paper. This is because referral behaviour does not involve messages produced and sent by the marketer to a target audience.

Specifying the third party

From the basic syntax mentioned above, definitions for terms that include a specific third party can easily be derived by changing *third party* into the specific third party, using the following syntax:

a [3rd party] [term]

Some examples

a [third party] [term]	
a customer	reference
a customer	testimonial
a celebrity	endorsement

Using the preliminary definitions mentioned above, these examples could be defined as:

- *a customer reference (short)*: a communications message that mentions one or more customers;

- *a customer reference (full)*: a communications message produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience, that mentions one or more existing customers of the marketer's company;
-
- *a customer testimonial (short)*: a statement made by a customer in which that customer testifies the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service, whether that be positive, negative or neutral;
- *a customer testimonial (full)*: a statement made by an existing customer of a marketer's company, in which that customer testifies the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service, whether that be positive, negative or neutral;
- *a celebrity endorsement (short)*: a statement made by a celebrity in which that celebrity positively supports the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service;
- *a celebrity endorsement (full)*: a statement made by a celebrity (being an individual, organisation or project of repute) in which that celebrity positively supports the abilities of the marketer's company, product or service.

Each time, when using the short definitions, the third party is not further refined. When using full definitions however, it would be wise to also refine the definition of the specific third party. We suggest to at least define the relationship the third party has to the two principals of the communications message.

In the above examples we suggest:

- *customer*: an existing or former customer of a marketer's company
- *celebrity*: an individual, organisation or project of repute

As mentioned above, these definitions are preliminary suggestions for which empirical research is necessary to determine their usability and accuracy. At least by using the specific third party as a qualifier to the given term is consistent with the way the terms are being narrowed in literature, and this syntax highlights the third party being the main concept of investigation. This said, there are probably going to be many instances in published research where papers do not specify any third party or mention *third party* as a qualifier. Our suggestion would be to interpret all unqualified terms as being qualified by the generic construct *third party*. In this way the unqualified term *reference* would be short for *third party reference*, and would hence not be equivalent to customer reference. Doing otherwise would increase inconsistency.

Specifying the medium

Finally, we can now have a closer look at the communications message. Again we suggest using the same syntax for both sides of the terminology framework – which is consistent with literature i.e.

a [3rd party] [term] [medium]

Using this syntax it is possible to codify various practices:

a [third party]	[term]	[medium]
a customer	reference	list
a customer	testimonial	leaflet
a celebrity	endorsement	advertisement

Using the preliminary definitions mentioned above, these examples could be defined (in short) as:

- *a customer reference list (short)*: a list containing one or more customer references;
- *a customer reference story*: a story containing one or more customer references;
- *a customer testimonial leaflet (short)*: a leaflet containing one or more customer testimonials;
- *a celebrity endorsement advertisement (short)*: an advertisement containing one or more celebrity endorsements.

The above definitions are almost evident and they all follow the same construct '*containing one or more*'. The full definitions are a little bit more complicated, since the message is to be interpreted differently between the term *reference* and the other nouns. For all phrases with the term *reference*, the specific definition is generated by replacing *message* in the generic definition with the specific medium. For phrases associated with the terms *testimonial*, *endorsement* and *recommendation*, we also have to add the fact that the marketer is producing the message that contains the statement. So for example

- *a customer reference list (full)*: a list produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience, that mentions one or more existing customers of the marketer’s company;
- *a customer testimonial leaflet (full)*: a leaflet produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience, containing a statement made by an existing customer of a marketer’s company, in which that customer testifies the abilities of the marketer’s company, product or service, whether that be positive, negative or neutral;
- *a celebrity endorsement advertisement (full)*: an advertisement produced by a marketer and made available to a target audience, containing a statement made by a celebrity (being an individual, organisation or project that has obtained a certain renown within the sector of the marketer’s target audience), in which that celebrity positively supports the abilities of the marketer’s company, product or service;

Of course, there are in principle no limits to the number of qualifiers that can be used to narrow the basic meaning of a term, e.g. “in a certain medium” or “by a certain sender”. The following syntax uses the same basic construct from above, to further narrow and refine the term:

[adjective] [3rd party] [term] [medium] in/on [medium]

For example:

- *doubtful business partner endorsement entries on social networking media (short)*: doubtful entries on social networking media containing statements of a business partner that positively supports the abilities of the marketer’s company, product or service

This only illustrates that the terminology framework is not stringent in its use, but can evolve with the discovery of many new ways to use third parties in marketing communications.

Closing the gap between referencing and endorsement

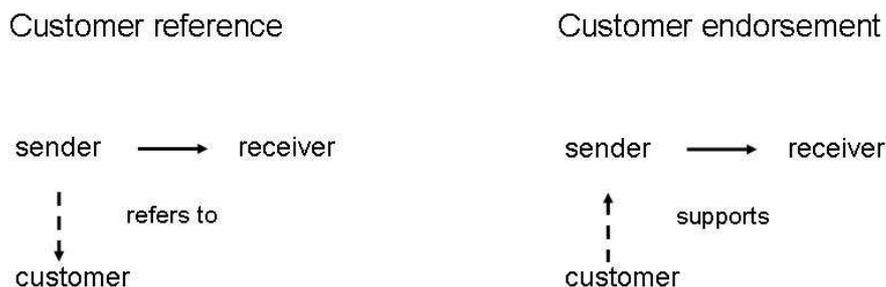
As mentioned earlier in this article, “customer referencing” and “endorsement” are considered as distinct fields of research, the former associated with business-to-business communication and the latter business to consumer (Canning and West, 2006). Using the terminology framework, it becomes clear how those fields of research interrelate.

