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# Strategic Management in Small Business: An Exploratory Study

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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN SMALL BUSINESS: AN EXPLORATORY

STUDY


by


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DISSERTATION

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## DEDICATION

To my amazing Wife,
Thank you for your unending support and patience with me as I pursued my dreams. The completion of these degrees and our adventure in New Mexico would not have been possible without you. It is as much your accomplishment as it is mine, because you provided me the opportunity and support to accomplish this achievement.

To my family,
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## ABSTRACT

Small businesses make up approximately 98% of all businesses in the United States, but little is known about how they engage with their communities and engage in strategic management (Small Business Administration, 2016). To understand more about how small businesses engage in these practices, this study seeks to explore these topics through a technology enhanced qualitative study design (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The study sought to replicate face-to-face interviews through an online survey with open-ended questions designed to learn from small business decision makers regarding their actions and the actions of their organizations. The study had 45 total participants from three metropolitan cities in the United States. The study produced themes generated from an inductive thematic analysis done by hand and the use of text analysis software, Leximancer. Triangulation was used to try and understand the true meaning of concepts pertaining to small businesses. The results of the study presented a variety of themes that focused on the system of entrepreneurism and how it impacts decision-making in small business. The results of this study are intended to encourage future work in the areas of strategic management and small business.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

# LIST OF FIGURES

# LIST OF TABLES

**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

Small business is one of the primary economic drivers in the United States, accounting for 54 percent of U.S. sales and providing over 55 percent of jobs to Americans (Small Business Administration, 2015). Small businesses are often the primary economic driver of smaller communities, with the communities relying on the firms to be a force of support for the community, giving the community an identity (Niehm, Swinney, & Miller, 2008). The wide range of praise for small business development and support for its sustainability in communities is important. However, little is known about how small businesses engage in strategic management practices.

When reviewing the management literature, it appears small businesses are still trying to be understood, especially their strategic management tendencies and typologies. A recent article in the *Journal of Small Business Management* highlights this notion, discussing the difference of opinion of Barney's 1996 strategic management theory of resourced based management amongst entrepreneurs and researchers (Kellermanns, Walter, Crook, Kemmerer, & Narayanan, 2016). The *Journal of Small Business Management* is the top journal in small business research, comprised of 54 volumes and 4 issues each, with over 4,000 articles published. A search of the journal returned only 427 articles that utilized the term "strategic management," amounting to approximately 10 percent of all articles addressing this topic. Other articles may have mentioned strategy or other forms of management, but "strategic management" was discussed in 10 percent of their articles, leaving a need for greater understanding of how small businesses engage with and utilize strategic management.

Small businesses come in all industry sectors, ranging from both franchise and non-franchise. Franchise small business are given a support system, including guidance from the franchise organization how to execute the strategic plan of the organization to succeed, noting that franchised chains often have increased sales over their non-franchised competitors, due to the dynamic capabilities a franchise has to offer to its franchisees (El Akremi, Perrigot, & Piot-Lepetit, 2015). A franchise provides the opportunity for somebody to get into a business with virtual guardrails to guide them through the business, contrast with a non-franchise business that has more agency over decision making but is left to define their strategic plan and execute this through strategic management. The need for more research in small business strategic management is evident by an apparent shortfall in the discipline's principal journal. Research focused on the small business decision maker's strategic management process is critical to understanding how they can be taught and consulted to develop their businesses.

Engagement with their communities can be associated to the overall success of small businesses in their communities (Niehm et al., 2008). A possible question and one at the central tenet of this project is understanding how small businesses engage with their community, particularly how to they possibly engage in strategic partnerships with sport organizations. This project sought to explore and gain insight into the strategic management actions of small business decision makers and how their organizations engage with their local communities. Utilizing the insight gleaned from small business decision makers, the study sought to derive guidance for the development of partnerships between sport organizations and small businesses in their communities, leading to an

understanding of how small business decision makers engage in strategic management and utilize it within their organizations. Sport organizations in this project are defined as:

> Any entity within a community that is affiliated with sport. The organizations could be professional or collegiate programs, but more than likely could be K-12 schools that offer sport programs. A sport organization could be an organization that conducts sport events like a 5K run or other sport recreational events for a community. It could also be an organization that puts on a sporting event for entertainment consumption, like a college football bowl game.

Understanding the strategic management tendencies of small businesses could present possible insight that could enable partnerships to be developed amongst small businesses and sport organizations. Due to the variety of benefits sport organizations can provide to their communities, one of the benefits is the development of social capital, partnerships between sport organizations and small business could possibly serve as an economic force within their communities (Misener & Mason, 2006; Svensson, Huml, & Hancock, 2014). Sport organizations, just like other organizations within the economic make-up of a community, can be reliant on small business to provide goods and services, but the relationship between small businesses and their desire to serve and care for their communities' in a unique manner is a possible aspect that sets them apart from large corporations. The ability for an organization to care for and about its stakeholders, potentially an element that can ingratiate small business amongst their communities and often seen with sport organizations (Cooke & Wills, 1999; Liedtka, 1996; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008).

Commitment to the community was found by Niehm et al., 2008 to be a primary aspect that explained small business desire to execute socially responsible behaviors in their community, finding that small businesses feel a need to support their communities especially in smaller communities where each depended on one another for their existence. The community can rely on the businesses for providing goods and services, but also for supporting other community activities that are valued, such as schools and sports organizations. Sport organizations often depend on small businesses to support their teams and events through sponsorships, giving the small business the opportunity to express their goodwill towards the community (Gardner & Shuman, 1988). Small businesses in sponsorship of college athletic departments often seek signage to build brand recognition with the athletic department (Slack & Bentz, 1996). One of the reasons small businesses could seek to sponsor sport organizations is the sport organizations are typically non-profit organizations, allowing the small business to do good for the community but also reduce their tax burden for the fiscal year (Berrett & Slack, 2001). However, the relationship between sport organizations and small business could be improved with an increased understanding of the strategic management aspects of small businesses.

**Sport Organizations**

Sports are a powerful force in the United States, often giving a community an identity and deriving psychic income for the community residents (Howard & Crompton, 2014). Cities and towns tend to support sporting events or teams, building up the towns identity, scholars have utilized Social Identity Theory to explain the attachment of a community to the brand of a sport organization, often seen when a team leaves a city

4

(Heere et al., 2011). The Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati, OH and Gasparilla Festival in Tampa, FL are two examples of how sport events can aid in the development of a community identity (Olberding & Jisha, 2005). Nearly each city or town can place their claim to a sport organization, especially when you include K-12 schools in the mix, where towns rally behind their local high school sports programs (Bissinger, 1990; Sage, 1987). Sport organizations can play a vital role within their communities, giving their communities an identity.

Sport organizations come in a wide variety with differing purposes. In this study, we viewed sport organizations in an inclusive manner, ranging from professional sports organizations to youth sport leagues, to various sporting events. Included in this group are K-12 schools that offer sport programs that can be a target for small businesses to sponsor or form partnerships. Sport organizations are often reliant upon small businesses for financial and other kinds of support to assist in the execution of their organization's purpose. Small businesses are a potential easier target for an organization to obtain a sponsorship because they don't have to clear the sponsorship through a corporate office. There is an adage of "the grass is greener near the spigot." This applies to sport organizations and small business because they can build relationships with the key decision makers of the organization, making access to financial support easier to obtain.

The unpredictable nature of the economy can make some small businesses less likely to engage in sponsorships, where they are not able to recognize their full return on investment. Sport organization's events could be a vital means for small business to be engaged and build a relationship with community stakeholders, through either financial or other forms of support. The sport organization administrators could play a vital role in

the development of partnerships, beyond the traditional sponsorship (transactional) exchange commonly witnessed with sponsorships. Due to the unique aspects of sport, could the sport organization's administrators take a transformative role in developing partnerships where an exchange of money could still occur, going beyond to focused more on the development of partnerships? Sport organizations and small business present a bevy in interesting opportunities for community enhancement, more information is necessary to understand how small businesses engage in strategic management, gaining information from this hard to access population.

## Theoretical Framework

Given the context introduced thus far, this study attempted to gain a better understanding of the strategic management practices of small businesses through examination of responsible leadership, stakeholder theory, and social capital. The theoretical model sought to explore how the interaction between the three theories' constructs can lead to an effective model for the interaction between sport organizations and small businesses in their local community. The exploratory nature of this study sought to understand the feedback from small business decision makers, utilizing theory to understand their interaction with strategic management and their local communities.

Partnership development is a norm in business, especially after the recession in 2008 left many businesses looking for partners that could limit expenses in doing business. Finding the right partner is critical for a firm and the partnership must fulfill the strategic vision of each firm (Waddock, 1988b). Firms seek partnerships for a variety of reasons, but they can be expressed for social good and social progress in the community. The resulting partnerships have been labeled social partnerships because of their intention

to improve society from their actions (Maria M. Seitanidi & Crane, 2014; Waddock, 1988a, 1989). Social partnerships are often engaged between non-profit and for-profit firms that are seeking to express some form of social responsibility. Engaging in these partnerships results in cross-sector partnerships with the explicit focus on benefiting a social cause in a community that traditionally would be overlooked and the partnership is communicated as a means to improve the community and enhance the perception of the firms in the eyes of the stakeholders (Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Koschmann, Kuhn, & Pfarrer, 2012).

This project utilized the definition provided by Mintzberg et al. (1976) for strategic decision making: "a set of actions and dynamic factors that begins with the identification of a stimulus for action and ends with the specific commitment to action" (pg. 246). An understanding of strategic decision making by small business decision makers is paramount to gaining insight into how a model can be developed, bringing sport organizations together with small businesses in their local community.

To provide clarity and guidance to this project, a theoretical framework is utilized to serve as the compass to analyzing how a model may look that can bring sport organizations and small businesses together for social benefits. The framework is displayed and intended to be the grounding force for analysis later in this project. An explanation of each theory utilized in this framework is discussed in this section. Figure 2.1 provides a graphical display of the theoretical framework and Table 1.1 provides the definitions for each term.

Table 1.1: Definitions of terms

| Term | Definition | Citation |
|---|---|---|
| Stakeholder Theory | Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives. | Freeman, 1984, p. 25 |
| Social Capital | Features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. | Putnam, 1995, p. 67 |
| | Social capital is the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor. | Adler and Kwon, 2002, p. 22 |
| Responsible Leadership | The art of building and sustaining good relationships to all relevant stakeholders; weaving a web of inclusion where the leader engages himself among equals. | Maak and Pless, 2006, p. 104 |

## Statement of the Problem

Small businesses account for 98 percent of all of the businesses in the United States and are often thought of for their explicit focus on serving and enhancing their local communities (Caruso, 2015; Miller & Besser, 2000). Per the United States Small Business Administration, small businesses provide 55 percent of all jobs and is the primary force behind new business development, particularly in smaller communities. They note since 1990, big businesses eliminated 4 million jobs, small businesses added 8 million jobs with the number of small businesses growing 49 percent from 1982 (Small Business Administration, 2015). Small business not only are one of the fastest growing segments of the American economy, they have demonstrated the ability to develop social capital in their communities with community members, enhancing the relationship that exists between the small business and their community stakeholders (Cooke & Wills, 1999; Westlund & Bolton, 2003).

