

THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL  
AS PERCEIVED BY THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
PROFESSIONAL AND THE CORPORATE  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The term "consumerism" is used to identify the widespread discontent consumers have with many products and services (Berry, Hensel, and Burke, 1976; Aaker and Day, 1978). Consumerism, as we know it today, encompasses activities of government, business, independent organizations, and concerned consumers to protect and enhance the rights of consumers (Aaker and Day, 1978). Identified areas of growing consumer discontent include: lack of information, advertising, health and safety issues, repairs, servicing, pricing, and product quality (Berry, Hensell, and Burke, 1976; Dameron, 1976).

The consumer affairs movement of today enjoyed widespread support from the general public ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977; St. Marie, 1978). "Consumerism at the Crossroads", a survey by Lou Harris and Associates for Sentry Insurance (1977) identified attitudes and opinions of consumers about the consumer movement. The survey indicated that the public supported a series of new policies. Several of these directly impact the consumer movement as it becomes more established in government and business:

Seventy-two percent of the public support a proposal to hold a major convention every four or five years at which government, business and consumer representatives would work out long-term policies in the consumer field.

By a 65 to 16 percent margin the public feels that all companies should be required to have a public or consumer representative on the board of directors.



By 77 to 8 percent a majority of the public believe that all large companies should be required to employ a senior officer with responsibility for consumer affairs ("Consumerism at the Crossroads", 1977, p. iv).

This rise in consumer consciousness and indications the movement will continue to gain strength has prompted many companies to establish consumer affairs departments and hire consumer affairs professionals ("Corporate Clout for Consumers", 1977). A Business Week survey indicated that more and more companies were listening to their customers with the understanding that listening serves both the corporate and consumer interest ("Corporate Clout for Consumers", 1977).

Many companies, however, resist changing their corporate structure to meet consumer needs. Critics of the consumer movement, many of whom include top management, have said that consumerism is unnecessary because consumers can most effectively voice their discontent with a product by not buying it ("Corporate Clout for Consumers", 1977). Top management may also have resisted change because they felt the leadership of the consumer movement was out of touch with consumers ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977). The Harris poll found, however, that top managers were themselves out of touch with consumers. Furthermore, a majority of business managers most closely involved with both the consumer movement and the general public believed consumer leaders usually reflect consumers' feelings ("Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977).

The basic problem is that no one has yet clarified the areas in which the goals of the corporation, the employees, and the consumer are congruent, partly congruent and most incongruent (Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974, p. 18).

In an attempt to define consumer affairs departments and consumer affairs professionals, Hise, Gillet and Kelly (1978) found

that many of the consumer affairs departments were struggling for identity and were only beginning to influence corporate philosophies, policies and practices. These researchers found that most consumer affairs departments had two primary responsibilities: development and handling of customer complaints and inquiries; and developing and disseminating consumer education materials. They discovered that departments with a broader scope (monitoring company advertising, providing input for product design, developing warranties, etc.) were backed by a management philosophy that was more responsive to consumer needs. In such firms, consumer affairs departments appeared to play a "change-agent" role (Hise, Gillet and Kelly, 1978). St. Marie (1977) asserts:

The consumer affairs field, whether in government or business, needs definition. It needs a mission statement. . . . The consumer affairs professional needs to understand how to function as a change agent (p. 18).

Newly established departments of consumer affairs have been faced with day-to-day operational problems as well as difficulties of fitting into a previously established organizational structure (Blum, Stewart and Wheatley, 1974). Although the consumer affairs area is new, several studies have investigated the role of the consumer affairs professional within the corporate structure (Blum, Stewart and Wheatley, 1974; Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, 1978; McKittrick, 1977). Many articles cite the need of top management to be aware of the support the consumer affairs position ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977; "Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977; "The Consumer Confronts the Businessman," 1977). None of these studies, however, investigate the perception of the consumer affairs professional as compared to the perception of the corporate executive officers in determining

the roles of the consumer affairs professional. Hise, Gillett and Kelly (1978) state that some of the concerns and frustrations of the consumer affairs professionals may represent top management's failure to fully understand and support the consumer affairs mission (p. 26).

### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze perceptions of the role of consumer affairs positions by those professionals who fill them and by those who manage them. By comparing the two views, it was anticipated that the role of both consumer affairs departments within the corporate structure and consumer affairs positions in those departments could be more clearly defined. This study involved an analysis of perceived input to specific job functions, job limitations and job satisfactions by selected consumer affairs professionals and their corporate executive officers. Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the particular job functions perceived to have the most input on corporate decisions by the consumer affairs professionals and by the corporate executive officers.
2. To determine the particular job functions perceived to have the least input on corporate decisions as rated by consumer affairs professionals and by corporate executive officers.
3. To determine the specific job factors deemed to be most limiting in the consumer affairs position as perceived by the persons holding those positions and by the corporate executive officers.
4. To determine the specific job factors deemed to be least limiting in the consumer affairs position as perceived by the persons holding those positions and by the corporate executive officers.

5. To compare ratings of each statement of job satisfactions in the consumer affairs position as perceived by persons in those positions and corporate executive officers.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated in relation to this study:

Hypothesis I: For each item characterized as a job function of the consumer affairs professional, there will be no significant difference in proportions of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each item as giving the most input into corporate decision-making.

Hypothesis II: For each item characterized as a job function of the consumer affairs professional, there will be no significant difference in proportions of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each item as giving the least input into corporate decision-making.

Hypothesis III: For each item characterized as a limiting factor of the consumer affairs position, there will be no significant differences between the proportion of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each factor as most limiting.

Hypothesis IV: For each item characterized as a limiting factor of the consumer affairs position, there will be no significant differences between the proportion of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each factor as least limiting.

Hypothesis V: There will be no significant difference in the rating of each item related to job satisfactions as perceived by CAPs and CEOs.

### Assumptions

In preparation of this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. To be effective, the consumer affairs professional and the consumer affairs department must have the support of top corporate management.
2. The role of the consumer affairs professional is relatively new to the corporate hierarchy and needs clarification and definition.

3. That professionals and managers were honest in presenting their perceptions.

#### Limitations

1. There was, at the time of the study, only one professional organization with members defined as consumer affairs professionals.
2. Consumer affairs professionals chosen for this study were regular members of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals and were employed in business at the time of the study. Other consumer affairs professionals were not contacted.
3. In each case, the consumer affairs professional was asked to identify the manager to whom s/he reported. The titles and position of these managers varied within the corporate structure.

#### Definitions

In order that accurate understanding and interpretations of the study might be assured, it was necessary to define the following terms:

1. Consumer Affairs Professional (CAP) - That person who is performing duties (other than routine or clerical duties) that not only improves the firm's communications and relations with the consumer but also makes the company more responsive to the needs and grievances of the consumer (Burton, 1976, p. 73).
2. Corporate Executive Officer (CEO) - That person in the firm with the final decision-making power for the consumer affairs position and the consumer affairs department.
3. Job - A set of work activities, the completion of which serves to increase or maintain the organization's effectiveness (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1976).

- a. Job function input - The degree of input which the CAP perceives s/he contributes to the corporate decision-making process.
- b. Job limitations - Those sources of frustrations which causes the CAP stress and subsequent coping behaviors and limits the job performance (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1976).
- c. Job satisfactions - The CAP's responses to or feelings about the aspects of the consumer affairs position (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1976).

These definitions were taken from publications in the management and consumer affairs areas following an extensive review of current literature. Chapter II will give further background information concerning the consumer movement and the development of the consumer affairs profession in business and industry.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

England's Adam Smith, promoted the idea in the late 1700's of an economy which, left to its own designs, would be a balanced market system meeting the needs of those it served. He felt there were two factors which would balance the marketplace: self-interest and competition. Self-interest would be the driving force which force men to become producers, and competition would balance the various self-interests so that the consumers' needs were met. Indeed, from self-interest and greed would eventually come a beneficial marketplace in which the consumer was king (Heilbroner, 1972).

Later, in the mid-1800's, Marx proposed, after careful examination of the capitalistic system, that the system was destined to destroy itself. Capitalism was built on a system of a working class gaining a subsistence level of living and a capitalistic class of landowners, who were owners and lived well, but were not producers. The upper-class, then, was gleaning a living from the lower classes with no basis of support to their economy. His proposition was that the working class would eventually rise, a product of the system, and destroy the system. It was only through the intervention of a government or a third power that the working classes would be kept

in balance and provided for, in the society as a whole (Heilbroner, 1972).

Keynes (Fusfeld, 1966) in 1936, transformed the whole direction and emphasis of modern economics by his book, The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money which introduced new language and a new set of theories. Included were the now common terms of: "propensity to consume, inducement to invest, the marginal efficiency of capital, liquidity preference and the multiplier" (Fusfeld, 1966, p. 105). While presenting very different processes for capitalism than Marx, Keynes proposed essentially the same future for the system--its survival through the force of a third party, i.e., the government.

Keynesian economics reached its peak in the 1950's and 1960's in the United States. Recent years have seen growing concern about government intervention in the economic structure. In a recent article, Minard (1980), refers to Hayek's term of "constructionism" where government intervenes in the market system and the economy causing total chaos. Hayek (Minard, 1980) promoted the thought that, left alone, the market system and producers would meet the needs of consumers. Economy, inflation, employment, and money supplies would respond to the demands (Minard, 1980).

Heilbroner (1972) suggests, however, that once the motions are set for intervention into the economic processes they will continue.

The natural outcome of the social struggle was thwarted, channeled, encouraged, and aimed at every turning--one reason, for example, that Marx's inexorable predictions never quite materialized was that we interceded in the game wherever it appeared it might otherwise proceed to a final checkmate. We curbed monopolies, we encouraged labor unions, we regulated competition, we intervened in the business cycle (p. 314).



Hayek (Minard, 1980) proposes that the eventual "tampering" of government in the economy will cause the economy to crumble from the false supports upon which it has been built. With this breakdown of the false economy, Hayek suggests that society will revert to rationing of resources. Only goods needed will be produced and supplied and society will revert to the *laisse faire* system of the English economist, Adam Smith (Minard, 1980). Hendon (1975) carries this "rationing" approach a step further by saying:

Marx and other economic historians felt that certain events had to happen. Is the U.S. current consumerism movement something that had to happen? Would Marx have foreseen it? . . .In general, as a nation experiences economic growth, consumerism issues grow more sophisticated and violent. . .As doomsday approaches, violence will increase as all humans revert to caveman behavior and riot for food, clothing and shelter (pp. 23-24).

The questions which face us in the future are not the purely economic ones of whether corporations will naturally grow larger or whether we will suffer from inflation or unemployment, but the moral ones of whether we will allow inflation or unemployment to develop unchecked (Heilbroner, 1972, p. 314).

Cravens and Hills (1970) asserted that "consumerism is an inevitable response to the increasingly complex and impersonal society of our times" and stated that consumerism and the movement will "bring pressure on business firms as well as government to correct business conduct thought unethical" (p. 21). These authors view the economic evolution in our society as moving into a new level of maturity from a "preoccupation with mass needs and wants toward a reassessment of social goals and the means necessary to achieve them" (p. 23).