Customer reference
used by the business marketer
mentioning a customer

Customer endorsement
action by the customer
supporting the business marketer

The principle distinction between both fields is the difference of the “active party”, i.e. the sender of the message is the active party in the customer reference, whereas the customer is the active party in the customer endorsement. In a triadic diagram, this would appear as in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Who does what? Customer reference vs. customer endorsement



Customer referencing practices in B2B communications could include

- a sales person making mention of customers that his/her company has dealt with whilst engaging in dialogue with a target client
- a marketing organisation compiling, supplying and/or publishing lists of customers that the company has dealt with
- a marketing organisation featuring the logo of a customer company on its website, or in print or TV advertisement.

Whilst the latter is a customer reference it is also a form of endorsement because the customer allows its own organisational/brand identity to be associated with the supplier – use of the customer’s name or logo without permission would run the risk of legal action.

Communications material used by the marketer can contain messages and information attributed to a customer, with this information typically containing positive evaluations of the marketers problem-solving abilities and the length, detail and content of such *testimonials* varying. The testimonial might be a brief statement attributed to a customer, a detailed account of a problem addressed by the marketer or an explanation of the marketer’s contribution to the customer’s business activities. Whatever the content and format of the testimonial, by being associated with the information contained in the testimonial (from a statement being attributed to a customer company, to a representative of that company featuring in the marketer’s video fragment) the customer is endorsing the business marketer.

Proposed research

The empirical study to follow from this working paper will be an inventory of potential third party categories and a measurement of the intensity of their actual use in B2B messages – and to some extent the variation of that parameter across Europe. From that point onwards, we want to investigate the various kinds of intentions for using various kinds of third parties in those messages. We believe there are different reasons for bringing in different kinds of third parties, and the inventory of those reasons will provide valuable guidelines for practitioners to choose the right third parties for the right purposes.

Some communications messages in which a third party (customer) feature include a customer endorsement and others do not. What is unclear and which needs further research, is the target audience's perception of the endorsement aspect of a communications message and the impact on future sales.

Conclusion

This paper has examined common practices in B2B marketing communication, in which a third party (customer) features in messages. We acknowledged that whilst these practices are important, clarity regarding the meanings attributed to them and the terms used to identify them are lacking. In order to provide greater clarity, the paper scrutinised the origins of the terms with regards meaning and derivatives and compared these with definitions and explanations provided in a business and also marketing context. From this scrutiny, we have developed a terminology framework which requires verification and which can be employed as a basis to measure the use and effect of various practices.

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Table 1 List of definitions

	Oxford English Dictionary	Websters Online Dictionary	Online Etymological Dictionary
Refer (v)	To mention or allude to. To direct the attention of (someone). To pass (a person or matter) to (a higher body) for a decision. Trace or attribute (something) to (a cause or source)	To make reference to. To be about; To have to do with; to send or direct for treatment, information, or a decision. To seek information from	To trace back, attribute, assign. From Latin <i>referre</i> to relate, refer, literally "to carry back", from <i>re-</i> "back" + <i>ferre</i> "carry". Meaning "to commit to some authority for a decision" from 1456; Sense of "to direct (someone) to a book, etc" from 1601.
Referral (n)	The act of referring someone or something for consultation or review, especially directing of patient by GP to a specialist	A recommendation to consult the (professional) person referred to	The act of referring an individual to a specialist
Reference (n)	The act of referring to something. A mention of a citation of a source of information in a book or article. A letter from a previous employer testifying to someone's ability or reliability, used when applying for a job.	A remark that calls attention to someone or something. A short note acknowledging a source of information or quoting a passage. A formal recommendation by a former employer to a potential future employer describing a person's qualifications and dependability.	The acting of referring, from 1589. Testimonial from 1895.
Testify (v)	To give evidence as witness in law court. To serve as evidence or proof.	To give evidence in law court. To provide evidence for.	To serve as evidence of, from 1377 From Latin L. <i>testificari</i> "bear witness."
Testimonial (n)	A formal statement testifying to someone's character and qualifications. A public tribute to someone and their achievements	Something: that serves as evidence; Given or done as an expression of esteem. That recommends (or expresses commendation).	Of or pertaining to testimony, from 1422. Writing testifying to one's character or qualifications, from 1571. Gift presented as expression of appreciation from 1838.
Testimony (n)	Formal statement, especially one given in a court of law. Evidence or proof of something	Solemn statement made under oath. An assertion offering first hand authentication of a fact. Something that serves as evidence.	Evidence, statement of witness from 1432.
Endorse (v)	To declare one's public approval of. To sign (a cheque or bill of exchange) on the back to specify another as the payee or to accept responsibility for paying it.	To be behind; approve of. To give support or one's blessing to. To guarantee as meeting a certain standard;	From old French <i>endosser</i> , "to put on back," from <i>en-</i> "put on" + <i>dos</i> "back." From Latin. <i>dossum</i> , of <i>dorsum</i> . Assimilated in form to modern Latin <i>indorsare</i> . Sense of "confirm, approve" (by signing on the back) from 1847.
Endorsement (n)	An act or the action of endorsing	A promotional statement (as found on the dust jackets of books). A speech seconding a motion.	

		Formal and explicit approval. A signature that endorses something. The act of endorsing.	
Recommend (v)	To put forward with approval as being suitable for a purpose or role. To advise as a course of action	To push for something. To express a good opinion of	1377, to praise, present as worthy. From modern Latin <i>recommendare</i> to commit thoroughly (1216). From Latin <i>re-</i> , intensive prefix, + <i>commendare</i> "commit to one's care, commend"
Recommendation (n)		Something (as a course of action) that is recommended	