Sports organizations are often reliant on small business to support their organization's events and teams through financial sponsorships and in-kind

gifts/marketing. Despite academic journals such as the *Journal of Small Business Management* and a concerted effort by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) to foster entrepreneurism in their students, more can be understood about small businesses strategic management practices and how they interact with their local communities (Gellman, 2016). An understanding of small business strategic management tendencies and practices could potentially foster and enhance partnerships with a variety of community stakeholders, including sport organizations.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and gain insight into the strategic management actions of small business decision makers and how their organizations engage with their local communities. The study seeks to gain insight that could potentially be used to better understand partnership development opportunities with small business and various community stakeholders.

## Research Questions

Research Question 1:

Based on Niehm et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of small business engagement with their community in community social responsibility, grounded in commitment to the community, community support, and sense of community; neglecting to provide a definition for community social responsibility. The study seeks to understand how small business decision makers define "community social responsibility."

Research Question 2:

Due to our understanding of strategic management forwarded by Freeman (1984); Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks (2007); and Barney & Hesterly (2010), strategic

management is vital to the longevity and competitive advantage of a business. How do small business decision makers engage and utilize the strategic management process?

Research Question 3:

Partnerships are a common avenue organizations seek to share resources and innovate new products and services for the marketplace (Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks, 2007), but organizations are also utilizing partnerships to engage with their local communities and activate their social responsibility programming (Waddock, 1988a, 1989). How and why do small businesses seek partnerships to engage their community with sport organizations? What do they consider when sponsoring an event or organization?

Research Question 4:

Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, working to develop their skills and behaviors to be an effective leader to their followers (Katz, 1955; Scott, 2014; Stogdill, 1974). How have small business decision makers developed their leadership and strategic management skills and what do they currently do, if anything, to continually develop these skills?

### Limitations

1. The study is qualitative and exploratory, seeking to find insight that could potentially be utilized to develop a model for understanding partnership with small business and community stakeholders. The possible limitation rest in the inability to generalize to a larger population.

2. The survey was distributed through email to participants that were on a Business to Business mailing list purchased from B2Bdata.co. The list may not have

included the whole business population of the metropolitan areas, due to the ever-changing nature of businesses coming and going within the economy.

## Delimitations

1. The markets chosen for this study were selected for their cultural and sociological diversity, making the results applicable to similar metropolitan areas as the locations utilized in the study.

2. The survey was primarily distributed through email to participants selected from a Business to Business marketing list. While it catches a wide-variety of the population, it may not include all viewpoints of the population.

3. Survey was distributed through email and was dependent on the respondent to self-respond to the survey.

## Definitions of Terms

1. Sport Organization – a sport organization could be any entity within a community that is affiliated with sport. The organizations could be professional or collegiate programs, but more than likely could be K-12 schools that offer sport programs. A sport organization could be an organization that conducts sport events like a 5K run or other sport recreational events for a community. It could also be an organization that puts on a sporting event for entertainment consumption, like a college football bowl game.

2. Small business – any business with less than 500 employees (Small Business Administration, 2004).

3. Independently locally owned – referring to a business that is owned locally in the community by someone who resides in the community.

4. Non-franchise – a business that is not a part of a national franchise. An example is Jimmy's Sandwiches, which is owned by Jimmy Smith, a local resident of the community.

5. Strategic business decision maker – although a business has an owner, the owner may not be directly involved with the operation of business, leaving someone to be the decision maker. A decision maker could be classified as the Executive Director, Owner, President, or Chief Executive Officer. (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992)

# CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this project is intended to be extensive and thorough, while being refined and focused on the critical components of the project. The critical components of this project are small business marketing and partnership activity, strategic partnerships, stakeholder theory, social capital, and responsible leadership. An examination of the literature surrounding strategic partnerships was conducted, with an exploration of small business actions surrounding marketing and partnership activity, further exploring how they engage with their community. The chapter will deviate towards addressing the literature surrounding the model discussed in the prior chapter exploring stakeholder theory, social capital, and responsible leadership.

### Small Businesses

Small businesses comprise the majority of business in the United States, accounting for nearly half the Gross Domestic Product and employing approximately 48 percent of the American workforce (Kobe, 2012; Small Business Development Center, 2014). According to the Small Business Administration in 2015, most small businesses in the United States were either sole proprietorships or very small businesses employing up to 5 employees. Small businesses have been described by scholars as a critical component to the American economy because they are integral in employing and engaging their communities (Besser, 1999; Besser & Miller, 2001). Small businesses were selected for this project because of their ability to connect with community stakeholders and because small businesses are trusted more by consumers than large corporations. This section of

the literature review provided information on the small business decision maker and how small businesses engage with stakeholders in their communities.

**Small Business Decision Maker**

The small business decision maker is the focal point of investigation in this project, because they are arguably the leader of their business and often serve as the moral guide for their employees. The management literature often focuses on the business owner as the key decision maker. This study seeks to expand this notion with literature grounded in the management literature surrounding the business owner. Marcketti and Kozar (2007) discussed how small business owners are leaders for their organization through building relationships. They cited that profitability and employee satisfaction are associated with the five areas of relational leadership: inclusiveness, empowerment, purposefulness, ethics and process-orientation. According to Marcketti and Kozar, the ethical construct is expressed when there is ethical decision making, encouraging socially responsible behavior, high standards of behavior help everyone, identifies issues as needing an ethical decision, and confronts inappropriate behavior in others (p. 149). The focus on relationships is an important node to stakeholder theory which stresses a pragmatic approach to management and emphasizing the building of relationships with stakeholders (E. Freeman, 1984).

Yan and Yan (2013) produced results that partially confirmed those of Marcketti and Kozar (2007), stating that relations-oriented leadership has a significant and positive relationship with the three organizational behavior constructs: civic virtue, helping, and sportsmanship. Relational leadership theory appears to be the dominant theory that is

employed when examining the leadership practices of small business decision makers within their organizations.

Relational leadership is an integration of trust and leader-member exchange producing an avenue to explaining the role of relationships in leadership (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). Uhl-Bein (2006) continued the work of Brower et al. (2000), stating that relational leadership is an exploration of the social process of leadership and organizing, citing the process of social construction as an instrumental force in the theory. The literature provides a foundation for understanding leadership of small business decision makers, but a possible question would be how does responsible leadership relate to relational leadership?

The leadership literature is full of a variety of leadership theories to aid in the explanation of a large latent variable. You could ask anybody for their definition of leadership and you are likely to receive a different definition from each person. The wide variety of potential definitions is a reason for the variety of leadership theories. Responsible leadership, which was popularized by Maak and Pless (2006), appears to vary from relational leadership amongst scholars in its focus on business outcomes and stakeholder relations, compared to relational leadership and its internal focus on leader subordinate relations within the organization (Hind, Smit, & Page, 2013). Responsible leadership will be addressed later in this literature review, but the literature appears to support the use of relational leadership theory in explaining the interaction of a small business decision maker with their organization and employees.

Small business owners have been noted as being the moral conscious of their business, often placing them as the focal point for the development of institutional logics

for their business. Fassin, Van Ross, and Buelens (2011) found that small business

owners served as a moral guide for their business, giving an association to their

perceptions of business ethics and CSR concepts. Their work is a possible link to

understanding how relationships with employees can bring about a more collective nature

in respect to employees buying into the adaptation of social causes into the business.

The small business owner is a complex individual who must rely on relational

leadership to accomplish the objectives of the business. Relational leadership has been

linked to social capital development, particularly the bonding social capital discussed by

Putnam (2000). McCallum and O'Connell (2009), in a review of five recent leadership

studies, concluded that social capital skills in leadership were beginning to be studied, but

did find that leadership and social capital have the potential to be linked; concluding that

more work needed to be done in relation to leadership and social capital. The work in

leadership has been often focused on the internal organizational behavior of the small

business owner and has often lacked in the area of external relations and strategy. I am

taking this opportunity to transition from the internal operation of the small business to

how they associated with external stakeholders to their business, practically in a strategic

manner accomplished through social responsibility actions (Fitzgerald, Haynes, Schrank,

& Danes, 2010).

**Small Business External Relations.**

In his 1912 book *The Theory of Economic Development*, Joseph Schumpeter

described the role of the entrepreneur as the primary cause of economic development.

Thurik and Wennekers (2004) described small business as a vehicle for the realization of

Schumpeterian ideals, either as business that brings something new to a market or who

are serving as franchisees. Small business can serve as an engine for economic development in a community, but must rely on relationships with stakeholders to achieve their business goals. In accomplishing their external relations with the community, small businesses have shown the propensity to utilize CSR actions to execute aspects of community relations

Fitzgerald et al. (2010) discussed socially responsible processes of small family business owners, grounding their study in the Sustainable Family Business Theory. They analyzed the 2000 National Family Business Survey, conducted by Price Waterhouse Cooper. One of the findings from their analysis was that business owners who resided in economically vulnerable communities were willing to assume leadership positions within the community and wanted to work together with the community to solve community issues. The findings of the study indicate a tendency for bridging social capital as discussed by Adler and Kwon (2002). Since small business want to assist and be good citizens in their communities, an understanding of how they go about this is pertinent to this project.

Small businesses have been found to be social responsible, especially toward the local communities in which they reside. Spence (2014) provided a thorough provoking conceptualization of CSR and stakeholder theory with small business owners. She attempted to expand the current CSR theory to include small business, making for greater research opportunities and practical application of theory to practice. She argued that small and large firms have different stakeholder groups to which they are accountable. Mainly the small business decision maker can establish relationships with their individual stakeholders. She stated that "small business has an emphasis on relationships and

networks, making it appeal for the application of stakeholder theory" (pg. 6). Due to its pragmatic nature, stakeholder theory, she says is "intended to be applied to any organization, because in each application the stakeholders should be calculated anew" (pg. 6). In her model of stakeholders for small business, she included local community, a group that was left off when she modeled the stakeholders to a large firm. She proposed four separate pyramids, like the pyramids introduced by Carroll (1979). The focus is predominantly on the pyramid she entitled "Responsibility to the Local Community" (pg. 18).

In this pyramid, she stated that the primary concern for the business owner towards their local community is to treat them with fairness and respect. She cited the work of Besser and Miller (2001), who said that philanthropic contributions were an important measure to the business' social responsibility to community members. I do not particularly agree with her use of philanthropic contributions as the sole basis for community members assessing the businesses impact on the community due, in part, to the literature on social partnerships (Maria M. Seitanidi & Crane, 2014), but I do agree that her position of it being close to the foundation of the pyramid is essential because it brings in a strategic component to the actions of the small business owner in their community.