## The Changing Consumer and Marketplace

A review of recent events gives an indication of the changing values of society, and new demands and attitudes of consumers. We have recently experienced:

- years of major political assassinations;
- an unpopular and very unsuccessful war;
- racial turmoil;
- campus upset;
- the worst inflation in a generation;
- an energy shortfall;
- a deep recession--marked by the worst decline in real output in forty years (Dennis, 1975, p. 155).

In addition to this list of societal factors affecting consumers and their financial condition, consumers have become more aware of the overall picture (Day and Aaker, 1970).

American consumers today are better educated, more affluent, more concerned, more articulate and more powerful than ever before. . . .They want more value, better service, greater product integrity. What's more they want clearly to perceive that these demands are being filled (Bernstein, 1977, p. 26).

The present era of consumer unrest is not unique in history. It follows two previous periods of consumer unrest, in the early 1900's and the 1930's. In each of these periods, consumer boycotts erupted in response to rising food prices, new consumer organizations appeared, and journalistic exposes of the dangers of widely used products created a rising demand for new consumer protection legislation. The common features of the three periods provide a new perspective on the consumer movement of the 1960's (Herrman, 1970, p. 55).

Buskirk and Rothe (1970) propose two opposing theories about the role of the consumer in the marketplace of a free enterprise system:

One theory suggests that the consumer is 'king.' It is his choice in the market which decides success or failure of producers. . . .This concept is referred to as 'consumer sovereignty.'

A completely opposite approach suggests that the consumer is a pawn in the entire process. The brilliance of Madi-

son Avenue . . . has been used to deceive the consumer to the extent that he is incapable of intelligent selection . . . consequently, the consumer is not playing a decisive role in the process (p. 62).

Dennis (1975) suggested that consumers "don't want to be manipulated", were more sensitive to today's problems, and were willing to look toward solutions in the future (p. 156). He said that consumers today were more anticipatory than reactive, and wanted to be prepared. Consumers today have had input into current legislation and have understood the central role that business played in the American society. This increased understanding and these changing attitudes, however, have placed new demands upon business (Herrman, 1970; Cravens and Hills, 1970).

The need is clear for improved communication and information feedback among all parties involved in the consumerism movement. Debate has been based far too often on superficial response and emotion rather than on an objective assessment resulting from carefully formulated and executed research (Cravens and Hills, 1970, p. 28).

Consumers need and want a voice in the decisions which affect their buying practices. As we have seen in other periods of high consumerism activity, communication gaps were a major factor in consumer dissatisfaction. Divita (1978) claimed that "consumer acceptance cannot be associated with consumer satisfactions. Rather, acceptance may be the forced selection of one of a number of less-than-satisfying alternatives" (p. 75). Yet, business has always operated with the assumption that consumer satisfaction was a principle determinant of sales.

Critics of the consumer movement have sometimes said that consumerism is unnecessary because consumers can most effectively voice their discontent with a product by not buying it ("Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977, p. 81).

Often management's response to changes brought about by consumerism has proved less than adequate. For all of its effort to earn customer satisfaction, business was still under fire by consumerists and government alike. Businesses' mechanism for understanding and responding to consumers' needs was not as effective as consumers and business would have liked (Divita, 1978).

Consumers wanted to know what they were buying. They wanted to know the expected performance of the product, its use or limitations. They wanted a quality product which would perform properly for the lifetime of the product (Divita, 1978).

The general public has had difficulty communicating with business. Their complaints and inquiries have gone unanswered or were not answered to the consumers' satisfaction. This process has led to increased alienation and frustration with business. "The public is skeptical that neither the regulators of business active by itself can satisfy consumer demands" ("Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977).

The first response of business to the consumer movement was skepticism and condemnation; increasingly, however, business is acknowledging this countervailing power. Not only must business respond, but business must communicate this response to the appropriate parties (Cravens and Hill, 1970, p. 28).

As consumer leaders gained strength in the Sixties, many in the business community assumed that these outspoken people were simply troublemakers who were not representative of consumers in general and who were simply stirring up a contented populace (McNamara, 1976, p. 3).

Past Giant Food Vice President-Consumer Affairs Esther Peterson flatly stated her belief that consumer activists don't represent current opinions of consumers (Love, 1975c). Virginia Citizens Consumer Council president Judy Kory agreed that activists must lead average

consumers.

What we are representing is consumers' rights that they may not even know they have, but we know they ought to have. We do represent opinions of a segment of aware consumers. And that segment is growing (Love, 1975c, p. 26).

Although progress seems to have been made in this area, a 1976 Conference Board study indicated that corporate executive officers considered the American public's mistrust of business to be the most serious problem that faced their firm (Berry, Hensel, and Burke, 1976). It has become evident that the attitude of a more aware public is not far behind the attitudes advanced by consumer activists.

In conclusion, it seems clear that consumer affairs directors know and are trying to tell management that consumers will be saying in a few years what consumer activists are saying today (Love, 1975c, p. 26).

So in reality, consumer activists have not exclusively represented the average shopper. However, findings indicated that the activists and the average shopper were not as divergent as possibly believed by business and industry (McNamara, 1976). Many business persons failed to see that the leaders did indeed speak for millions of consumers who were "frustrated by products that did not work, advertisements that misled, and by management that would not listen" (McNamara, 1976, p. 3). It was fair to say that consumer affairs directors knew--and were trying to tell management--that what consumer activists were saying to them might be an insight into the future (Love, 1975c).

In order to obtain the satisfaction levels demanded, consumers had to rely on voluntary cooperation of business and industry or resort to increased government regulation (Divita, 1978). Business often reacted with the feeling that government was protecting consumers at the expense of everyone ("Chains and Consumerism: New Direc-

tions Necessary?", 1977). One concern with increased consumer legislation was that all too often the rules have become inflexible, costly and burdensome. Consumers, as well as business people, have experienced failures as well as successes with government regulation. Consumers have learned that

The average gestation period of consumer legislation in Congress is six years, and once passed the act does not always bring the benefits expected (McNamara, 1976, p. 5).

There were many costs associated with increased government regulation. Consumer leaders were very aware of these increased costs to business and the fact that these costs were passed on to the consumers. Dennis (1975) listed what he termed as "significantly increased costs in both time and dollars for the institution":

The hardware and operational expenses of tooling up and re-tooling; the legal costs of reviewing these changes, the internal time and energy of management review; of rewriting policies and procedures; of communicating those procedures; of re-educating line and staff to new policies and philosophies; and finally, the costs of recalcitrance or a tarnished image if the public perceives the industry as not being in compliance (p. 159).

Ms. McNamara, in a speech before the Financial Executives Division National Conference in 1976, suggested that

We have found that when industry is determined to overcome a consumer problem, the solution is usually cheaper, faster, and more effective than legislative relief (p. 4).

#### The Role of Business and Top Management

Divita (1978) perceives business and management as having an "inability to respond to consumers' changing standards of company performance" (p. 75). There was a tendency for business executives to see the consumer movement as a threat. Instead of opening lines

of communication between activists, government leaders, and other consumer leaders, business was fearful of those consumer demands. "Most businessmen believe that social responsibility is something that a company can only afford when it is making a reasonable profit" ("The Consumer Confronts The Businessman", 1977, p. 81).

More and more the "profit motive" attitude has not been accepted in the changing attitudes about business and its responsibility toward the consumer. According to a recent survey, "Consumer at the Crossroads", there was public support of several policies:

. . . By 66 to 25 percent the public believe that it would be helpful if every community had a complaints bureau where complaints against manufacturers, dealers and salesmen could be dealt with.

. . . By 79 to 11 percent the public believe that there should be a new independent testing center for evaluating the safety of potentially dangerous products, run by either the Federal government or consumer activists, rather than by business.

. . . 92 percent of the public believe that consumer affairs should be a compulsory subject in all high schools.

. . . By 77 to 8 percent a majority of the public believe that all large companies should be required to employ a senior officer with responsibility for consumer affairs ("Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977, p. 83).

The business community has been in trouble with the American people on the consumerism issue. Business has had to prepare for new attacks by both public and elected officials and this trend will not change in the future if there is not a change in attitude toward consumers ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977).

The first and much needed step is a change in the attitudes and perceptions of senior management, based on better information about consumer needs, consumer attitudes and consumer expectations ("The Consumer Confronts The Businessman", 1977, p. 83).

That corporations--the whole business system, in fact--are undergoing a barrage of howitzers can pass without comment. The pollsters have been proving it for years, . . . Ralph Nader wrote "Unsafe At Any Speed" and, with a little help from General Motors, gave birth to the consumerism movement, which begat the ecological movement, which begat a bee in the bonnet of Congress to come in and lend management a hand (Langley, 1978, p. 28).

Top management has been the key to the degree of openness with which a corporation deals with the consumer.

Silence is an indication that the businessman is hiding something. For the sake of public acceptance, management must learn to live with the world under new rules (Rauch, 1976, p. 15).

Consumers are demanding information and expecting to have input into the corporate effort.

In order to communicate with the consumer, there must have been a sincere and aggressive commitment by top management, and economic investment, and time. There must have been an understanding of how the organization functions on both a formal and informal basis (Berry, Hensel, and Burke, 1976). Many top executives have begun to view the consumer affairs position as the vital communications link between business and consumers ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977; Cravens and Hills, 1970).

### The Developing Role of the Consumer

#### Affairs Professional

The attitude of top management has had tremendous impact upon the public's perception of business. As a utility manager put it

There is no question as to whether or not a utility will have relations with its customers--it must. The manager, however, can determine whether that relationship will be



good, peaceful and constructive; or stormy and disruptive. This is a very real and valid challenge (Langworthy, 1975, p. 45).

Other top executives saw the challenge in a less positive light.

We're in business, and everything we do is to make profit. I'm not rushing out to hire a director of consumer affairs because, frankly, I'm not convinced that it would accomplish anything . . . Talking to consumer representatives would just be wasting their time and ours ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977, p. 148).

Although the rise of consumerism has prompted many firms to form consumer affairs departments, many such moves were regarded as public relations ploys ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977). Consumer affairs departments were a part of the corporate structure in name and on paper only. It is possible the consumer affairs professionals, themselves, may have also be a factor contributing to the lack of integration into the total corporate picture. Fitzgerald suggests that "because there are few CAPs specifically training for their profession . . . persons from various disciplines are often hired to fulfill the CAP function" (1979, p. 49).

In a lot of companies, customer service management is little more than a white-collar janitorial job that calls for clean-up somebody else's mess. . . .That's no way to run a business (Blanding, 1978, p. 98).

Good consumer affairs departments have been built over time and from a combination of approaches. When asked if consumers are too demanding, Chrysler's Hazelroth said, "I think people expect quality. They want full value for the dollar--so do you and I. But, on the whole, they're pretty reasonable" (Skolnik, 1975, p. 22). The Armstrong Corporation has felt that complaint letters "contain a pile of information" and has seen the complaints function of the business as an opportunity rather than a problem (Skolnik, 1975).