Much of the literature discussed up to this point has focused on sole proprietorships or family businesses. Small business owners could be franchisees, posing an interesting and potential moderating variable to understanding CSR engagement and activation within their communities. Meiseberg and Ehrmann (2012) discussed the difference between franchise system CSR compared to CSR engaged by other small

businesses. In their analysis, they found that the top reason for conducting CSR was to provide greater financial returns; the top obstacle to CSR activity was "too-time consuming" followed by "no knowledge how to organize or enact CSR", and the top way of communicating CSR was through "press releases." Their work provides a great deal of insight into how a small business owner, franchise or independent, thinks about their business. The reason for noting the importance to all business owners is because they all face the same issues; the franchisee often has greater support and guidance from their corporate supervisors in the running of a business. Overall, they found that larger, more mature firms were more active in CSR and actions to enhance the brand image were sought. Small businesses often have looked to sport to express their CSR actions towards their communities, particularly through sponsorships of sports teams.

**Small Business Sponsorships of Sport**

Small businesses can utilize sponsorship to connect with another agency and express a brand alliance. Small businesses have been found to seek sponsorships; they often come at a variety of expense levels and scope (Gardner & Shuman, 1988). An example of this relationship is the local pizza shop sponsoring a little league baseball team. The simple act of sponsorship provides the small business owner with the opportunity to contribute to the community in a philanthropic manner, often placing a plaque recognizing the sponsorship in their place of business.

Sponsorships of sport organizations have continually increased to a manner that can make it difficult for a small business to have the financial capital to pay for the sponsorship while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Gray (1996) discussed the bottom line figures associated with sponsoring a football game at the University of Miami; they

were asking $175,000. Since the article was published in 1996, if adjusted for inflation in 2017, they would be asking for $268,638. The amount is extremely large and places small businesses at a disadvantage to sponsoring sporting events. Sponsoring sporting events can be a critical component for a small business. Sport sponsorships can have big impact on a business's bottom line because sport and society are highly integrated and often mirror each other, as well as the ability to associate a brand with the brand of the sport organizations could present a growth strategy for the business.

The literature is sparse on the topic of small business sponsorship in sport. Mack (1999) conducted a study that examined event sponsorship, but her sample contained businesses that had between 25 and 99 employees. The size of the businesses in the sample is a concern because most small businesses, according the Small Business Administration, have less than 5 employees (Small Business Administration, 2015). Mack's study presented interesting findings that 47 percent of her participants sponsor between 3-10 events annually and 81 percent sponsor an event tied to charity. She also found that 88 percent of business with yearly sales volume/year of $1 million to $4 million sponsor events and family-owned business sponsor more than non-family owned businesses.

Slack and Bentz (1996) presented a paper examining the role of small business in sport sponsorships. They found that there are few formalized policies in small business that guide their sponsorship actions. They concluded that sport sponsorship can be a strategic resource for the business, helping to present a socially responsible organization. Slack and co-authors also explored other determinants of business sponsorship in sport, finding that sport sponsorship could be utilized for penetrating a new market and non-

profits segment themselves into the categories of augmenters and media focusers will generate the most for sponsorship revenue (Berrett & Slack, 2001; Cousens & Slack, 1996; Slack & Bentz, 1996). Overall, the literature on small business sport sponsorship is sparse; an area where this project could potentially add to the literature base.

**Strategic Partnership Development**

Inter-organizational partnership development could be an important component to an organization's success or failure. Partnership development can lead to the sharing of resources or collaborating for mutual gain without having to stress one organization's financial resources. Cropper, Ebers, Huxman, and Smith Ring (2010) provided a historical perspective of inter-organizational partnerships, noting its roots are grounded in systems theory and the work of Johnson, Kast, and Rosenzweig (1964), also noting that inter-organizational partnerships came in a variety of names including partnerships, alliances, federations, collaborations, relationships, networks, etc. In this project, strategic partnership was referred to in order to maintain consistency with the literature focused on partnership action in small business and sport.

In defining a strategic partnership, I rely on the definition provided by Barney and Hesterly (2010), who defined a strategic alliance as "two or more independent organizations cooperating in the development, manufacturing, or sale of products or services" (pg. 250). They state that alliances can be done in three forms: non-equity, equity, or joint venture. Non-equity is defined as cooperation between firms and is managed directly through contracts, without cross-equity holdings. Equity alliances are cooperative contracts, supplemented by equity investments by one partner in the other partner. Joint ventures are where firms form an independent firm in which they invest;

profits from the firm are compensation partners in the investment. Barney and Hesterly also note that partnerships help firms improve their current operations, create a favorable competitive environment, and facilitate entry and exit to markets.

Partnerships are viewed as a collaboration and a system that is entered into by, at a minimum, two individuals or groups. Johnson et al. (1964) provided a definition for systems theory in management, stating that a system is "an organized or complex whole; an assemblage or combination of things or parts forming a complex and unitary whole" (pg. 367). Visualizing partnerships as a system provides a pragmatic approach to theorizing and analyzing behaviors that take place in between partners. Cropper et al. (2010) claimed the work of Johnson et al. (1964) served as the catalyst for systems theory in inter-organizational partnerships, noting that it provided managers with a pragmatic tool for analyzing their role within a larger system.

Evan (1965) provided a seminal paper on inter-organizational partnerships, providing two possible methodological tools for understanding partnerships. He noted that graph theory and input-output analysis can be beneficial for understanding how partners can work together in a partnership. The use of graph theory is beneficial for understanding networks, and could be a precursor to network analysis.

In their 1979 article in the *Academy of Management Review*, Tichy, Tushman, and Fombrun provided a theoretical model for social network analysis in organizations. They theorized that social networks were developed for four types of exchanges: expression of affect, influence attempt, exchange of information, and exchange of goods and services. In their analysis, they utilized graph theory to analyze networks established within an organization, furthering the theoretical methodology proposed by Evan (1965). An

interesting takeaway from Tichy et al. was their ability to analyze social psychographic data, since providing pros and cons for various research methodologies. The article is dated, advances in technology have provided greater analysis options for social psychographic work, but their description provide possible guidance to developing the present study.

The discussion of networks demands a definition to be introduced for networks in the project. I choose to utilize the definition provided by Easton (1992) who defined networks as a "model or metaphor which describes a number, usually a large number, of entities which are connected." Johnson, Lamming, and Harland (2010) provide a point of contention with definition and the use of the word 'metaphor', it provides a possible problem because networks mean different things to different people, a point they feel is addressed in Mintzberg's (1992) five alternative for understanding strategy. The definition of networks provided a foundation for this project to build on the understanding of how small businesses and sport organizations, working together, can grow their network and connect with stakeholders. Since the partnership proposed in this project is grounded in social benefit, we cannot neglect the literature addressing social partnerships.

### Social Partnerships

Social partnerships can be viewed as a subset of strategic partnerships, with a specific purpose of utilizing the partnership to provide good to society. Sandra Waddock has been an influential scholar in the field of social partnerships, with her early writings on the partnership form and selecting the right partner. In her 1988 article in the *Sloan Management Review,* Waddock provided a definition for social partnerships:

A commitment by a corporation of a group of corporations to work with an organization from a different economic sector (public or nonprofit). It involves a commitment of resources – time and effort – by individuals from all partner organizations. These individuals work cooperatively to solve problems that affect them all. The problems can be defined, at least in part, as a social issue; its solution will benefit all partners. Social partnership addresses issues that extend beyond organizational boundaries and traditional goals and lie within the traditional realm of public policy – that is, in the social arena. It requires active rather than passive involvement from all parties. Participants must make a resource commitment that is more than merely monetary (pg. 18).

Waddock provided a detailed and meaningful definition for social partnerships. The definition was a source of inspiration for this project. An area of difference from the definition provided by Waddock is that the proposed model does not necessarily rely on a social cause, but is utilizing community engagement to connect with community stakeholders and improve the community, not mutually benefiting all community stakeholders. I choose the term strategic partnership because it is using each partner's resources, through their networks, to build social capital and enhance both the sport organization and its small business owner's brands. Also, when this model is applied in a pragmatic manner, I want the focus to not be purely on gaining a positive public perception or solving a problem that may, in part, be a social issue, but I want it to change the strategic mindset of the parties involved.

Waddock (1988) provided a guide to understanding how picking the right partners can be instrumental in creating social change. She discussed the need for understanding

the type of partnership planned, nature of locality and characteristics of people who may be involved. She also noted that it is important for executives to retain the ability to make decisions regarding funding and in-kind contributions. She would follow up her work on selecting the right partners with a paper in 1989 that would present a model for understanding partnerships between organizations.

Waddock (1989) presented a typology for social partnership organization. She discussed the evolutionary stages of social partnership formation: 1. a context of forces generating a recognition of need/use of partnership, 2. initiation of the partnership, 3. establishment, and 4. maturity. The four steps laid out by Waddock provide a road map for understanding social partnership formation and growth. She also noted that the process is cyclical in nature and that partnerships tend to broaden and grow over time. Her assessment that partnerships tend to grow is logical, especially since she is discussing social partnerships, which serve a variety of stakeholders and generate value.

Hudson (2014) echoed the comments of Waddock, stating that social partnerships are a new social contract to deliver focused value propositions for stakeholders. He stated that the new social contract, based on a "3+2" formula, represents the added value each sector brings to a cross-sector collaboration, with the three main collaborators being: government, business, and civic society (Hudson, 2014). He added that "universities would be another possible contributor because of their access to teaching and research experience, and students as a source of skilled labor for the workforce" (pg. 369). We fully agree with Hudson in that the proposed model in this project brings the university into a closer relationship with business in the community, almost creating a full 5 component model, including his final product of the equation, "real-time engagement

with community citizens." Building relationships with stakeholders has been shown to increase associations with a brand, providing greater trust and reciprocity behaviors toward a brand/organization.

Peloza and Ye (2014) provided an analysis of how social partnerships can build brands. They grounded their work in the work of Keller (1993), who introduced the concept of customer-based brand equity. Keller suggested that associations between a brand and specific attributes, and associations between the brand and perceived benefits, form the image of any brand. Peloza and Ye note that a brand that engages in social partnerships receive benefits to their brand in experiential, social, and functional manners. They note that "brands tied to social partnerships can provide a high degree of symbolic value by creating 'badges' for customers who support such brands" (pg. 193). They stressed the fact that to receive the full benefit of a social partnership, an organization must fully integrate this into their organization by: seeking high, big, broad, and intensive objectives that must be central and major to their organization, and must be complex managerially. The final component that I find important is their definition of workforce fit, meaning "it represents an opportunity for brands to benefit from social partnership by allowing their employees to engage directly with a non-profit at the grassroots level" (pg. 199). Brand enhancement is a critical focus of this project, being the outcome of increased engagement with the community. The partnership must fully leverage its strategic nature to benefit all parties.

Seitanidi and Crane (2009) discussed social partnerships as "primarily addressing social issues by combining organizational resources to offer solutions that benefit partners, as well as society at large" (pg. 413). They concluded that social partnerships

are comprised of partnership selection, partnership design, and partnership institutionalization, and a partnership review process. The partnership selection process includes: deciding an institutional form, assessing the different options, and informal risk assessment processes. Partnership design includes: experimentation, adaptation, and operationalization. Partnership institutionalization includes relationship mastering and personal familiarization. The model introduced by Seitanidi and Crane was the inspiration for a model instituted in sport.

Walters and Anagnostopoulos (2012) provided an application of social partnerships to sport. They relied on the model introduced by Seitanidi and Crane as the foundation for their model, only adding a small construct at the bottom of the model allowing for feedback to occur from the partners about the model. The feedback was discussed as a manner to assess the value of the partnership and the direction moving forward. The model addition by Walters and Anagnostopoulos was their attempt to extend the model, but it merely added an assumed comment to an already highly cited model. In this project, relying on the model introduced by Seitanidi and Crane as the basis for understanding how partner selection and partnership management should be administered.

Overall, the use of social partnerships and strategic management are critical components of this project. In this section, I have identified my perceived difference between social partnership and strategic partnerships, an area where I recognize the importance of a social partnership, but feel that the present project is using elements of social partnerships without directly solving a societal issue. I agree with the definition provided by Waddock (1988) and supported by Selsky and Parker (2010), but I feel the

introduction of strategic planning and management should be included into the project to change the thinking of administrators.

## Theoretical Model

The theoretical model, introduced in chapter one, is comprised of three primary components: stakeholder theory, responsible leadership, and social capital. All three present a wealth of literature supporting their position in this model, but the emphasis of the proposed model is the center. The center of the model is where all three constructs overlap, creating, what I will call, the ideal candidate for partnership with a sport organization. If small business owners find themselves falling within the center region of the model, they should display a strong tendency to be responsible leaders, aspire to have their business interact with stakeholders in a variety of channels, and strive to construct social capital within their community. One could say that I am trying to find a magical unicorn, but I believe small business owners do exist that display these qualities and may even exist in a greater quantity than expected.

To address these constructs, a detailed review of the literature is necessary. Stakeholder theory and social capital are two established academic disciplines and have an extensive literature base supporting them. Responsible leadership is the new construct, catching on in the late 2000's, but having developed an extensive literature base. In order to make this document one that can be enjoyable to the reader, the provided literature is pertinent to this study, including the seminal works in their respective areas.

The literature surrounding stakeholder theory focused on the works of Ed Freeman and other scholars who have written on the normative and pragmatic manner that this theory can be applied to management. Stakeholder theory has afforded many

scholars with the opportunity to develop divergent lines of research, with the theory serving as their foundation. The analysis of the literature focused on the basic tenants of stakeholder theory, developing value and enhancing relationships with stakeholders. The analysis focused predominantly on the strategic management of stakeholder theory and how it has been utilized to derive value for a variety of stakeholders in a simultaneous manner. The review of literature will not be venturing into the line of research addressing stakeholder salience or power, because this line addresses stakeholder concerns of identifying stakeholders of the organization, instead of deriving value for stakeholders (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). The analysis focus on how organization can derive the greatest value, integrating it into their overall strategy and how an organization can develop authentic and meaningful relationships with stakeholders.

The literature surrounding responsible leadership is still a fairly young area of study, especially in the management literature. As with any of the thousands of leadership theories that exist, responsible leadership was built on the foundation of previous leadership literature focused on ethical and servant leadership theories. The analysis of responsible leadership provided a background for the theory followed by an explanation of ethical and servant leadership. A focus on these two constructs of responsible leadership because they are the core constructs that make up the theory.

Social capital is a giant in the literature, spanning the disciplines of sport management, sociology, psychology, management, political science, and urban studies. The whole social capital theory was not addressed in this project; instead focusing on social capital as it is discussed in the management literature. Seminal works are included that address the two primary forms of social capital: bridging and bonding. My analysis

included work from authors such as Putnam and Adler and Kwon. The list of authors is just a sampling of what I was covered in my analysis of social capital. Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of conceptual model, where a small business owner who is positioned in the middle of the model would be an ideal candidate for a strategic partnership with the sport organization. The analysis is focused on addressing social capital as it relates to management and connection with organizational stakeholders.

Figure 2.1 – Conceptual Model
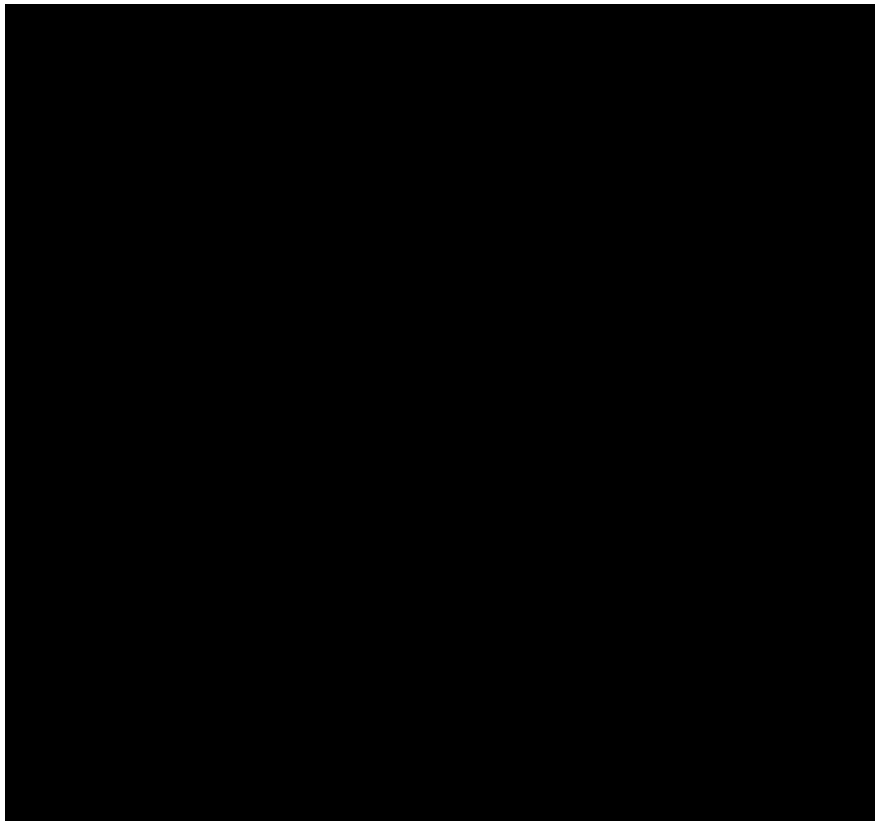


**Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory is based on the construct of relationships and deriving value for stakeholders through an increased understanding of what they seek from the

organization. In his book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Ed Freeman

provided a definition and extensive insight into how managing for stakeholders should be

a strategic direction for a firm. The definition that I was relied on for conceptualizing

what a stakeholder is and how it relates to an organization is "any group or individual

who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives" (E. Freeman,

1984, p. 25). While Freeman states that this definition is an overly simplified definition

of the stakeholder system, it provides a clear roadmap to follow in understanding

stakeholder theory for this paper.

Freeman was not the first person to discuss the stakeholder concept in the

literature. According to Freeman et al. (2010), the first mention of stakeholder

management literature was in 1963 in an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research

Institute. Freeman et al. discussed the original intention of stakeholders, drawing on the

1963 Stanford Research Institute memo, as "those groups without whose support the

organization would cease to exist" (pg. 31). Developing stakeholder theory was not a

smooth passage, with scholars presenting fascination with separating the economic and

social aspects of stakeholder management.

Ansoff (1965) discussed responsibilities and objectives and that organizational

objectives should be "balanced between the various stakeholders of the firm" (pg. 34).

Ansoff credited Abrams (1954) and Cyert and March (1963) with a similar view,

rejecting the theory under the premise that economic and social issues of the firm should

be addressed separately, with emphasis placed on the economic viewpoint being the

primary focus. Firms must produce a profit, or else they would not be able to ensure they

would be able to maintain the foundational social responsibility and economic responsibility to stakeholders.

Carroll (1979) introduced strategy and corporate social responsibility. He would propose that economic responsibilities are the foundational responsibility a firm has towards society. Society is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and strategy is the basis for which a firm goes about planning for how they will address stakeholder demands while providing strategic guidance for achieving organizational goals. Stakeholder theory is commonly associated with strategic management and strategy formation.

Freeman et al. (2010) provided a timeline for the tracing of stakeholder theory and stakeholder management up until 1984 when Freeman published the seminal book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. They note its transition into the planning process for management and then into describing the responsibilities of the Board of Directors. Stakeholder theory has been discussed in a wide variety of aspects relating to management. They note that stakeholder theory is intended to solve the problem of ethics in capitalism, problem of value creation and trade, problem of the managerial mindset, the separation fallacy, the integration mindset, and the principle of responsibility. It should be made explicitly clear that stakeholder theory is a pragmatic approach to management; a point that was made clear by Freeman et al. (2010).

In the seminal book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Freeman (1984) lays out stakeholder theory. He described the need for a new framework for management because the "managerial view of the firm simply provides no cohesive way of understanding the changes that have or will occur; managers have a hard time separating between trivial and real changes" (pg. 22). Managerial decision making is a

critical focal point of the theory; stakeholder theory provides managers with a pragmatic

guide to making decisions, based around the primary question of how we can develop the

greatest value for stakeholders. Freeman repeatedly discusses the need to develop

relationships with all stakeholders. Relationship development should not be taken for

granted and should be conducted in a manner that works to treat stakeholders as ends and

not a means to an end for the organization. Freeman frequently discussed the relationship

process with stakeholders, which prompted managers to group stakeholders into generic

groups since the theory was initiated, making it easier to manage stakeholders and

ultimately removing "strategic" from the book title *Strategic Management*.

In 2005, McVea and Freeman introduced a new take on stakeholder management

that they coined the "names and faces" approach to stakeholder management. They stated

that stakeholder theory should be utilized on an individual basis instead of grouping

stakeholders together into generic groups, limiting the impact of individual differences

that comprise the group. Understanding the individual demands of stakeholders allows

for organizations to bridge the values gap between the organization and their stakeholders

(R. E. Freeman & Auster, 2015). Bridging the values gap provides the transition to social

capital through the development of relationships and a greater understanding of

stakeholder demands. Putnam (2000) noted that social capital can serve as both a

bridging and bonding nature; stakeholder theory works through relationship building to

serve bridging social capital and bringing together groups from different backgrounds

(Putnam, 2000). Bringing stakeholders together through unified efforts from the sport

organization and small business can familiarize community stakeholders with the

partnership program from the sport organization; with the resulting output being social capital creation.