When Joseph B. Danzansky, president of Giant Food, Inc., hired Peterson (President Johnson's special assistant for consumer affairs), "his peers wondered if he'd "flipped" ("Joseph B. Danzansky", 1974). However, he said, "We had decided that consumerism was here to stay, and its premises were valid. We had decided to go the whole way . . ." ("Joseph B. Danzansky", 1974, p. 53). Giant Food has not been damaged by Danzansky's decision. In fact, they have enjoyed tremendous returns in the past few years. Much of this success might be a reflection of Danzansky's attitude toward consumers:

. . . if we aren't interested in the consumers, then, damn it, we shouldn't be in the retail business trying to sell consumers. If we are interested, we ought to hear what they have to say. And if what they say is right, we should do something about it . . . I don't consider myself a professional manager. I consider myself a professional human being ("Joseph B. Danzansky", 1974, p. 60).

The development of consumer affairs departments has taken time, effort, and commitment. In a recent survey of business asking why they were setting up consumer affairs departments, the word most frequently replied was "coordination" (Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974). Potentially, persons in the consumer affairs departments have, or should have been, interacting with departments concerned with product design, packaging, quality control, dealer relations, pricing, legal services, warranty development, delivery, advertising, marketing research, public relations, credit, service and others. It is critical that the department heads of existing departments have not felt threatened and yet consumer affairs department heads have had access to other areas when necessary (Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974).

In order to accomplish an expanded role within the corporation, St. Marie (1977) suggests five areas of potential for the profession, one of which is to recognize that "decisions and changes are hardly ever accomplished through orders issued from the top" (p. 19). Burris, consumer affairs director, Wegmans Food Markets (Rochester, N.Y.), told Supermarketing, "It's important to have access to the point where decisions are made, and this may be outside committees" (Love, 1975b, p. 4). Whether the working relationships are inside or outside the corporate structure, top management backing has proven to be essential to the performance of the consumer affairs job. Several consumer affairs directors have expressed dissatisfaction with their lack of authority and access to necessary information:

I am valued by ten percent of top management and the rest look on my activities as a nuisance.

We're asked to handle problems, but we're not involved in the decision-making. It's a joke.

I'm not contributing any input into decision-making and in order to have more than just token position there should be input from consumer affairs (Love, 1975b, p. 4).

Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, (1978) in an attempt to isolate the frustrations of the consumer affairs department, mailed questionnaires to a broad spectrum of consumer affairs professionals. They found major frustrations to be concerned with: cooperation with other departments within the firm; relations with outside groups; getting a fair share of the company's resources; low status; and lack of authority. These researchers felt that in view of their findings that they could not conclude that consumer affairs departments, and their top people, have yet achieved the degree of impact on their firms' operations that indicated a deep underlying commitment to

consumers (Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, 1978). Top on their list of recommendations was that:

Top management needs to reaffirm its commitment to the consumer affairs effort by establishing a supportive climate in the firm for consumer affairs executives and staff. This supportive climate needs to be strongly expressed throughout the organization (Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, 1978, p. 25).

Ms. Judge, consumer affairs consultant, listed several steps she feels should be taken in order to pave the way for a new consumer affairs job. Many of these steps would eliminate dissatisfactions expressed by many consumer affairs professionals. These steps include:

1. Determining the position of the consumer affairs director within the company.
2. Specifying goals and objectives for the post.
3. Establishing a budget.
4. Creating a written job description.
5. Setting up a planned orientation program.
6. Conducting employment interviews with specific criteria in mind (Love, 1976d, p. 43).

Following these six steps would create a direction for both management and the new consumer affairs professional coming on board. As one consumer affairs director said, "Management feels I should be aware of everything going on so I can do my work better" (Love, 1975a, p. 4).

Hise, Gillet and Kelly (1978) upon the completion of their study listed several other recommendations which they felt were necessary in establishing and maintaining an effective consumer affairs department:

1. Top management needs to reaffirm its commitment to the consumer affairs effort by establishing a supportive climate in the firm. . . needs to be strongly expressed throughout the organization.

2. A formal mechanism needs to be instituted to ensure coordination and cooperation between consumer affairs and other areas of the firms.
3. Consumer affairs budgets should be critically reviewed in terms of an expanded role for consumer affairs.
4. Much of the handling of the consumer complaints and inquiries and developing educational materials should be delegated to subordinates so that the top consumer affairs individual has more time for such significant internal areas as product safety, quality control, product design, and packaging and labeling, as well as important external relationships with consumer groups, customer and legislative bodies.
5. Full-time directors are required.
6. The top consumer affairs person should report directly to the company's chief executive officer.
7. Individuals appointed to direct the consumer affairs department should, if possible, have a consumer affairs background (p. 25).

#### Summary

As indicated by this review of literature, the consumer affairs position has just recently come into its own as an area for research and study. Only in the past four or five years have researchers begun to determine the position of the consumer affairs professional and the position of the consumer affairs department within the corporate structure. There is no indication, following an extensive INFORM and ERIC computer search, that the interactions of these personnel and positions with other management have been investigated.

Adam Smith promoted a *laissez faire* economic structure in which the needs of the consumer were to be met through fair and perfect competition. In this economy, Smith viewed the consumer as king (Heilbroner, 1972). Others, including Marx and Keynes, promoted

the ideas that capitalism as an economic structure could only survive through the intervention of a third party such as a government (Fusfeld, 1966; Heilbroner, 1972). Government intervention into the economic processes has come under criticism recently and persons such as Heyek have proposed that the "tampering" of the government in the economy will cause it to crumble from the false supports from which it is built (Minard, 1980).

Many authors pointed to the strength of the modern consumer in a changing marketplace (Dennis, 1975; Divita, 1978). The general public, i.e., the average consumer, has increased in the demands made on business and industry. Activists have proven not to be as far removed from the general public in their demands as business would have liked to believe (McNamara, 1976; Love, 1975c). Business, in the past, has not reacted quickly and positively to the new demands placed upon them (Divita, 1978). Consumers have had to resort to increased government legislation which has not proven to be as effective in solving consumer problems as hoped (McNamara, 1976; Dennis, 1975).

Consumer studies have shown the public has a basic mistrust of business ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977; "Consumerism At The Crossroads", 1977). Business can no longer view consumer relations and consumer communications as a social responsibility included as an extra when profits are high. The "profit motive" is under fire from consumers ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977). Top management and business will need to view the consumer affairs position as a vital communication link between business and consumers ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977; St. Marie, 1978).

The commitment and attitude of top management is vital to the

development and operation of an effective consumer affairs department (Berry, Hensel and Burke, 1976). Some consumer affairs departments are only window dressing or public relations efforts. Other departments play a "catch-up" game trying to correct mistakes made in other areas of the corporation ("Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977; Blanding, 1978). More effective consumer affairs departments have been established with commitment and dedication to serving the needs of the consumer (Skolnik, 1975).

Several attempts have been made to determine the right mix of resources to establish a comprehensive and effective consumer affairs department (Hise, Gillet and Kelly, 1978; Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974; Love, 1975c). The author is not aware of any studies which specifically studied the perceptions of the role of the consumer affairs professional and the consumer affairs department by the person filling that position and the corporate executive officer. Each of the previous studies have laid groundwork about the structure of the department, duties of the position and department, reporting procedures of the position and the department (Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974). This study has attempted to determine the effectiveness of the consumer affairs position and the consumer affairs department by examining the perceptions of those persons in the positions and departments and their corporate executive officers. Chapter III discusses the research design and procedures used in the study.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Type of Research

This study was undertaken in order to gain insights into the variables of job input, job limitations and job satisfactions of the consumer affairs professional in business. In order to fully assess these variables, information was gathered from persons filling positions as consumer affairs professionals in corporations and corporate executive officers who supervise their work. The nature of the data to be collected suggested the survey research technique was most appropriate. Johnson (1959) suggests the use of the survey method of research to detect associations between factors in a population and finds the survey method most suitable to examine situations in detail.

#### Selection of the Population and Sample

The population upon which this study was based consisted of all the consumer affairs professionals employed in business and industry in the United States who are members of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP) and their corporate executive officers. There were an estimated 434 consumer affairs professionals employed in managerial capacities and in SOCAP at the time of the study. The sample included every consumer affairs professional listed in the SOCAP mem-



bership list as of June, 1979. Full members of this existing organization with managerial responsibilities, as determined by their job titles, were deemed to meet the requirements of a consumer affairs professional for the purposes of this study. A purpose of membership in SOCAP as defined by the bylaws (SOCAP, 1978a) of the organization is to "define and advance the consumer affairs profession" (p. 14). Members awarded full standing as a consumer affairs professional must be employed in the business world with job responsibilities in the areas of consumer affairs. These professionals may also be employed by trade associations. Other interested persons (faculty, students, etc.) may become associate members.

From the membership lists of SOCAP the corporations were divided into four categories: Manufacturing; Retail; Service; and Utilities. Each of the four categories was subdivided when a wide diversity in types of corporation was evident; i.e.:

Manufacturing: Chemical, Drug, Energy, Food, and Products

Service: Financial, Insurance, Transportation, and other

Utilities: Telephone, Gas, and Electric

Each firm was assigned to one category by a committee consisting of the researcher and two educators, one of whom is an associate member of and has worked for several years with SOCAP.

Each firm was assigned a code which represented the type of corporation, the particular firm and the consumer affairs professional, (1), or the corporate executive officer,(2). An example of a code number would be 1-4-005-1 which represents a manufacturing company in the area of foods with the individual company number of 005 and the CAP reporting.

Names of the corporate executive officers were obtained from each consumer affairs professional. As the surveys were sent to each consumer affairs professional, a postcard was enclosed asking that person to identify the corporate executive officer who was responsible for the consumer affairs department in their corporation. As the postcards were returned, a questionnaire was mailed to each corporate executive officer.

Questionnaires were mailed to 434 consumer affairs professionals and 106 questionnaire postcards were returned with addresses of corporate executive officers. From this return mailing, 94 questionnaires were mailed to the corporate executive officers. From these totals, 51 useable questionnaires were obtained from the corporate executive officers. These figures represent a 24 percent return by the consumer affairs professionals and a 54 percent return by the corporate executive officers. The return percentages represent total figures of returned questionnaires from original and follow-up mailings to both the consumer affairs professionals and the corporate executive officers (see Table I).

#### Data Collection

Two instruments were developed by the researcher. The consumer affairs professional (CAP) questionnaire was used to collect information concerning job input, job limitations, and job satisfactions as perceived by the CAP. The corporate executive officer (CEO) questionnaire was used to collect information about the position of the CAP as perceived by the CEO in the same areas of job input, job limitations and job satisfactions.

TABLE I  
QUESTIONNAIRES MAILED AND RETURNED

Sample	Number	Percent
Consumer Affairs Professionals:		
Questionnaires mailed	434	100
Questionnaires returned	106	24
Non-respondents	328	76
Corporate Executive Officers;		
Questionnaires mailed	94*	100
Questionnaires returned	51	54
Non-respondents	43	46

\*Twelve CAPs did not return information for mailing to their CEOs.

### Development of Instruments

#### CAP Confidential Questionnaire

This instrument consisted of four parts (Appendix A). Part I consisted of the identification of job functions which the CAP determined to have the greatest and the least input into the corporate decision-making process. The nine job functions for this list were compiled from a review of literature which defined the functions of the consumer affairs position (Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, 1978; Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974; "Corporate Clout For Consumers", 1977; and Johnston, 1979).

Part II listed job limitations of the CAP position and these items were checked as the most limiting aspects and the least limiting

aspects of the job. The nine job limitations were chosen from previous consumer affairs studies (Hise, Gillet, and Kelly, 1978).

Part III of the questionnaire comprised a list of statements pertaining to the job satisfactions of the CAP. These statements were taken from previous studies (Hise, Gillet and Kelly, 1978) and modified for the study. Each of the 11 statements was rated on a scale from "Strongly Agree" (1) to "Strongly Disagree" (5).

Part IV consisted of demographic data such as age, sex, positions held currently and in the past, and educational background. In addition to answering the questions, each CAP was asked to define the consumer affairs mission in the organization and to enclose an organizational chart and a job description of the consumer affairs position which he or she currently occupied.

As noted, the survey was adapted from the Hise, Gillet, and Kelly study (1978). The instrument was then administered to eight selected members of SOCAP as a pilot test. Suggestions were accepted from these eight members concerning wording and clarity of instrument. The instrument was then submitted to the doctoral committee of the researcher and a marketing research consultant. This committee examined the instrument and offered numerous suggestions. Three changes and suggestions were incorporated.

#### CEO Confidential Questionnaire

This instrument also consisted of four parts and the CAP questionnaire. Part I consisted of job function questions. The CEO was instructed to check the job functions of the CAP that influenced corporate decision-making. Part II consisted of the same list of job limitations as identified on the CAP questionnaire. The CEO

of job limitations as identified on the CAP questionnaire. The CEO was asked which limitations were most limiting and least limiting to the CAP. Part III asked the CEO to rank on a scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" (1) to "Strongly Disagree" (5), the job satisfactions of the consumer affairs position. Part IV consisted of demographic data about the CEO, i.e., age, sex, length of time with the company, etc. In addition to answering the questions, the CEO was also asked to define the mission of the consumer affairs department in the firm and enclose an organizational chart noting both the position of the CAP and the CEO. In each of the parts of the questionnaire developed for the CEO, top management was asked not to try to "second-guess" what the CAP answered but rather to answer viewing the position from a supervisory capacity. This instrument was also submitted to the doctoral committee of the researcher and a marketing research consultant. This committee examined the instrument and added suggestions, and these changes were incorporated into the instrument (Appendix B).

Cover letters explaining the purpose of the study and asking for the individual's cooperation accompanied each CAP questionnaire and each CEO questionnaire (Appendix A and B). An explanation of the coding was given to assure anonymity of data collected. Each CAP knew that the CEO was also being contacted as the CAPs suggested the names of the CEOs. Each CEO was told how his or her name was obtained and that the CAP was participating in the study. Instructions were given in the letters for each person to complete their questionnaires independently.

Follow-up procedures included a second mailing to the consumer affairs professionals who did not initially respond. This second

mailing again included a cover letter, the CAP survey, and a card to be returned with the name of the appropriate CEO. As the cards were returned, the surveys were mailed to the appropriate CEO. Follow-up to the CEOs included a cover letter and a CEO questionnaire.

### Analysis of Data

Responses to the items on the two instruments were coded and the data were keypunched on computer cards. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) programs were used for analysis of the data. The probability of .05 was used as the criterion for significance.

Frequency tables, showing the number of times an event occurred in the data, were prepared in order that characteristics of the sample might be reported. Data regarding the job functions which provided the most input and the least input to corporate decision-making, and job limitations which were perceived as the most limiting and the least limiting factors in job performance were summarized through the frequency tables. A modified random block analysis which is commonly known as a modified Friedman analysis (Claypool, 1975) was used in testing hypotheses statements for job functions and job limitations along with the test for equality of two proportions. The purpose of a randomized block design is to make comparisons within blocks of relatively homogeneous experiential material (Mendenhall/Reinmuth, 1978). The Chi-Square analysis was used to test the hypothesis statement concerning job satisfactions.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study was designed to observe and compare role perceptions of the consumer affairs professional position as viewed by the person filling that position and the corporate executive officer supervising that position.

Surveys were mailed to a total of 424 consumer affairs professionals (CAPs) and 94 corporate executive officers (CEOs). Names of the CAPs were chosen from the membership list of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals and names of the CEOs were obtained from each CAP as s/he mailed in the name and position of his/her particular reporting officer. A total of 106 useable surveys were returned by the CAPs representing a 24 percent response and a total of 51 useable surveys were received from the CEOs representing a 54 percent response. Although 106 CAPs responded to the survey, 12 of these respondents asked that their CEOs not be contacted to participate in the survey, therefore, leaving a total of 94 CAP responses for use in analysis.

Procedures for the survey data collection included mailing a cover letter, a survey, and a post card to be returned with the name of the CEO. When either the questionnaire or post card were received, a letter and survey were mailed to the named CEO. Both the CAP and the CEO from a firm were told that the other was participating in the study. Each of these respondents were asked to complete their surveys

independently of the other. It was interesting to note a few respondents who completed the survey and took time to add special comments requesting their CEO not be contacted. Some of them gave reasons for their request, others did not. This type of response may indicate a lack of communication and/or commitment between the consumer affairs department and top management. It is possible that the very low response rate among the CAPs (24 percent) could be attributed to the fact that many CAPs were not comfortable in asking their CEOs to respond and therefore did not respond themselves.

Each of the initial mailings to the CAPs and the CEOs were followed up with a second mailing. Relatively few responses were received from the second mailing. It is possible that CAPs either responded immediately to the survey, or decided not to respond, and a second mailing did not affect their original decision.

The high response rate of the CEOs (54 percent) may be due to the previously mentioned communication pattern between the consumer affairs department and management. Since the CAP provided the name of the CEO, and the CEO was given this information in a cover letter, the initiative to respond was stronger. This type of communication may have biased the data received in that only the stronger consumer affairs/management communication combinations responded to the survey. It should be noted that possible areas of conflict between consumer affairs departments and top management may not be reported or discovered in this study due to the fact that departments with conflicting goals and objectives may not have chosen to participate.

A complete analysis of the Consumer Affairs Professional Questionnaire and the Executive Questionnaire will be discussed in this



chapter. Hypotheses addressed include: perceptions of the most and least input to each job function, perceptions of each of the most and least limiting job factors, and ranking of job satisfactions. In each instance these perceptions of the consumer affairs position were obtained from the person filling that position (CAP) and the person managing that position (CEO).

Analyses used for testing the data included: frequency tables of the responses of the CAPs and the CEOs proportionally as individual groups and as CAP/CEO pairs, to determine job functions and job limitations; the modified Friedman analysis to determine a preference in ordering of job functions and limitations; and tests for equality of proportions for job functions, limitations and satisfactions. The Statistical Analysis Systems programs (SAS) were used and the probability level of .05 was used as the criterion for rejection of an hypothesis.

### Job Functions

Hypotheses I and II explored the job functions of the CAP which were determined to give the most input and least input into the consumer affairs position. These hypotheses were:

Hypothesis I: For each item characterized as a job function of the consumer affairs professional, there will be no significant difference in proportions of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each item as giving the most input into corporate decision-making.

Hypothesis II: For each item characterized as a job function of the consumer affairs professional, there will be no significant difference in proportions of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each item as giving the least input into corporate decision-making.

Table II shows the percentage responses for the nine selected job functions. Respondents were asked to identify the three functions they perceived to have the most input and the three job functions they perceived to have the least input. Respondents were asked not to mark the three remaining items which were intermediate in the degree of input. Therefore, responses in Table II show M for responses determined to have the most input, responses were noted L for least input, and N for intermediate or neutral input and no mark was placed by that item. The frequency counts are included in Appendix C. For this portion of the analysis, a total of 94 CAP respondents and 51 CEO respondents were used in the individual analysis. A total of 31 matched CAP/CEO pairs were used for the paired analysis.

In Table II, each hypothesis was applied to each item. As an example, when Hypothesis I was applied to Item A, comparisons of the percentage of proportions showed CAPs with 11 percent for most input, and CEO with 6 percent; CAPS with 53 percent for least input and CEOs with 55 percent. As can be seen by examining each item in Table II, none of the items appeared to be significant when the test for equality of proportions were performed on the data. Since none of the items showed a significant difference between the proportions of CAPs and CEOs, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for any item concerning job functions of the consumer affairs professional.

It is interesting to note the lack of significant differences between the CAPs and CEOs concerning job functions. This similarity in defining duties may be due to the fact that the CAPs who have well defined positions and good communication with management are the CAPs who were willing to participate in the study.

TABLE II  
INDIVIDUAL PERCENTAGE JOB FUNCTIONS

Job Function	CAP			CEO		
	M	L	N	M	L	N
A. Analyzing advertisements	11	53	36	6	55	39
B. Processing consumer inquiries	65	11	24	78	6	16
C. Influencing product safety	15	39	46	14	35	51
D. Presenting consumer view to management	70	5	24	64	3	33
E. Handling consumer complaints	72	10	18	82	0	18
F. Exchanging with government and business	17	38	45	18	41	41
G. Influencing product design	11	46	44	10	53	37
H. Developing federal/state legislation	4	76	20	0	90	10
I. Developing consumer education programs	35	22	43	29	16	55

M = most input; L = least input; N = neutral or intermediate input. Job Function figures include a total of 94 CAP responses and 51 CEO responses.

The modified Friedman Analysis was used to test the hypothesis that there is no difference in the degree of input the nine functions contribute to corporate decision-making as perceived by CAPs and then by CEOs. This was a type of modified random block analysis. Table III shows a probability value for the job functions of the CAPs of 0.0001 and for the CEOs of 0.0001; therefore the null hypothesis that all functions have equal weights must be rejected at the .05 level of significance for both the CAPs and the CEOs. Hence, the percentage given in Table II for the category of most input gives an estimation of ranking of importance to corporate decision-making.

TABLE III  
MODIFIED FRIEDMAN TEST FOR FUNCTION IMPORTANCE

	Degrees of Freedom	Anova Sum of Squares	F Value	Prob- ability
Dependent Variable: Importance				
CAP - Functions	8	256.0851	48.02	0.0001
CEO - Functions	8	197.9607	47.12	0.0001

Data is based on the analysis of 94 CAP responses and 51 CEO responses.

Only items B, D, and E (Table II) were perceived by more than 50 percent of the CAPs and CEOs to give the most input to the decision-making process. Item E (Handling consumer complaints) was determined by both CAPs and CEOs to have most input to the decision-making process. However, Items B (Processing consumer inquiries); and Item D (Presenting consumer view to management) were slightly above the 50 percent figure. Items showing large percentages concerning the least input to corporate decision-making processes may be interesting for consumer affairs professionals or those persons considering this profession. Only Item H (Developing federal/state legislation) proved to have a larger percentage over 50 percent for least input into the decision-making process. Items A (Analyzing advertisements) and G (Influencing product design) centered around the 50 percent figure.

This analysis of the various job functions of the consumer

affairs professionals confirmed findings of earlier studies (Hise, Gillet and Kelly, 1978; Blum, Stewart and Wheatley, 1974) that the major function of the consumer affairs professional and the consumer affairs department is handling consumer complaints and answering consumer inquiries. Consumer affairs professionals may wish to note the contrast of Item D (Presenting consumer view to management) in this study and other studies. It may be that this particular study attracted only those professionals who did, in fact, represent the consumer view to management due to good communication networking. This particular bias is, of course, impossible to determine.