Stakeholder theory and responsible leadership are homogeneous with a responsible leader placing emphasis on being a servant to their employees and being authentic in how they operate the business. Freeman and Auster (2015) stated that authenticity is critical for a business to understand where their values originate from and what values should shape the organizational direction. Responsible leadership is managing for stakeholders because it places stakeholders at the center of the decision making process, allowing for values to be derived that meet stakeholder demands and needs (Maak & Pless, 2006b; Pless & Maak, 2012). Stakeholder theory is one of the three guiding principles of theoretical framework in this project; an increased understanding of responsible leadership must be undertaken to understand how a small business owner leads their business.

**Responsible Leadership**

Responsible leadership is a new concept that ties stakeholder management and leadership together, in effect, leading an organization to best serve the stakeholders instead of a select few. Maak (2007) described the purpose of leadership as "the building and cultivating trustful, sustainable relationships with stakeholders inside and outside the organization to achieve mutually shared objectives, based on a vision of a business as a force for good for many and not just a few" (pg. 331). Leadership is a topic that is often discussed as a crucial element for a business decision maker or manager to possess, but which element of the leadership spectrum is desired to guide an organization in an effective direction? Scholars have noted that business leaders should seek to achieve

higher-level goals based on the businesses role in society, taking the perspective of being transformational instead of transactional (Burns, 2010; Maak, 2007). The transformational thinking of responsible leadership is homogenous with the work of Freeman on stakeholder theory, stating that business should move past the transactional nature with a pure focus on profits and move to transformational thinking to derive value for stakeholders.

Maak and Pless (2006) stated Responsible Leadership is grounded in servant and ethical leadership. The focus on ethical leadership was emphasized by Maak and Pless when they edited the book *Responsible Leadership* in 2006, making it the first chapter of the book and selecting Joanne Ciulla to be the author of the chapter. Ciulla is a dominant voice in ethical leadership theory, editing the book *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership* in 2014. Maak and Pless also discussed servant leadership as a foundational component to the responsible leadership theory. A brief discussion of ethical and servant leadership theories follows.

Ethical leadership is given a harsh examination by Ciulla in Maak and Pless's (2006) book *Responsible Leadership,* stating that most authors, when discussing leadership, often "genuflect at the altar of ethics and speak with hushed reverence about its importance to leadership" (pg. 19). She noted that scholars often skirt the topic by not providing specific details pertaining to how ethics can be integrated in a pragmatic manner into leadership. She has written extensively on ethical leadership and providing a guideline for integrating ethics into leadership. In 1995, she published an article that examined ethical leadership, highlighting many of the same flaws that she wrote about in 2006 and 2014, possibly explaining the quote earlier in this paragraph. She expresses a

need for more research surrounding the application of ethics into leadership, express displeasure in 2014 when she noted the disregard to include ethics into the leadership discussion, noting that "applied researchers often overlook ethics because it may seem like common sense" (pg. 5). I would concur with Ciulla in the need for a practical application of ethics to leadership in a pragmatic manner, leading to the discussion of servant leadership.

Maak and Pless brought up servant leadership noting its influential presence in their development of responsible leadership, noting that it is important to the theory because of its influence of an "ethic of care" (2006a, p. 46). Servant leadership was developed by Robert Greenleaf in 1977, in a series of essays. Greenleaf does not only rely on the individual to be the servant, but discusses how an organization can be a servant. He stated that his thesis was "caring for persons; the more able and the less able serving each other, and is the rock upon which a good society is built" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 62). The work of Greenleaf is foundational and, coupled with ethical leadership, is the foundational element of responsible leadership, making it a potential new theory to influence leadership in an ethical manner. A primary drawback to responsible leadership is that it is a theory; responsible leadership has not been empirically examined.

In deriving value for stakeholders, social capital can be measured as an output from the proposed model in this project. Scholars have viewed social capital from an economic and social lens, with social capital being considered an "investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace" (Lin, 2001, p. 19). Cohen and Prusack (2001, pg. 4) describe social capital as a "stock of active connections among people: trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind members of

human networks together." Maak (2007, pg. 333) provided his own working definition of social capital: "social capital consists of social structures and resources which are inherent to, more or less, institutionalized relationships of mutual recognition, both internal and external to the organization, which allow facilitating mutually beneficial, responsible action." Social capital and responsible leadership are linked through the attention to stakeholder demands and incorporating stakeholders into organizational decision making.

Responsible leadership can be conceptualized through the means in which the organization works to provide value to its stakeholders. Value can be derived to stakeholders using socially responsible actions of community service or action within the local community. Strategic planning should be utilized executing socially responsible actions to ensure that it is a good fit for the organization and is congruent with the organizations strategic mission (Guzmán & Becker-Olsen, 2010). Building relationships with stakeholders allows for an organization to understand how it can work to provide socially responsible behaviors that will facilitate the development of social capital in the community. Maak (2007) stated that responsible leadership is a tool to building social capital amongst stakeholders. Social capital is the next area that I will discuss as a component of the conceptual model.

**Social Capital**

Social capital is a theory and utilized by both sociologists and economists. Sociologists operationalize social capital though their ability to build and augment communities, whereas economists operationalize social capital as a means to generate a financial return from the building of relationships in the community. I believe that both

perspectives have merit and can be utilized effectively in business if it is done in a

manner to best serve the organization's stakeholders. If an organization utilizes

responsible leadership, the business leadership will be leading the business to best serve

the needs of its stakeholders and will not be seeking to exploit their relationships with

stakeholders because this would create distrust and cynicism that can be detrimental to

the organization (Maak, 2007; Maak & Pless, 2006b).

Social capital is focused on the ability for people to act collectively (Woolcock &

Narayan, 2000). Working collectively is a foundational element of the proposed model in

this project, but not just individuals but sport organizations and small businesses in the

community. Adler and Kwon (2002, pg. 23) noted that social capital can benefit the

individual or group with the output from the resources proving to be assets: "social

capital is the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure

and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from information, influence,

and solidarity it makes available to the actor." Social capital and stakeholder theory are

congruent if we utilize the explanation provided by Adler and Kwon which placed an

emphasis on stakeholder engagement.

Stakeholder engagement is important because of its ability to generate the greatest

possible value for the stakeholder, which according to Freeman and Auster should be the

primary purpose of the organization. Maak (2007) provided a model for the interaction of

social capital, responsible leadership, and stakeholder theory, placing social capital as the

foundation in the model, leading to responsible leadership, stakeholder engagement and

value which feeds back to social capital. While the model is very interesting, the flow is

not proper because social capital is the result of the value created from stakeholder

engagement, not the base for the model. The model provided by Maak (2007) will serve

as a good guiding post for this project, but I believe the model flows in a separate manner

during the development of strategic partnerships.

# CHAPTER 3

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a technological enhanced qualitative approach to address the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore and gain insight into the strategic management actions of small business decision makers and how their organizations engage with their local communities. The study sought to gain insight that could potentially be used to better understand partnership development opportunities with small business and various community stakeholders. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the theoretical model was a guide to understanding the small business decision maker's responses to answer the research questions. The theoretical framework was the guide, in this grounded approach, it aided in understanding, not the guide the analysis.

### Participants

The participants in this study are small business decision makers or those who are in key decision-making roles within a small business. Small businesses are defined by the United States Small Business Administration as those without 500 employees (Small Business Administration, 2004). Sticking with this definition for the present study, segmenting the participants in this study by micro-businesses, or those businesses with less than 50 employees. Businesses that have less than 50 employees make up the majority of small businesses within the United States (Small Business Administration, 2015; Viek, 2013). The other component of small business to consider is whether the business is a franchise or non-franchise. Small business decision makers from franchise and non-franchise businesses were utilized in this study; the potential differences

between the two forms of small business could be important to the overall study and analyzed.

**Participant Recruitment**

Participants were recruited from three specific cities within the United States: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Charleston, South Carolina; and Tampa, Florida. The three cities were chosen because of their unique culture and demographics, each having a wide variety of sport organizations within the city. A brief description of each city is provided in the following paragraphs.

**Albuquerque, New Mexico.** According to the United States Census Bureau, Albuquerque had an estimated population in 2015 of 559,121 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a). Table 3.1 provides a profile of Albuquerque form the Census Bureau. Albuquerque has a diverse culture, with a very heavy Hispanic/Mexican influence on the city. Albuquerque was selected to be in this study because of its geographic location and its diverse cultural mix. Albuquerque contains the University of New Mexico, which has over 25,000 students and is the primary form of sports entertainment for the residents of Albuquerque. The city has a Minor League Baseball team who is the AAA affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. The city also has a minor league soccer team, but the primary focus of the sports entertainment culture is focused on the University of New Mexico's athletic events.

The city maintains a college football bowl game, Gildan New Mexico Bowl, which is owned and operated by ESPN. The bowl has built a presence for sport entertainment in the state of New Mexico, but it only occurs once a year. The University

of New Mexico is the primary sport entertainment avenue for the residents of Albuquerque, highlighting its place in this study.

Albuquerque does not have a significant number of large corporations, making them reliant on small businesses for their economy. The state of New Mexico has one publicly traded company that is headquartered within the state, Power New Mexico. The dependence of the state on small and medium-sized firms for their economic existence makes an ideal case for this project.

Table 3.1 Albuquerque, New Mexico

| Albuquerque | Amount/Percent |
|---|---|
| Total Population (2015 estimate) | 559,121 |
| Race and Hispanic Origin | White – 42.7%<br>Black or African-American – 3.3%<br>American Indian – 4.6%<br>Asian – 2.6%<br>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – 0.1%<br>Hispanic – 46.7% |
| Employment Rate | 65% |
| Education | High School Diploma – 88%<br>Bachelor's Degree – 33% |
| Business | Total Firms – 44,272<br>Men Owned – 20,208<br>Women Owned – 16,129<br>Minority Owned – 16,511<br>Non-Minority Owned – 23,116 |
| Median Household Income | $47,413 |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2015

**Charleston, SC.** Charleston, South Carolina presents a unique, dynamic case for this study because it contains three universities/colleges and does not contain any professional teams from the major sports leagues. Charleston County will be the focus of this case because it encompasses a wide diverse dynamic of individuals and culture. The city limits of Charleston are small, but most of the residents reside within Charleston County; this is the rationale for the focus on the county instead of the city of Charleston.

Charleston County contains The Citadel, College of Charleston, and Charleston Southern University; all three schools compete in NCAA Division I athletics, with Charleston Southern and The Citadel playing football at the FCS level. The three schools compete in three different conferences: The Southern Conference, Colonial Athletic Association, and the Big South, respectively.

The Citadel is a non-service academy and a military school that has a total enrollment slightly over 3,500. The College of Charleston was established in 1770 and total enrollment is slightly over 12,000 students. The College of Charleston competes at the Division I level, but does not compete in football. Charleston Southern University is a private institution and has approximately 3,600 students.

Charleston County, in 2015, had an estimated population of 389,262 and contains the cities of Charleston, Folly Beach, Isle of Palms, and North Charleston (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015b). It also contains a wide variety of towns that are regarded as some of the wealthiest in South Carolina. Table 3.2 contains demographical information for Charleston County.

The economy of Charleston and Charleston County is tied to tourism and the port. Charleston is regarded by many travel websites as the top tourist destination in the world, citing its beauty and world-class hospitality, with U.S. World and News Report voting Charleston the number one city in the world (Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2016). The economy of Charleston is forecast to grow more than 25,000 jobs a year up until 2020, citing a culture welcoming to millennials, expanses in aviation, a booming start-up industry and increased influx of shipping due to the port (Charleston Regional Development Alliance, 2015).

Table 3.2 Charleston County, South Carolina

| Charleston County, South Carolina | Amount/Percent |
|---|---|
| Population | 389,262 |
| Race and Hispanic Origin | White – 68,2%<br>Black or African American – 28.1%<br>American Indian – 0.4%<br>Asian – 1.7%<br>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – 0.1%<br>Hispanic/Latino – 5.0% |
| Employment Rate | 65.3% |
| Education | High School – 89.2%<br>Bachelor's Degree – 40.0% |
| Business | Total Firms – 40,782<br>Men Owned – 21,522<br>Women Owned – 14,464<br>Minority Owned – 7,135<br>Non-Minority Owned – 31,968 |
| Median Household Income | $52,083 |

United States Census Bureau, 2015

**Tampa Bay Area.** The Tampa Bay area includes Pinellas County and the City of Tampa. The Tampa Bay area is being selected because the metro population is transient and residents of Pinellas County often work in Tampa and vice versa. Pinellas County is the most densely populated county in Florida, containing the cities St. Petersburg and Clearwater. The population of the combined area was approximated, in 2015, to be 1,318,902 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015c). Table 3.3 contains more demographical information on the Tampa Bay area.

The Tampa Bay area contains the University of South Florida and University of Tampa. The University of South Florida is a large state institution and has a student population of almost 49,000 and competes at the NCAA Division I level in the American Athletic Conference. The University of Tampa is a private institution with an estimated student population of 8,000. They compete in the NCAA Division II level in the Florida Sunshine Conference. The University of Tampa is located in downtown Tampa,

compared to the University of South Florida, which is located in a suburb of Tampa called Temple Terrace.

The major reason for selecting Tampa as a location for this project is because of the competition for sports entertainment faced by University of South Florida and University of Tampa by professional sports. Tampa is certainly not a college town and its colleges are not the primary form of sports entertainment for the population of the area. The Tampa Bay area contains the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL), Tampa Bay Rays (MLB), and Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL). The area has recently seen its professional teams be successful in competing and winning championships. The role of the Tampa Bay area in this project is to examine how small business decision makers perceive the ability to form partnerships with sport organizations in a market dominated by professional sports, an aspect that is lacking in the other two markets.

Table 3.3 Tampa Bay Area

| Tampa Bay Area (Tampa & Pinellas County) | Amount/Percent |
|---|---|
| Population | 1,318,902 |
| Race and Hispanic Origin | White – 72.5%<br>Black or African American – 18.3%<br>American Indian – 0.3%<br>Asian – 3.2%<br>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – 0.1%<br>Hispanic/Latino – 5.6% |
| Employment Rate | 61.6% |
| Education | High School – 87.8%<br>Bachelor's Degree – 31% |
| Business | Total Firms – 134,688<br>Men Owned – 69,010<br>Women Owned – 50,380<br>Minority Owned – 37,693<br>Non-Minority Owned – 91,751 |
| Median Household Income | $44,657 |

U.S. Census Bureau, 2015

**Participant Recruitment (Mailing List)**

Due to the increased time demands placed on small business decision makers, a survey was utilized in this project. To obtain as many participants as possible, two methods of recruiting participants were utilized. The first avenue for recruiting participants for this study was through direct email, provided from emails obtained through a business-to-business marketing list purchased from the B2B.co, an online business to business email mailing list database. They collect company emails through searching of public records, the internet, and an opt-in service for businesses to join their database. The database will be broken down into the four markets previously discussed in this paper. The databases will be broken down into decision makers with the following titles: President, Vice-President, Owner, Founder, C-Suite Executive, Executive, Director, Chairman, Director, General Manager, and Board Member. Emails beginning with "sales@..." were removed, only using emails with unique first portions of their email address. After cleaning up the databases emails will be sent to 77,699 potential participants (Charleston, SC = 18,446; Albuquerque, NM = 29,668; Tampa Bay, FL = 29,585).

Due to the exploratory nature of this project, I am not setting any minimums for participants. The survey is designed to replicate an interview utilizing technology, to try and obtain more participants than if face-to-face interviews were conducted. I am not conducting a power analysis, as I am not seeking to generalize to the overall population, but to develop a theoretical model for possible partnerships between small business decision makers and sport organization, based on an increased understanding of small businesses comprehension and use of strategic management principles.

## Instrument Delivery & Project Timeline

The instrument utilized in this project was delivered using a web link provided by Qualtrics. Qualtrics provided a digital interface for participants to participate in this study at their leisure, either on their computers or cell phones. The instrument was designed to replicate an interview and is a method that has been discussed as a new approach to qualitative methodology (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Once the project concluded, data was pulled from Qualtrics utilizing a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

The project lasted a total of two weeks. Upon notification from the Institutional Review Board for acceptance for this project, distribution of the survey to potential participants will began immediately. The instrument was distributed on a Tuesday; reminder emails were sent to participants who originally received the instrument three times in this week. Reminder emails were sent out three times to potential participants during the second week. At the end of the second week, data collection ceased and an analysis began. Data analysis will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

## Instrument

The instrument, which is available in Appendix A, opens with demographical questions seeking to understand more about the participant's business and personal information about themselves. The qualitative questions are intended to replicate a face-to-face interview (Glesne, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The questions are grounded in theory and seek to provide an increased understanding of how small business decision makers interact with their communities and engage in strategic management. Each of the questions utilized on the survey are intended to provide insight into the small

business decision maker's strategic management and leadership knowledge as well as how their organization utilized strategic management.

## Analysis

The analysis of this project was two-fold, first an inductive thematic analysis was conducted by hand, deriving themes emerging from the responses from the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011), followed by an analysis using Leximancer (A. Smith, 2017). The purpose of the two-stage analysis was to lead to possible methodological triangulation, due to the three separate and unique sites being used in the study, the project utilizes data triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Triangulation is often utilized in qualitative studies to increase the possible generalization of the study's results, leading to increased assurance the results are reflective of the overall population sampled from in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). A thematic analysis was utilized in this analysis because it is "widely-used qualitative analytic method, and theoretically-flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77).

The questions on the instrument are all open-ended and intend to replicate an interview. The study employs a technologically enhanced qualitative study, using a thematic analysis. The open-ended questions allow for participants to freely enter their responses, providing a large amount of textural data. The data will be utilized using the qualitative analysis software, Leximancer.

**Inductive Thematic Analysis**

Braun & Clarke (2006) provided a guide for conducting a thematic analysis, broken into six phases, defining "inductive thematic analysis" as one where themes identified are strongly linked to the data, like a grounded theory, and may have little connection to the actual question and are not driven by the researcher's analytic preconceptions (pg. 89). The inductive thematic analysis takes on an emerging role of themes from the data.

The phases are as follows: 1. Familiarizing yourself with data, 2. Generating initial codes, 3. Searching for themes, 4. Reviewing Themes, 5. Defining and naming themes, and 6. Producing the report.

Phase 1 involves the researcher becoming familiar with the data collected in the "data corpus" or all the data collected in the project, it involves a great deal of reading and re-reading the corpus. Initial thoughts are written down to gain an understanding of the data.

Phase 2 begins after the researcher has familiarized themselves with the data, leading to the development of codes. The codes are associated with the initial set of ideas generated from reviewing the data. Coding is a process by which data are organized into "meaningful groups" leading to the development of "units of analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 95).

Phase 3 involves searching for themes. After the list of codes have been developed, it is compiled into larger groups or "themes." The codes are compiled together, making it easier to associate into themes, only larger coded sections should be

included in the themes, disregarding the smaller sub-themes. Visual mapping could be beneficial to understanding the dominate themes in a project.

Phase 4 is where the researcher reviews the themes. The review process includes going through the groups of themes and seeing where in the data there is evidence to support the overall strength of the theme. Braun & Clarke (2006) recommend two levels of analysis, reviewing the data at the level of the coded data, seeking patterns. The second level examines the theme in respect to the overall dataset. One could continually work to refine themes, but Braun & Clarke recommend that if the theme fits the data well, stop the analysis.

Phase 5 involves defining and naming themes. Once a researcher has a developed thematic map, the researcher must describe the theme. In the "define and refine" process Braun & Clarke (2006) recommend that the research capture the 'essence' of what the theme is about, discretion is up to the research to define each theme (pg. 99).

Phase 6 is writing up the report. It is a fairly self-explanatory phase, where the researcher writes up their findings from the analysis. Once the analysis is completed, the report should provide visual representation of the themes, making it easier for readers to understand the theme. Just as with quantitative analysis, all steps taken during the analysis should be described in the report.

**Present Study**. In the present study, the guidelines laid out by Braun & Clarke (2006) were followed for conducting an inductive thematic analysis. The analysis will be conducted prior to the data being analyzed in Leximancer. Each question will be analyzed individually to answer the four research questions. An explanation of the method for answering each research question is explained later in this chapter. The analysis will seek

codes that are emergent from the corpus for each question on the instrument, after codes

and themes are derived for each question, the themes will be synthesized with other

questions from the instrument to answer the research question.

NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2014)  was utilized in this phase of the

analysis to conduct a word count/frequency analysis for each question. NVivo is a

qualitative analysis software, frequently utilized in qualitative analysis. The decision to

use a different software besides Leximancer was done to not bring bias into the inductive

thematic analysis conducted by hand. The word count will be utilized to add a

quantitative component to the analysis, giving support for the development of thematic

strength in the inductive thematic analysis. The results section of this project will

describe the results of the inductive thematic analysis done by hand. The results will be

compared to the results derived from Leximancer, examining each set of results to

triangulate the "true meaning" to answer the research questions.

**Leximancer**

Leximancer is a text analysis tool, analyzing textual data, breaking the data into a

conceptual map displaying the themes. It presents the data in a mode of understanding

concepts, the connections of each concept to each other and the links to the original text;

providing a means to "quantify and displaying the conceptual stature of the text" (A.