Of those factors which the CAP had the least input, it is interesting the large percentage of responses to Item H (Developing federal/state legislation). Since business and industry do greatly impact the development of legislation, future studies might be designed to determine which departments in the corporation perform this function. It may be that the consumer affairs department was working with other departments such as government relations or corporate planning but did not see this crossover function as an integral part of the consumer affairs department. It is possible that the consumer affairs department, in fact, does not participate in the legislative activities of the corporation as is reflected in the analysis.

A paired analysis was performed on those CAPs and CEOs in the same company who both returned useable questionnaires. These answers were compared by matching the responses of each pair from the same corporation. A total of 31 paired CAP/CEO responses were contained in the data and examples of the information obtained are contained in Table IV. Table IV gives an example of an item (Item E - Handling

TABLE IV  
GREATEST PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT OF CAP/CEO  
PAIRS FOR JOB FUNCTION

	(CEO) Most	Least	Intermediate
(CAP)			
Most	25/80.6%	0/0.0%	1/3.2%
Least	1/3.2%	0/0.0%	0/0.0%
Intermediate	2/6.5%	0/0.0%	2/6.5%
Total Pairs			31/100%

consumer complaints) for which the largest percentage of CAP/CEO pairs were in agreement in their perception of the most input to corporate decision-making.

In Table IV, a total of 27 of 31 CAP/CEO pairs marked identical answers, (i.e., 25 + 2 = 27). This would also indicate that 25 of the 27 pairs marked this item as giving most input to the corporate decision-making process. The Chi-Square analysis was determined not to be valid since there were small numbers of frequencies in several cells.

#### Job Limitations

The second section of the survey investigated aspects of the consumer affairs position which the CAP and CEO perceived to be the

most limiting and the least limiting in performance of duties.

The hypotheses were stated as follows:

Hypothesis III: For each item characterized as a limiting factor of the consumer affairs position, there will be no significant differences between the proportion of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each factor as most limiting.

Hypothesis IV: For each item characterized as a limiting factor of the consumer affairs position, there will be no significant differences between the proportion of CAPs and CEOs who perceive each factor as least limiting.

Frequency tables showing most and least limiting factors as the CAPs and CEOs responses were analyzed are summarized in Table V.

As in the case of the job function portion of the survey, respondents were asked to check the three most limiting factors of the CAP position, the three least limiting factors and leave the remaining three unmarked noting intermediate or neutral limiting factors. Each item concerning job limitations was specifically tested with each hypothesis. In each case, proportions of the CAP responses and the CEO responses for each response were compared for significant differences.

Table V shows that only one item, Item C (Unclear job evaluation procedures) was significant when the test for equality of proportions was performed on the data. Since only Item C showed a significant difference between the proportions of CAPs and CEOs, the null hypothesis is rejected only for Item C.

The modified Friedman analysis was used to determine the significance of ranking of job limitations (Table VI) just as it was used to rank job functions. The null hypothesis stated that all limiting factors would have equal weights in the ranking or ordering process. The significance level of .05 was used.

TABLE V  
INDIVIDUAL PERCENTAGE JOB LIMITATIONS

Job Limitations	CAP			CEO		
	M	L	N	M	L	N
A. Unclear authority	30	54	16	25	49	25
B. Unrealistic work load	46	22	32	35	31	33
C. Unclear job evaluation procedures	23	29	48	12	49	39
D. Insufficient information	34	24	41	43	29	27
E. Unending consumer complaints	29	31	40	29	29	41
F. Indefinite responsibilities	30	41	29	25	43	31
G. Uncertain promotion opportunities	30	32	38	33	16	51
H. Lack of inter-departmental cooperation	39	34	27	49	27	24
I. Company interest vs. consumer interest	39	32	29	47	35	18

M = most limiting; L = least limiting; N = Neutral or intermediate. Analysis included a total of 94 CAP responses and 51 CEO responses.

TABLE VI  
MODIFIED FRIEDMAN TEST FOR JOB LIMITATIONS

	Degrees of Freedom	Anova Sum of Squares	F Value	Probability
Dependent Variable: Degree of Limitation				
CAP - Factor	8	18.7517	2.38	0.0156
CEO - Factor	8	18.6144	2.39	0.0159

Data is based on the analysis of 94 CAP responses and 51 CEO responses.



Since the probability values of 0.0156 and 0.0159 are less than the accepted level of .05, the null hypotheses must be rejected. Therefore, percentages listed in Table V provide an estimated ranking of importance for those items perceived to be most limiting to the consumer affairs position.

Items included in the most limiting categories were Items B (Unrealistic work load), H (Lack of inter-departmental cooperation), and I (Company interest vs. consumer interest). It is interesting to note the difference in percentages concerning Item B (work load) between the CAP (46 percent), and the CEO (35 percent). The last two items, Item H and Item I, also show a fairly wide spread in percentages between the CAP and CEO. Item H (Lack of cooperation) shows the CAP with 39 percent as most limiting and CEOs with 47 percent most limiting. Item I (Company vs. consumer interest) shows the CAP with 39 percent and the CEO with 47 percent most limiting. These particular items and the differences in percentages may show a lack of communication between the consumer affairs professional and the consumer affairs department and top management. Since these factors are not high percentages, none of these factors appear to be severely limiting the consumer affairs professional in job performance. Item D (Insufficient information) is seen as more limiting by the CEOs (43 percent) than by the CAPs (34 percent). This is the only factor the CEOs determined to be more limiting than the CAPs.

The least limiting factor seems to be Item A (Unclear authority) with CAPs reporting 54 percent and CEOs reporting 49 percent. Along with this is Item F (Indefinite responsibilities) with the CAPs responding 41 percent and the CEOs 43 percent. This analysis supports

the job function analysis in that the consumer affairs professional and the consumer affairs department is perceived to have only one particular, i.e., well defined, job to do. Other tasks and reporting procedures seem to remain unclear or uncertain in many companies.

A paired analysis was performed on the job limitation data as was performed on the job function information. The job limitation data was obtained from the 31 paired CAP/CEO responses obtained from those CAPs and CEOs in the same company who both returned useable questionnaires. Table VII gives an example of the largest number of CAP/CEO pairs in agreement of their perception of an item, i.e., Item H.

TABLE VII  
GREATEST PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT OF CAP/CEO  
PAIRS FOR JOB LIMITATION H

	Most	Least	Intermediate
Most	10/32.2%	3/9.7%	2/6.5%
Least	6/19.3%	1/3.2%	3/9.7%
Intermediate	2/6.5%	3/9.7%	1/3.2%
TOTAL			31/100.0%

In Table VII, a total of 12 out of 31 CAP/CEO pairs marked the identical responses, i.e., 10 + 1 + 1 = 12). A total of 10 out of 31

or 32 percent marked most limiting for this particular item. The Chi-Square analysis was, as with the job function analysis, not considered due to the small number of frequency counts in many cells.

### Job Satisfactions

The third portion of the survey was designed to determine job satisfactions of the consumer affairs professional position through the use of a Likert Scale rating with responses ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). Each item was ranked without regard for other items in this section. For this analysis the entire 94 CAP surveys were tabulated with the entire 51 CEO surveys. The frequency percentage analysis of job satisfactions as determined by the CAPs is shown in Table VIII and the particular frequencies are given in Appendix E.

As can be determined from Table VIII, most CAPs receive a great deal of satisfaction from knowing their job is important to the success of the organization (Item A); that there is opportunity to grow (Item B); and that the job utilizes a wide range of skills (Item C). It is interesting to note, however, that CAPs feel less strongly that their particular skills and training are utilized in the position (Item J).

Areas of satisfaction which CAPs indicated as undecided or disagree were Item D (the opportunity for future advancement in the organization); Item F (Viewed as important by others in the organization); Item H (Viewed as important by people outside the organization); and Item I (Job is very challenging). A possible contradiction is noted concerning the opportunity to grow (Strongly Agree 38 percent and Agree 40 percent) in comparison to the question about opportuni-

TABLE VIII  
PERCENTAGE JOB SATISFACTIONS AS RANKED BY CAPS

	SA	A	U	D	SD
A. Work is important to the success of the organization.	46	46	6	2	0
B. Job provides the opportunity to grow.	38	40	13	6	3
C. Job allows the utilization of a wide range of skills.	53	37	3	6	1
D. Job provides the opportunity to prepare for future advancement in the organization.	13	39	28	14	6
E. Job allows the setting of goals/objectives.	31	51	10	6	2
F. Job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	12	47	26	13	2
G. Job provides a sense of accomplishment.	36	50	9	4	1
H. Job is viewed as important by people outside the organization.	26	53	18	3	0
I. Job is very challenging.	45	34	10	10	1
J. Job allows the utilization of a full range of his/her educational training and previous work experience.	33	35	14	12	6

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

ties for future advancement within the organization (Strongly Agree 13 percent, Agree 39 percent, Undecided 28 percent, and Disagree 14 percent). It is possible that the consumer affairs position is seen as important to the organization and could potentially be expanded but is not presently seen as a stepping stone to a higher position.

This limited growth perception of the position is reinforced by the limitation factors discussed earlier of lack of importance of the position by others within the company and those outside the firm. The lack of job challenge may also be reflective of a "dead-end" position. The two items with the largest percentage of "disagree to strongly disagree responses" concerned future advancement (Item D) the position being viewed as important by others in the organization (Item F). Item D had 20 percent Disagree to Strongly Disagree and Item F had 15 percent Disagree to Strongly Disagree. These items may lend support for one of the limitation factors of lack of inter-departmental cooperation.

Table IX gives a summary of responses of the CEOs concerning job satisfactions of the consumer affairs position. Percentages are reported in this table and frequency information is contained in Appendix E.

The CEOs were, to some extent, in agreement with the job satisfactions determined by the CAPs especially Item A (Work is important to the success of the organization). Several other items were scored similar to the CAPs such as Item C (Utilizes a wide range of skills); Item E (Setting goals/objectives); Item G (Provides a sense of accomplishment); Item I (Job is challenging) and Item J (Allows the utilization of education experience and background). Interesting, however, are the areas which are not viewed as job satisfactions by both the CAP and the CEO. These items include: Item B (Opportunity to grow); Item D (Opportunity for future advancement); and Item H (Viewed as important by people outside the organization). Since both the CAP and CEOs have identified these particular areas as not providing

TABLE IX  
PERCENTAGE JOB SATISFACTIONS RATED BY THE CEOs

	SA	A	U	D	SD
A. Work is important to the success of the organization.	54	40	6	0	0
B. Job provides the opportunity to grow.	14	57	16	11	2
C. Job allows the utilization of a wide range of skills.	30	63	3	4	0
D. Job provides the opportunity to prepare for future advancement in the organization.	9	49	23	16	3
E. Job allows the setting of goals/objectives.	27	59	11	3	0
F. Job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	15	50	26	9	0
G. Job provides a sense of accomplishment.	25	65	6	3	0
H. Job is viewed as important by people outside the organization.	29	52	19	0	0
I. Job is very challenging.	39	53	6	2	0
J. Job allows the utilization of a full range of educational training and previous work experience.	27	54	12	7	0

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; and SD = Strongly Disagree.

satisfaction in the CAP position, this may be an area for further study.

The hypothesis for the job satisfaction portion of the study were stated as follows:

Hypothesis V: There will be no significant difference in the rating of each item related to job satisfactions as perceived by CAPs and CEOs.

The frequency analysis presented in Tables VIII and IX shows percentage differences in the ratings of job satisfactions of the consumer affairs professional position. Based on this analysis, the stated null hypothesis may be rejected for Items D, C, I and J only.

#### Characteristics of the Sample

Profiles of both the CAPs and the CEOs were developed in the study. Table X summarizes the demographic information gathered concerning the CAPs and Table XI presents similar information concerning CEOs.

The typical consumer affairs professional in this study seemed to be a woman with at least a college degree and in many cases more than four years of college. She was a business or liberal arts major in college and received consumer training through seminars and professional meetings. The CAP reports a corporate executive officer, i.e., president, vice president, etc. The CAP is involved with the area of consumer relations for the corporation 100 percent of the time and she has been in this position for less than five years. The CAP was in her previous job less than five years also and was with the same company. The amount of experience and the time spent in these jobs could be areas of further study since a great majority of

TABLE X  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CAPS

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Job Title:</u>	
Consumer Affairs Officer	22
Customer Complaint Officer	1
Customer Relations Officer	22
Consumer Advocacy Officer	0
Other	54
<u>Department Title:</u>	
Consumer Affairs Department	19
Customer Affairs Department	13
Customer Relations Department	24
Customer Complaint Department	1
Other	43
<u>Time Involved With Consumer Affairs:</u>	
10%	3
15%	0
20%	5
25%	0
30%	3
35%	0
40%	3
50%	8
60%	4
65%	1
70%	1
75%	4
80%	1
85%	0
90%	1
100%	66
<u>Report to:</u>	
Chief executive officer (President, V. P., Corporate staff)	28
Divisional General Management	14
Marketing or Sales Executive	17
Public Relations Executive	13
Other	29



TABLE X (Continued)

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Time As Chief Consumer Affairs Officer:</u>	
Less than one year	19
1 - 5 years	57
6 - 10 years	18
11 - 20 years	4
Over 20 years	1
<u>Time In The Consumer Affairs Area:</u>	
Less than one year	14
1 - 5 years	51
6 - 10 years	18
11 - 20 years	13
Over 20 years	3
<u>Highest Level Of Education:</u>	
High School Education	5
1 year of college	6
2 years of college	9
3 years of college	5
4 years of college	38
More than 4 years of college	37
<u>Major Area of Study:</u>	
Business	29
Liberal Arts	35
Home Economics	19
Law	2
Consumer Areas	1
Other	7
No Answer	7
<u>Training Other Than College:*</u>	
Yes	74
No	21
No Answer	5
Vocational Technical School	9
Workshops	54
Seminars	70
Professional Meetings	64

TABLE X (Continued)

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Previous Position:</u>	
With this company	69
With another company	31
<u>Previous Position Concerned:</u>	
Sales	6
Production	10
Marketing	13
Public relations	9
Distribution	4
Personnel Management	3
Secretarial Work	10
Other	45
<u>Time In Previous Position:</u>	
Less than one year	10
1 - 5 years	66
6 - 10 years	15
11 - 20 years	4
Over 20 years	4
<u>Age:</u>	
Under 30	18
31 - 40	31
41 - 50	23
51 - 60	18
Over 60	5
<u>Sex:</u>	
Female	66
Male	34

\*Question will have a total greater than 100% due to the nature of the question.

TABLE XI  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CEOS

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Job Title:</u>	
Chief Executive Officer	4
Vice President	49
President	10
Chairman of the Board	1
Other	34
<u>Department Title:</u>	
Marketing	16
Sales Division	7
Public Relations	7
Divisional Head	12
Other	57
<u>Time Involved in Consumer Affairs:</u>	
5%	14
10%	25
15%	6
20%	13
25%	1
30%	3
33%	1
40%	5
50%	12
100%	10
<u>Report To:</u>	
Chief Executive Officer	61
Executive Vice President	28
Chairman of the Board	6
Other	6
<u>Time With the Present Employer:</u>	
Less than one year	0
1 - 5 years	29
6 - 10 years	16
11 - 20 years	16
Over 20 years	38

TABLE XI (Continued)

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Time in Area of Consumer Affairs:</u>	
Less than one year	7
1 - 5 years	39
6 - 10 years	16
11 - 20 years	14
Over 20 years	10
<u>Area of Consumer Affairs for Present Employer:</u>	
Less than one year	11
1 - 5 years	51
6 - 10 years	20
11 - 20 years	10
Over 20 years	7
<u>Previous Position:</u>	
With this company	73
With another company	27
<u>Previous Position Concerned:</u>	
Sales	14
Production	4
Marketing	22
Public Relations	17
Distribution	3
Personnel Management	7
Other	32
<u>Time in Previous Position:</u>	
Less than one year	4
1 - 5 years	52
6 - 10 years	27
11 - 20 years	13
Over 20 years	3
<u>Age:</u>	
Under 30 years	3
31 - 40	23
41 - 50	29
51 - 60	35
Over 60	6

TABLE XI (Continued)

Characteristic	Percent
<u>Sex:</u>	
Female	8
Male	92

the CAPs are fairly young. No particular area of the firm for department location emerged in the findings and no particular areas to which to report emerged clearly from the data. Only marketing shows slightly higher percentage of places for the CAP to report. Marketing is also the area with slightly higher percentages of locations for the previous jobs of the CAPs. Information from respondents in this study did approximate findings of demographic characteristics in the 80 CAP National Job Salary Survey (SOCAP, 1978b).

Overall characteristics of the CEOs in this study include that they are older males who report to top level management. They, typically, have been with the company 5 years or more and have been involved with consumer affairs for most of that time. Over half of the CEOs were previously employed with the same company and were in their previous job for more than five years. Although the backgrounds seem to be varied, sales, marketing, and public relations stand out as the fields from which these CEOs have come. Many of these CEOs were at the vice presidential level in their companies.

Interactions of CAPs who are largely female and CEOs, mostly

males, may have some effect on the interaction of the consumer affairs department with other departments. This particular characteristic, combined with the female CAPs being, on the whole, younger than the CEOs may affect communication patterns also. Further studies may wish to devote additional time to the sex and age characteristics as it effects management strategies.

Since the CAPs come from such diverse backgrounds and the CEOs seem to have more business-directed backgrounds, this may also affect communication patterns. This is another area which might be considered for further study.

Chapter V will contain a summary of the study in its entirety.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Consumerism, as we know it, encompasses activities of government, business, independent organizations, and concerned consumers to protect and enhance the rights of consumers (Aaker and Day, 1978). The consumer affairs movement of today has enjoyed widespread support from the general public as determined by studies and surveys ("The Consumer Confronts the Businessman", 1977; "Crossroads of Consumerism", 1972). This rise in consumer consciousness and indications the movement will continue to gain strength, has prompted many companies to establish consumer affairs departments and hire consumer affairs professionals ("Corporate Clout for Consumers", 1977).

A problem which is basic to the entire consumer affairs movement and the establishment of consumer affairs departments, however, is that

. . . no one has yet clarified the areas in which the goals of the corporation, the employees and the consumer are congruent, partly congruent and most incongruent (Blum, Stewart, and Wheatley, 1974, p. 18).

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze perceptions of the role of the consumer affairs positions by those professionals who fill them and by those who manage them. By comparing the two views, it was anticipated the role of both consumer affairs departments

within the corporate structure and the consumer affairs positions in those departments could be more clearly defined. Therefore, this study involved an analysis of perceived input to job functions, job limitations, and job satisfactions by selected consumer affairs professionals and their corporate executive officers.

Surveys were developed for the consumer affairs professionals and the corporate executive officers concerning the most and least input into various defined job functions, the most and least limiting factors of the job, and job satisfactions. Information concerning job functions, job limitations and job satisfactions was taken from studies by Hise, Gillet, and Kelly (1978) and Blum, Steward, and Wheatley (1974). Other information in the survey concerned reporting procedures, position of the department within the corporate structure and demographic information about the individual.

Surveys were mailed in the spring of 1980 to a total of 434 SOCAP members. Respondents were chosen from the membership lists of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals and the corporate officers were taken from the names returned by the CAPs. A total of 106 useable CAP surveys were returned and 51 CEO surveys.

Analysis for the Consumer Affairs Professional survey and the Corporate Executive Officer survey included frequency tables and a modified random block analysis commonly known as a modified Friedman analysis. The Statistical Analysis programs (SAS) was used and the .05 probability level was used as the criterion for significance.

### Major Findings

The first portion of the survey consisted of job functions which



CAPs and CEOs perceived, item by item, to have the most and least input into the corporate decision-making process. Hypothesis I and Hypothesis II suggested that there was no significant difference between each job function perceived to have the most input and the least input by consumer affairs professionals and by corporate executive officers. Tests for equality of proportions were performed on the data and none of the items concerning job function input were determined to be significant. The modified Friedman analysis was used to determine the differences in the degree of input of each of the nine job functions as perceived by both the CAPs and the CEOs. A significance level of .05 was used. Using this testing procedure, the null hypothesis that all functions have equal weights must be rejected for all nine job functions. Frequency tables did give an estimation of ranking of importance of the job functions to the corporate decision-making process. Using this analysis, items concerning the handling of consumer complaints, processing consumer inquiries and presenting consumer view to management seemed to show the most input to corporate decision-making. Those items showing the least input were developing federal/state legislation, analyzing advertisements and influencing product safety. A paired analysis using 31 CAP/CEO pairs from individual corporations supported and items estimated as significant in the frequency analysis.

The second portion of the survey determined the most and least limiting factors of the consumer affairs position. The null hypotheses (Hypothesis III and Hypothesis IV) stated there would be no significant difference between consumer affairs professionals and corporate executive officers in their perceptions of each of the

factors of the position determined to be most limiting and least limiting. The test for equality of proportions was performed on the job limitation data. Since none of the items showed a significant difference for most limiting factors between the proportions of responses of CAPs and CEOs, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for any item concerning most limiting factors of the consumer affairs professional. Only Item C was determined to be significant for least limiting, therefore the null hypothesis may be rejected only for this item concerning the least limiting factors of the consumer affairs position. The modified Friedman analysis was used to determine the significance of ranking of job limitations just as it was used to rank job functions. The null hypothesis stated that all limiting factors would have equal weights in the ranking process and the .05 significance level was used. Testing showed that for all limiting factors the null hypothesis must be rejected. Frequency tables gave an estimation of the importance of particular job limitations. Included as items determined to be the most limiting were unrealistic work load, lack of interdepartmental cooperation and company interest vs. consumer interest. Items estimated to be the least limiting to the position of the CAP were unclear authority and indefinite responsibilities. A paired analysis of matching CAP/CEO pairs from the same company also supported these estimated items as most limiting and least limiting.