Smith, McFadden, & McFadden, 2016, p. 3). "Concepts in Leximancer are collections of

words that generally travel together through text. The terms are weighted according to

how frequently they occur in sentences containing the concept, compared to how

frequently they occur elsewhere…concept definitions are also used to determine the

frequency of co-occurrence between concepts" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 9) Leximancer is

described to have a variety of uses, of which one is academic research, noting it can be used in literature, media studies, sociology, and "coding surveys that ask open-ended questions (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 6). It is a tool that can take large amounts of textural data and develop conceptual maps for understanding the meaning of the large groups of texts.

Leximancer conducts a content analysis, which is described as a "research tool used for determining the presence of words or concepts in collections of textural documents" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 7). The analysis conducts a conceptual and relational analysis. A conceptual analysis "measures documents for the presences and frequency of concepts" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 8). Leximancer learns from the text to develop a library and thesaurus, removing potential bias from the researchers developing their own code scheme for the project. A relational analysis "measures how such identified concepts are related to each other with the documents" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 8). The relational analysis measures the co-occurrence of concepts and presents a visual representation of the comparison, highlighting the main relationships between concepts.

Leximancer begins the analysis by first finding concept "seed words" and are the starting point of a concept. Through the analysis, more pertinent words may be discovered, pushing the "seed words" away from the center of the concept. Leximancer can learn new concepts based on the original set of "seed words" derived from the text. When the concept map is produced, the main concepts are shown in gray. The overall brightness of the concept label, the more often the concept is seen in the text. Themes are "heat coded" with the most important theme appears in red, and the next in orange (A.

Smith et al., 2016, p. 12). Each theme takes the name of the "most frequent and connected concept within the circle" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 15). Words are classified in concepts, creating "relevancies of all the associated keywords that are present in the block are summed" (A. Smith et al., 2016, p. 95). The associated keywords affixed to the concept, which relate to how connected the keywords are together in the concept. The more words closely related in a concept, leads to increased strength and connectivity.

Leximancer is still a new software for qualitative analysis, which can be a positive and a negative. It has been described as a tool in exploratory studies, but has only been cited one time in Sport Management journals (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014). Per guidance from the developers of Leximancer, the quantitative output should be used as a guide for understanding textural analysis, but logic should be utilized when assessing the strength of a theme (A. E. Smith & Humphreys, 2006). Leximancer has been found to be reliable and that there is no difference between individual coding and Leximancer's machine learning ability to develop its own coding scheme (Cretchley, Rooney, & Gallois, 2010; Grech, Horberry, & Smith, 2002). While Leximancer has been utilized in a variety of disciplines, scholars cannot agree on an agreed upon threshold for connectivity, further reinforcing the initial guidance of Leximancer's developers (Crofts & Bisman, 2010). Leximancer will be utilized in this study and logic will be utilized to make associations with theory.

**Research Questions**

The research questions posed earlier in this paper were analyzed in four separate manners. Each qualitative question in the instrument will be analyzed individually. The demographic questions were used to segment the data for further inquiry, specifically

firm size, value, perceived decision-making authority, gender, and educational

obtainment. Analysis will also be explored for each site, conducting individual analysis

for each geographic location and then aggregating the data into one large analysis. The

individual breakdown for each geographic location could provide greater insight into the

possible cultural differences between each location, in relation to small businesses use of

strategic management principles.

**Research Question 1:** The first research question addressed how small business

decisions makers define "community social responsibility." The first two questions on the

instrument address defining "community social responsibility" and how their

organization engages with their local community. The responses from the participants

were copied into a Microsoft Excel .csv file and loaded into Leximancer for analysis. The

results of the content analysis and themes discovered will be utilized to develop a

definition for "community social responsibility."

**Research Question 2:** The second research question explored how small

business engage and the strategic management and planning process. Each question will

be analyzed individually following the same methodology as the first research question.

The analysis of the questions will be utilized to derive an understanding of how small

businesses engage with the strategic management process.

**Research Question 3:** The third research question explored how small businesses

engage in strategic partnerships to engage their communities with sport organizations and

what is considered when they are on sponsoring an event or organization. The same

procedure was utilized in analyzing the responses as done with the first question. The

analysis will be utilized to understand any barrier to engaging in partnerships and what a small business considers in sponsoring an event or organization.

**Research Question 4:** The fourth research question explored leadership of small business decision makers. The analysis will utilize the final two questions of the instrument, gaining an understanding of how the small business decision maker developed their leadership and strategic management skills and what they presently do to continually develop these skills. The analysis of these two questions provide feedback to understand how small business decision makers have prepared themselves to be leaders and what are they currently doing to refine their skills. Leadership skills have been found to be learned and can vary depending on the situations leaders are placed into amongst their followers (Katz, 1955). The analysis of these questions was done using the same method as the first questions.

**CHAPTER 4**

**RESULTS**

An attempt was made to include as many small businesses as possible that reside

in the Tampa, Charleston, and Albuquerque markets, using the purchased B2B mailing

list. The intent of this study was to replicate an interview, but do so using technology to

encourage more small business decision makers to participate. The survey was distributed

to a total of 77,699 potential participants (Charleston, SC = 18,446; Albuquerque, NM =

29,668; Tampa Bay, FL = 29,585). Mailing lists are not perfect and it is common for list

to not produce a 100 percent accuracy rate. Table 4.1 displays the distribution figures for

each city with their effective distribution rate. The effective distribution rate (EDR) is

intended to be the percentage of emails that were successfully delivered to potential

participants.

Table 4.1 Distribution Figures for Email Survey Distribution

|  | Albuquerque, NM | Charleston, SC | Tampa Bay, FL | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 29,668 | 18,446 | 29,585 | 77,699 |
| Bounced/Failed | 16,184 | 9,607 | 12,063 | 37,854 |
| Opt-Outs | 364 | 204 | 379 | 947 |
| Actual | 13,120 | 8,635 | 17,143 | 38,898 |
| Participants | 25 | 2 | 16 | 43 |
| EDR | 44.22% | 46.81% | 57.94% | 51.39% |

The solicitation to potential participants led to a total of 45 participants. 32 of the

responses were usable in their entirety, meaning they responded to all off the open-ended

questions in the survey and then demographical questions. Eleven participants only

answered the demographical questions. Two participants were removed from the analysis

because they reported having over 500 employees in their organization, meaning they did

not qualify as a small business according to the United States Small Business

Administration. A breakdown of the demographical makeup of all participants in this

study is available in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Demographics of Participants

| Total Participants | 43 |
|---|---|
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 35 |
| Female | 8 |
| **Ethnicity** | |
| White | 42 |
| Hispanic | 1 |
| **Education** | |
| High School | 1 |
| Some College | 4 |
| 2 Year Degree | 1 |
| 4 Year Degree | 12 |
| Graduate Degree | 25 |
| **Age** | 56.1 |
| **Role in Company** | |
| Board Member | 1 |
| C Level Executive | 2 |
| CEO | 2 |
| Founder | 7 |
| Owner | 19 |
| President | 6 |
| Vice-President | 4 |
| Other | 1 |
| **Business Industry** | |
| Business to Business | 17 |
| Financial Planning/Broker | 2 |
| Legal | 1 |
| Non-Profit | 3 |
| Real Estate | 2 |
| Retail | 1 |
| Service Oriented | 7 |
| Other | 10 |
| **Number of Employees** | |
| 1-10 | 22 |
| 11-20 | 8 |
| 21-30 | 2 |
| 41-50 | 4 |
| 51-100 | 2 |
| 101-200 | 1 |
| 201-300 | 2 |

| Organization's Annual Revenue | |
|---|---|
| Less than $100,000 | 7 |
| $100,001 - $250,000 | 4 |
| $250,001 - $500,000 | 4 |
| $500,001 - $750,000 | 3 |
| $750,001 - $1,000,000 | 2 |
| $1,000,001 - $2,000,000 | 8 |
| $2,000,001 - $3,000,000 | 0 |
| $3,000,001 - $4,000,000 | 3 |
| $4,000,001 - $5,000,000 | 1 |
| $5,000,000+ | 10 |
| No Answer | 1 |
| **Organization's Annual Net Profit** | |
| Less than $100,000 | 21 |
| $100,001 - $250,000 | 8 |
| $250,001 - $500,000 | 3 |
| $500,001 - $750,000 | 1 |
| $750,001 - $1,000,000 | 1 |
| $1,000,001 - $2,000,000 | 2 |
| $2,000,001 - $3,000,000 | 1 |
| $3,000,001 - $4,000,000 | 0 |
| $4,000,001 - $5,000,000 | 0 |
| $5,000,000+ | 2 |
| No Answer | 4 |
| **Organization's Annual Budget for Marketing/Sponsorships** | |
| $0 - $5,000 | 19 |
| $5,001 – $10,000 | 6 |
| $10,001 - $15,000 | 3 |
| $15,001 - $20,000 | 0 |
| $20,000+ | 14 |
| No Answer | 1 |

The participation figures may seem to be low for casting a large net of potential participants, but the approach in this paper was to cast the large net and use a technological mediated approach to qualitative research. As with any research study, more participants would have been ideal, but due to the unique participant being solicited where availability of time is essential, the total participation is higher than some recent qualitative studies that employed an interview as their methodology, gaining participant

figures between 10-20 (M. P. Johnson, 2017; Kanchanapibul, Lacka, Wang, & Chan, 2014; Wieland, 2016). From a methodological perspective, the study was also an attempt to understand how technology enhanced qualitative methodology would compare to traditional face-to-face or telephone interviews. The participant figures demand greater attention focusing on using technology to possibly push the paradigm of qualitative research methodologies.

During the conceptual stages of this project, relationships were established with Chambers of Commerce in the Tampa and Charleston markets. Due to a short timeframe in completing this project, attempts were not made to contact the Chambers, due to Charleston expressing putting this in their member newsletter and the timeframe would not have been conducive to this study. To maintain consistency in methodology, the decision was made to only utilize the mailing list for participant selection. As a follow-up study, the relationships were leveraged and data was collected from Chamber of Commerce members.

## Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the framework laid out in chapter three. The description of the results in this section are displayed in accordance with the research questions. Each question is reintroduced and then the subsequent data analysis will follow. The attempt to answer the research questions will first introduce the inductive thematic analysis conducted by hand, followed by the results produced by Leximancer. Each question will have the individual breakdown of each question from the instrument that went into answering the research question, followed by a cumulative analysis done in Leximancer.

**Research Question #1 – Community Engagement**

The first research question addressed community engagement amongst small businesses. The research question was based on Niehm et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of small business engagement with their community in the areas of community social responsibility, commitment to the community, community support, and sense of community. The primary oversight in Niehm et al.'s (2008) paper was the lack of a definition for "community social responsibility." This study seeks to understand how small business decision makers define "community social responsibility." The question's intention is to understand how small business become a part of and work with their community. The definition of "community social responsibility" is a means to understand small business decision maker's thinking regarding community engagement.