The third portion of the survey asked CAPs and CEOs to react to satisfactions of the consumer affairs position on a scale ranking from from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Hypothesis V stated that no significant differences between ratings of job satisfactions as

perceived by CAPs and the CEOs would be found. In this section each item was ranked independently from other items. Chi-Square tests for comparing two distributions of responses show Items B, C, I, and J to be significant and therefore must reject the null hypothesis. This may be interpreted to mean that the CAPs did give responses which resulted in a different distribution than the CEOs. For all other items, the null hypothesis must not be rejected. Items showing a great deal of satisfaction for the CAP were: knowing their job is important to the success of the organization; opportunity to grow; and utilizing a wide range of skills. The CAPs did not feel, however, that their particular skills and training were utilized.

Areas showing less satisfaction included: opportunity for future advancement; viewed as important by others in the organization; viewed as important by people outside the organization; and job is very challenging.

The final portion of the survey for both the CAP and the CEO contained demographic information. Although the consumer affairs profession seems to draw from many and varied backgrounds, an attempt was made to profile the "typical" CAP and CEO who participated in this study. The "typical" CAP did seem to parallel, to some extent, those CAPs who responded to the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Job/Salary Survey (SOCAP, 1978b).

The CAPs in this study were determined to be females, in their 30's with at least a college education and many with more than four years of college. They spend 100 percent of their time with the consumer affairs area and have worked for their present company in this position for less than five years. Their previous position was with

the same company and they were in their previous position less than five years also. They seemed to have majored in business or a liberal arts area and have received most of their consumer training through seminars and/or professional meetings.

The CEOs who participated in this study were found to be males in their 40's and 50's. They had been with the company longer periods of time (over 5 years) but in the current consumer-related position less than five years. They seem to spend 20 percent or less of their time with the consumer area, were usually at the vice presidential level, and reported directly to top level management.

#### Observations

The Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals, was at the time of this study, the only professional organization or association available to persons employed in the areas of consumer affairs in business and industry. Since this organization is relatively new, it is possible that members could have similar views and needs. Many of the members previously worked within their current corporation in other capacities, and were transferred into the consumer affairs position. Very few of the members have any formal training in the area of consumer affairs. This lack of formal training may account for the lack of definition of the position and department in many firms as discovered in this study. The Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals has identified this need of its membership and has provided workshops to help in this definition process.

Since many of the CAPs are unfamiliar with what their role should be in the corporation, they are following management in the establish-

ment of job functions and limitations. Top management may see the consumer affairs areas as threatening rather than a cooperative effort with the consumer. Therefore, the development of consumer affairs positions and departments may not be as effective in making changes as they might be with additional corporate planning and commitment. St. Marie (1978) suggests:

In order to succeed as change agents, consumer affairs professionals must learn to: meet management where they are--that is, understand the world from their perspective and their needs; work toward incremental improvements--not try to achieve utopia overnight; work for practical, actionable steps that people can implement now; recommend and implement a set of combined, interrelated solutions--attacking on only one front, with one kind of weapon, seldom wins battles. . . . Exercise a high degree of patience and fortitude (p. 19).

Developing effective consumer affairs professionals may prove to be a future challenge of SOCAP, other consumer organizations, and colleges and universities.

A final observation particularly concerning this study is that the CAP was asked to return the survey and give the name of their reporting officer so another survey could be sent. It is assumed that the low response rate indicated many CAPs would not, or could not, bother their reporting officer with this type of task. It is possible, then, that surveys returned evaluated those consumer affairs departments with above average working relationships. Letters returned and personal comments to the researcher indicated that many of the CAPs would have participated but knew their CEO did not think the job and position were important enough to bother participating in the survey.

## Recommendations

It is apparent from the results of this study that the major functions of the consumer affairs department have not changed in the past few years, i.e., that of handling consumer complaints and inquiries. Most will agree that the complaint function is, in fact, a very important communication link between the consumer, his/her needs, and the corporation who wishes to meet those needs. This networking and communication process should be expanded however. The consumer affairs department, evidently, has not been accepted into the corporate structure and has not seemed to become an integral part of the total corporate picture. This lack of integration may be due to lack of training of the consumer affairs professional, the selection process of the consumer affairs professional, lack of communication between the CAP and top management, and/or the lack of commitment to the consumer affairs effort by either the CAP, the CEO, or the corporation. Broadening the consumer affairs position and department and integrating the department into the total corporate planning process, brings the following recommendations for possible areas of further research:

1. A study which would identify possible "proactive" job functions of the consumer affairs professional rather than the "reactive" areas of the position. This would identify job functions which identify consumer needs and take action on the corporate level before they become consumer problems. Total non-participation in legislative development is one example in this study of areas of the consumer affairs department which are not being utilized by companies.

2. A longitudinal study of the backgrounds of the consumer affairs professional, the training and work experience which led to

affairs professional, the training and work experience which led to the CAP position, and to what position the CAP is promoted. This type of study would address the areas of concern noted in the study of growth and promotion opportunities. It is possible that the CAP and CEO see the consumer position as a "dead-end" position and do not look for further areas of potential. In this manner, the views expressed in the survey of lack of opportunities and promotions become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

3. A study which would investigate communication patterns and management strategies of the 40 to 50 year old male CEO with a business background working with the consumer affairs professional who is a 20 to 30 year old female with a more varied background, i.e., business, liberal arts, and home economics.

4. A ten-year follow-up study similar to this study and the Hise, Gillet and Kelly study (1978) which would examine changes occurring during each decade concerning the CAP job functions, limitations and satisfactions. This type of study could be designed to follow the patterns of consumerism, i.e., the early 1900's the 1930's, the 1960's and possibly the early 1980's.

5. A study which would examine changing roles of the consumer affairs professionals in the corporate structure within the context of changing environmental and socio-economic conditions. This study would also follow the periods of high consumer activity and the early 1980's may be a time period to watch with new interest.

There is much potential growth and development in many areas of consumer affairs. St. Marie (1978) suggests there are five potentials for consumer affairs professionalism--"to define the function, to

function as a change agent, to develop competence, to acquire knowledge of the political system, and to achieve credibility as a resource. . . ." And she adds

In addition, one absolute need for every consumer affairs professional that is basic to all of this--and yet is the most intangible quality of all--is commitment, commitment that gives the professional that confidence to continue to function as a change agent even when the task seems impossible. . . .To begin with, this means a clarification of the individual's own values as a consumer affairs professional in relation to the extent of his or her commitment (p. 19).

Although there is much agreement among consumer affairs professionals and corporate executive officers concerning the job functions, limitations, and satisfactions of the consumer affairs position, there remains much to be developed and researched in this field.



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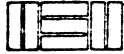
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APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL



Oklahoma State University

DIVISION OF HOME ECONOMICS  
Department of Housing, Design and Consumer Resources

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
HOME ECONOMICS WEST BUILDING  
(405) 624-5048

In an effort to better define the role of the consumer affairs professional, I would like to ask your help in the completion of the enclosed questionnaire which will be used in the completion of my doctoral research. Completion of the survey should require only ten to fifteen minutes.

Data is being gathered from all consumer affairs professionals and chief executive officers who are members of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. In order for me to know the appropriate reporting officer for your organization, I would like for you to forward the name of the executive officer to whom you report. Please fill out the card and return it no later than April 5. A matching survey will be sent to the officer. Please fill out your survey and return it by April 21. Although you and your supervisor may have the surveys at the same time, please complete them independently.

Your assistance in this research will be appreciated. The code on the questionnaire identifies the type of industry and the specific company. Only the researcher will have access to code information. Complete anonymity of persons and organizations will be maintained in reporting results in my doctoral dissertation.

Thank you for aiding me in the completion of the research. Results of the report can be obtained by noting on the card you are returning.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Morrow McPherson

Code \_\_\_\_\_

## CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

## JOB FUNCTION INPUT

1. Several job functions common to most consumer affairs professionals are listed below. Please check the THREE over which you have the MOST INPUT to corporate decisions. Check the THREE over which you have the LEAST INPUT to corporate decisions.

	<u>Most Input</u> (3)	<u>Least Input</u> (3)
a. Analyzing advertisements	_____	_____
b. Processing consumer inquiries	_____	_____
c. Influencing product safety	_____	_____
d. Presenting consumer view to management	_____	_____
e. Handling consumer complaints	_____	_____
f. Exchanging with government and business	_____	_____
g. Influencing product design	_____	_____
h. Developing federal/state legislation	_____	_____
i. Developing consumer education programs	_____	_____

## JOB LIMITATIONS

2. Consumer affairs professionals are sometimes limited in carrying out their responsibilities. Several limiting aspects of the job are listed below. Please check the THREE MOST LIMITING FACTORS in your job. Check the THREE LEAST LIMITING FACTORS in your job.

	<u>Most</u> <u>Limiting Factors</u> (3)	<u>Least</u> <u>Limiting Factors</u> (3)
a. Unclear authority	_____	_____
b. Unrealistic work load	_____	_____
c. Unclear job evaluation procedures	_____	_____
d. Insufficient information	_____	_____
e. Unending consumer complaints	_____	_____
f. Indefinite responsibilities	_____	_____
g. Uncertain promotion opportunities	_____	_____
h. Lack of inter-departmental cooperation	_____	_____
i. Company interest vs. consumer interests	_____	_____

## JOB SATISFACTIONS

3. Some jobs are more satisfying than others. This section contains statements about your job. Please rate each statement from 1 to 5 with 1 being STRONGLY AGREE and 5 being STRONGLY DISAGREE.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
One of the most <u>satisfying</u> aspects of my job is that:					
a. My work is important to the success of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
b. My job provides me with the opportunity to grow.	1	2	3	4	5
c. My job allows me to utilize a wide range of my skills.	1	2	3	4	5
d. My job provides me with the opportunity to prepare myself for future advancement in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
e. My job allows me to set goals/objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
f. My job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
g. My job provides me with a sense of accomplishment.	1	2	3	4	5
h. My job is viewed as important by people outside of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
i. My job is very challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
j. My job allows me to utilize the full range of my educational training and previous work experience.	1	2	3	4	5

OVER, PLEASE--

4. Define the consumer affairs mission in your organization. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. My job title and department title is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer Affairs Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Customer Relations Officer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Customer Complaint Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer Advocacy Officer  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Consumer Affairs Department \_\_\_\_\_ Customer Relations Department  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Customer Service Department \_\_\_\_\_ Customer Complaint Department  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you involved with consumer affairs full-time \_\_\_\_\_ or part-time \_\_\_\_\_  
 If part-time, what percent of your time is in consumer affairs \_\_\_\_\_
7. To whom do you report in your organization:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ a. chief executive officer (president, exec. V. P., corporate staff)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. divisional general management  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. marketing or sales executive  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. public relations executive  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. How long have you been the chief consumer affairs officer for your present employer? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
9. How long have you been in the area of consumer affairs? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
10. How long have you worked for your present employer? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
11. What is the highest level of education you obtained? \_\_\_\_\_ High school education, \_\_\_\_\_ 1 year of college, \_\_\_\_\_ 2 years of college, \_\_\_\_\_ 3 years of college, \_\_\_\_\_ 4 years of college, \_\_\_\_\_ more than 4 years of college.
12. If you went to college, your major area of study was \_\_\_\_\_  
 Was your major related to the area of consumer affairs \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no. If so, what was the relationship? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Did you have any training other than college? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no. If yes, was this training: \_\_\_\_\_ vocational technical school, \_\_\_\_\_ workshops, \_\_\_\_\_ seminars, \_\_\_\_\_ professional meetings. How was this training related to the area of consumer affairs \_\_\_\_\_
14. Was the position you held immediately before your current position with this company? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no. If no, was it with another organization? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
15. Was your previous position concerned with: \_\_\_\_\_ sales, \_\_\_\_\_ production, \_\_\_\_\_ marketing, \_\_\_\_\_ public relations, \_\_\_\_\_ distribution, \_\_\_\_\_ personnel management, \_\_\_\_\_ secretarial work, \_\_\_\_\_ other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
16. Length of time in your previous position: \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
17. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ under 30, \_\_\_\_\_ 31-40, \_\_\_\_\_ 41-50, \_\_\_\_\_ 51-60, \_\_\_\_\_ 60 and over.
18. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ female, \_\_\_\_\_ male
19. Please enclose an organizational chart and a job description of your consumer affairs position. Indicate your position on the chart and please indicate if it is a line position or a staff position.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

This information will be used in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation. All information is coded and confidential. Please return the completed questionnaire no later than April 20 to:

Kathleen Morrow McPherson  
 HEW 436 Consumer Studies  
 Oklahoma State University  
 Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE  
CORPORATE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS





*Oklahoma State University*

DIVISION OF HOME ECONOMICS  
Department of Housing, Design and Consumer Resources

STIELWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
HOME ECONOMICS WEST BUILDING  
(405) 624-5048

In an effort to better define the role of the consumer affairs professional, I would like to ask your help in the completion of the enclosed questionnaire which will be used in meeting the requirements of my doctoral research. Answering the questionnaire should require only ten to fifteen minutes.

Questionnaires asking the consumer affairs professional (CAP) to give his/her perception of their role have been sent to the CAP in your company. Your CAP has returned your name as the officer in the organization to whom he/she reports. The enclosed questionnaire asks for your perception of how the CAP and/or consumer affairs department should or does function in your organization.

Your assistance in this research is appreciated. The code on the questionnaire identifies the type of industry and specific company. Only the researcher will have access to code information. Complete anonymity of persons and organizations will be maintained in reporting results in my doctoral dissertation.

Thank you for aiding me in the completion of the research. Results of the report can be obtained by returning the enclosed card.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Morrow McPherson

Code \_\_\_\_\_

## EXECUTIVE CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

**NOTE:** This survey is to be completed BASED ON YOUR PERCEPTIONS of the job input, limitations, and satisfactions of the consumer affairs professional in your firm.

## JOB FUNCTION INPUT

1. Several job functions common to most consumer affairs professionals are listed below. Please check the THREE over which your consumer affairs professional has the MOST INPUT to corporate decisions. Check the THREE over which your consumer affairs professional has the LEAST INPUT to corporate decisions.

	<u>Most Input</u> (3)	<u>Least Input</u> (3)
a. Analyzing advertisements	_____	_____
b. Processing consumer inquiries	_____	_____
c. Influencing product safety	_____	_____
d. Presenting consumer view to management	_____	_____
e. Handling consumer complaints	_____	_____
f. Exchanging with government and business	_____	_____
g. Influencing product design	_____	_____
h. Developing federal/state legislation	_____	_____
i. Developing consumer education programs	_____	_____

## JOB LIMITATIONS

2. Consumer affairs professionals are sometimes limited in carrying out their responsibilities. Several limiting aspects of the job are listed below. Please check the THREE MOST LIMITING FACTORS your consumer affairs professional has in the job. Check the THREE LEAST LIMITING FACTORS your consumer affairs professional has in the job.

	<u>Most</u> <u>Limiting Factors</u> (3)	<u>Least</u> <u>Limiting Factors</u> (3)
a. Unclear authority	_____	_____
b. Unrealistic work load	_____	_____
c. Unclear job evaluation procedures	_____	_____
d. Insufficient information	_____	_____
e. Unending consumer complaints	_____	_____
f. Indefinite responsibilities	_____	_____
g. Uncertain promotion opportunities	_____	_____
h. Lack of inter-departmental cooperation	_____	_____
i. Company interest vs. consumer interests	_____	_____

## JOB SATISFACTIONS

3. Some jobs are more satisfying than others. This section contains statements about the job of your consumer affairs professional. Please rank from 1 to 5 each statement concerning the position with 1 being STRONGLY AGREE and 5 being STRONGLY DISAGREE.

One of the most satisfying aspects of the job of the consumer affairs professional in my company is that his or her:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Work is important to the success of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Job provides the opportunity to grow.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Job allows the utilization of a wide range of skills.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Job provides the opportunity to prepare for future advancement in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Job allows the setting of goals/objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Job provides a sense of accomplishment.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Job is viewed as important by people outside the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Job is very challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Job allows the utilization of a full range of his/her educational training and previous work experience.	1	2	3	4	5

OVER, PLEASE --

4. Define the consumer affairs mission in your organization. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. My job title is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Chief Executive Officer \_\_\_\_\_ President  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Vice President \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman of the Board  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. My department title is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Marketing \_\_\_\_\_ Public Relations  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sales Division \_\_\_\_\_ Divisional Head  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you involved with consumer affairs full-time \_\_\_\_\_ or part-time \_\_\_\_\_  
 If part-time, what percent of your time is in consumer affairs \_\_\_\_\_
8. To whom do you report in your organization:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Chief executive officer (president, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Executive vice president  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman of the Board  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. How long have you worked for your present employer? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
10. How long have you been in the area of consumer affairs? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one  
 year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
11. How long have you been in the area of consumer affairs for your present  
 employer? \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year, \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
12. Was the position you held immediately before your current position with  
 this company? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no. If no, was it with another organization?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no.
13. Was your previous position concerned with: \_\_\_\_\_ sales, \_\_\_\_\_ production,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ marketing, \_\_\_\_\_ public relations, \_\_\_\_\_ distribution, \_\_\_\_\_ personnel  
 management, \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
14. Length of time in your previous position: \_\_\_\_\_ Less than one year,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 years, \_\_\_\_\_ over 20 years.
15. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ under 30 years, \_\_\_\_\_ 31-40, \_\_\_\_\_ 41-50, \_\_\_\_\_ 51-60, \_\_\_\_\_ over 60.
16. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ female, \_\_\_\_\_ male
17. Please enclose an organizational chart of your company. Indicate your  
 position and the position of your consumer affairs professional.  
 Please indicate if the position of the consumer affairs professional is  
 a line position or a staff position.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

This information will be used in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation.  
 All information is coded and confidential. Please return the completed  
 questionnaire no later than May 9 to:

Kathleen Morrow McPherson  
 HEW 436 Consumer Studies  
 Oklahoma State University  
 Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

APPENDIX C

FREQUENCY TABLES OF JOB FUNCTIONS

TABLE XII  
 FREQUENCY RESPONSES TO JOB FUNCTIONS  
 INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS BY THE  
 CAPS AND CEOS

	CAP			CEO		
	M	L	N	M	L	N
a. Analyzing advertisements.	10	50	34	3	28	20
b. Processing consumer inquiries.	61	10	23	40	3	8
c. Influencing product safety.	14	37	43	7	18	26
d. Presenting consumer view to management.	66	5	23	32	2	17
e. Handling consumer complaints.	68	9	17	42	0	9
f. Exchanging with government and business.	16	36	42	9	21	21
g. Influencing product design.	10	43	41	5	27	19
h. Developing federal/state legislation.	4	71	19	0	46	5
i. Developing consumer education programs.	33	21	40	15	8	28

M = most input, L = least input and N = neutral or intermediate.  
 Data includes a total of 94 CAP respondents and 51 CEO respondents.

APPENDIX D

FREQUENCY TABLES OF LIMITING JOB FACTORS

TABLE XIII  
 FREQUENCY RESPONSES FOR LIMITING JOB  
 FACTORS INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS  
 BY THE CAPS AND CEOS

	CAP			CEO		
	M	L	N	M	L	N
a. Unclear authority.	28	51	15	13	25	13
b. Unrealistic work load.	43	21	30	18	16	17
c. Unclear job evaluation procedures.	22	27	45	6	20	25
d. Insufficient information	32	23	39	22	15	14
e. Unending consumer complaints.	27	29	38	15	15	21
f. Indefinite responsibilities.	28	39	27	13	22	16
g. Uncertain promotion opportunities.	28	30	36	17	8	26
h. Lack of inter-departmental cooperation.	37	32	25	25	14	12
i. Company interest vs. consumer interest.	37	30	27	24	18	9

M = most limiting factors, L = least limiting factors, and N = neutral or intermediate factors.

APPENDIX E

FREQUENCIES OF SATISFACTIONS BY CAPS AND CEOS



TABLE XIV  
FREQUENCIES OF SATISFACTIONS BY CAPS

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a. Work is important to the success of the organization.	66	66	9	5	0
b. Job provides the opportunity to grow.	56	59	19	9	5
c. Job allows the utilization of a wide range of skills.	79	54	4	9	2
d. Job provides the opportunity to prepare for future advancement in the organization.	19	57	41	20	11
e. Job allows the setting of goals/objectives.	46	75	15	8	3
f. Job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	18	70	38	19	2
g. Job provides a sense of accomplishment.	53	74	13	6	1
h. Job is viewed as important by people outside the organization	38	78	26	5	1
i. Job is very challenging.	67	50	14	14	2
j. Job allows the utilization of a full range of his/her educational training and previous work.	49	52	21	18	8

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree.

TABLE XV  
 FREQUENCIES OF SATISFACTIONS BY CEOS

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a. Work is important to the success of the organization.	40	29	4	0	0
b. Job provides the opportunity to grow.	10	42	12	8	2
c. Job allows the utilization of a wide range of skills.	22	47	2	3	0
d. Job provides the opportunity to prepare for future advancement in the organization.	7	36	17	12	2
e. Job allows the setting of goals/objectives.	20	44	8	2	0
f. Job is viewed as important by employees working in other areas of the organization.	11	37	19	7	0
g. Job provides a sense of accomplishment.	18	47	4	2	0
h. Job is viewed as important by people outside the organization.	21	38	14	0	0
i. Job is very challenging.	29	39	5	1	0
j. Job allows the utilization of a full range of his/her educational training and previous work experience.	20	40	8	5	0

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree.

VITA<sup>2</sup>

Kathleen Morrow

Candidate for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL AS PERCEIVED  
BY THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL AND THE CORPORATE  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Major Field: Housing, Design and Consumer Resources

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 15, 1949, the  
daughter of Joe Ellingwood and Bobbera Warren Morrow.

Education: Graduated from Collinsville High School, Collinsville,  
Oklahoma in May, 1967; received Bachelor of Science degree  
from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May  
1971, in Home Economics Education and Home Economics  
Communications; received Masters of Arts degree in Curri-  
culum and Instruction in August, 1978, from the University  
of Texas at Austin; completed requirements for the Doctor  
of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in July,  
1981.

Professional Experience: Department Manager, Yaring's, Austin,  
Texas, 1971-72; Home Economics Teacher-Coordinator, Home  
Economics Cooperative Education, Crockett High School,  
Austin Independent School District, Austin, Texas, 1972-78;  
Instructor, Housing, Design and Consumer Resources, College  
of Home Economics, and Instructor, Marketing, College of  
Business, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma,  
1978-81.