The research question was addressed in the survey instrument through the first three questions: 1. Define "community social responsibility." 2. How does your organization engage with the community? and 3. What prevents your organization from engaging with the community? The first segment of the research question to be addressed in this section is the definition of community social responsibility.

**Defining Community Social Responsibility**

**Defining community social responsibility (Hand Analysis).** The responses were analyzed by hand in an inductive thematic analysis. The analysis produced 85 unique codes that were collapsed down into five themes. The five themes that were developed were Local Community, Community Connection, Environment, Economic v. Non-Economic, and Obligation.

Local community was derived due to comments stemming from "nobody is alone" and "community support." Community connection was derived from comments that focused on actions done by small businesses. An example of the actions communicated by participants were "donating goods and services" and contributing money and funds to community organizations. Environment was a surprising theme to arise from the participant comments, focusing on the business's desire to not impact the environment in a negative manner. Economic vs. Non-Economic was derived from participant comments that appeared to be focused on a dichotomy in their social responsibility to the community. Participants appeared to produce comments either focused on economic health of the community, "paying taxes" or "hiring employees" compared to non-economic which focused around "improving the environment," not "over using environment," and "providing services to enhance community." The final theme was obligation. The participants expressed an obligation toward their local community, especially "not to harm" and "hiring practices."

The themes that emerged from the participant comments were used to develop a definition of community social responsibility. The following is the definition of "community social responsibility."

> "An obligation to give back to the local community. Connecting with the community through economic and non-economic means and not harming the overall environment. Respecting community stakeholders through business practices that are fair and just, adding value for the community as a whole."

**Defining community social responsibility (Leximancer).** Figure 4.1 displays the thematic analysis map for the question focused on defining community social

responsibility. The four dominant themes were community, social, business and employees. Community had a connectivity score of 90, social had a score of 57, business had a score of 46, and employees had a score of 41. The scores provide a quantitative metric for understanding the strength of a theme, but a greater understanding of the themes by reviewing the concepts is essential. Comparing Leximancer themes to that of the hand analysis, produced similarities, but differences in naming and other aspects but get to the same key tenets.

Figure 4.1 Defining Community Social Responsibility Leximancer Map

The purpose of this question was to derive a definition for community social responsibly. A definition is produced for each the hand analysis and Leximancer analysis. The definitions will be compared to triangulate a final definition. The Leximancer definition for community social responsibility is below.

"A responsibility to participate in and aid in addressing social needs of the community. Participating in the community through business practices that minimize impact on the environment and add value to individual stakeholders within the community."

The two definitions are very similar in their wording of community social responsibility. Word choices are the two primary differences between the two definitions. An example is responsibility and obligation, a reason for the difference is Leximancer's machine learning algorithm, learning from the text as it goes through the corpus. While steps can be taken to control this in the software, if community was deleted from the thesaurus for analysis, the Leximancer definition would have not reflected the actual meaning intended by the participants, in the use of words like community. Reflecting on the two definitions, the final definition of "community social responsibility" is provided below.

"An obligation to give back and participate in the local community through means that enhance the lives of individual community stakeholders. Engaging with the community through economic and non-economic business practices that minimize harm and improve the environment."

**Community Engagement**

The second component to address the first research question is addressing the question of "How does your organization engage with the community?" The purpose of this question was to understand how small business decision maker's organization are engaging with the community and through what forms of engagement.

**Community Engagement (Hand Analysis).** The hand analysis for community engagement produced 52 unique codes, collapsing down into four themes. The themes that emerged from the codes were Education, Philanthropy, Services, Employee Engagement. Participants discussed their means of engaging the community through educational programming, offering internship programs for students, workshops, offering scholarship programs. They discussed engaging with the community through various forms of philanthropy, making charitable contributions to non-profit organizations and having specific charity budgets. Services were expressed by small business decision makers through offering product or services for the community, through the form of medical or legal services. Employee engagement was expressed by participants stating they give their employees flexible schedules to engage with their personal community service projects, while others expressed how their employees actively engage with the community through organization sponsored activities.

While not expressed as a theme, the tone of the responses was geared toward impact. The participants discussed a need to engage with the community in a means that will leave an impact, they expressed this by discussing finding organizations to give to that will leave a direct impact on the community. The organization they contribute to or work with could be beneficial for their employees to make an impact on the community,

it doesn't appear small business want to be accused of "green washing," they want to know impact.

A peripheral theme presented itself that was not large enough to warrant classification as a dominant theme, it was confusion from the small business decision makers. Some of the small business decision makers expressed confusion based on a lack of understanding the community's needs, they noted they wanted to help but didn't know how to aid the community. Confusion surrounding the other areas of this project would be evident by small business decision makers, leading to future questions that will be addressed in the chapter 5.

**Community Engagement (Leximancer Analysis).** The Leximancer analysis of this question led three dominate themes emerging. The three themes are Community with a connectivity score of 94, Participate with a score of 60, and Volunteer with a score of 41. Figure 4.2 displays the Leximancer map for this question.

Figure 4.2 Leximancer Map for Community Engagement



When participants discussed community, it was often associated with non-profit. The Leximancer result is consistent with the hand analysis, providing association with philanthropy and the participants often seeking a non-profit to work with or contribute to because they know it will have a direct impact on the community. It is evident of their desire for impact by the next theme, Participate, where they discussed a desire to participate and be engaged with organizations that impact the local community. Volunteering was the third major theme, where they often discussed their organization or employees volunteering within the community, either for organization sponsored or their

own community service. The act was encouraged by the small business decision makers as is evident by the peripheral theme of encourage.

**Preventing Community Engagement**

Preventing community engagement was a question focused on understanding the barriers in place the limit an organization from engaging with their communities. The question posed to participants was "what prevents your organization from engaging with the community?" The following is the analysis for this question.

**Preventing Community Engagement (Hand Analysis).** In conducting an analysis 38 unique codes were found. The three themes that emerged were Time, Profitability, and Community Knowledge. Time was repeated by the participants in a variety of comments from participants, sometimes just a one word response. It was apparent that time is the most important resource available to a small business decision maker. The second theme that was apparent was Profitability. Small business decision makers commented that a need to maintain profitability or cash flow hindered their ability to engage with the community. Time and profitability appear to be the biggest barriers to small business decision makers. Profitability appeared to be a major business concern that they could not allocate resources away from their central purpose of working to be profitable or maintain profitability. The third theme was Community Knowledge, and is a continuation from the peripheral theme in the positives of connecting with the community, a barrier is a lack of knowledge of how they can impact the community.

**Preventing Community Engagement (Leximancer).** Leximancer produced different themes, but still focused on similar concepts from the hand analysis. The overall connectivity score was lower than other analysis in this study. The major themes were

Engagement with a score of 29, Time with a score of 13, and Community with a score of 13. The scores are lower, but the dispersion of responses was a possible reason for the lower scores and the increase in shorter responses which can limit connectivity. Figure 4.3 displays the Leximancer map for Preventing Community Engagement.

Figure 4.3 Preventing Community Engagement Leximancer Map
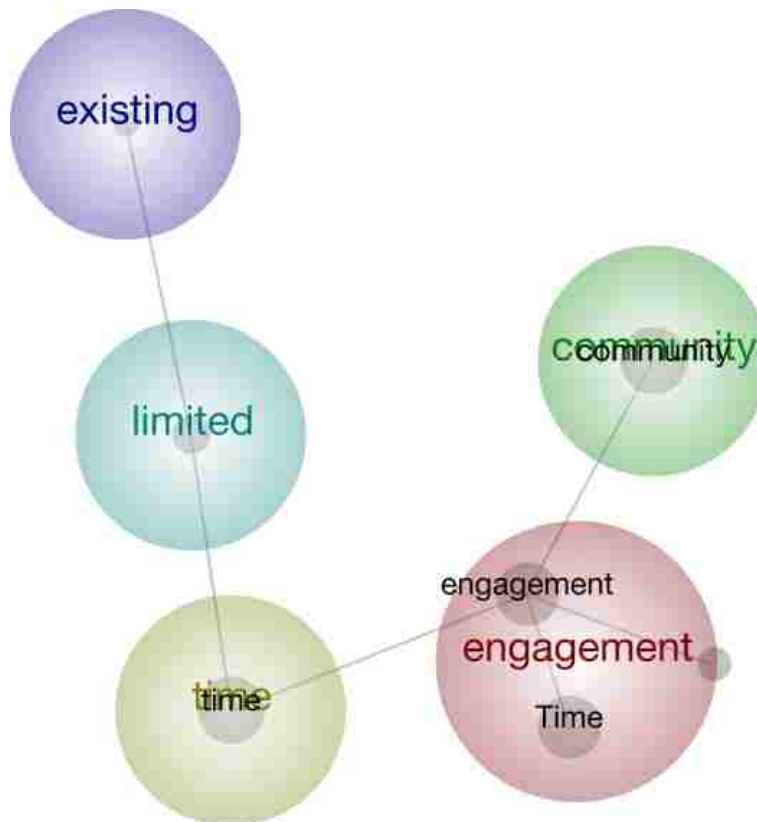


The results of Leximancer are congruent with the hand analysis, but the naming of themes varies. Time is a concept of the engagement theme, dictating that they want to engage but time is a limiting factor. The hand analysis made Time a theme and the same is true for the Leximancer analysis, the difference being that time is directly linked to engagement which is linked to community. Overall, the central themes of Time and Resources leads to the preventing small business decision makers from engaging with the community.

**Combined Analysis (Leximancer)**

Leximancer enables the researcher to combine the corpus for all three questions

into one analysis. Figure 4.4 presents the Leximancer map for the overall analysis in

answering the first research question. The dominant themes are Community (269),

Organization (105), Business (100), Responsibility (72), and Time (63).

Figure 4.4 Overall Analysis for Research Question #1



Community being the dominant theme for community engagement is expected,

but the variety of concepts that overlap with business, including environment and

education speak to how small businesses engage with the community. Community is also

connected with responsibility, which is associated with individuals, meaning that

organization display a social responsibility with individual stakeholders within the

community. Time is expressed as a slight peripheral theme that is connected through limits on connecting with the community, with the concepts of time being provide, leaders, and companies. Time is an important asset and small business decision makers appear to view their role as enabling their employees to use their time toward the community, while also seeing this as an important asset to their company and profitability.

**Conclusions for Research Question #1**

Overall, small business decision makers appear to be engaged with the community through a variety of means, but want to know specifically how they can impact the community. Time and profitability appear to be the most dominant theme in barriers to engaging with the community. The focus on profitability will be addressed more in Chapter 5, the mindset can limit their organization and possibly hinder innovation. The one surprising theme that came from this research question was small business decision maker's focus on environmental sustainability within their communities and the role they play in advancing this cause.

Small businesses appear to be guided toward impacting their local community through direct impactful associations and contributions. While large corporations may have more financial and physical resources to utilize during their corporate social responsibility initiatives, small businesses appear to take a more intimate approach, striving for connection. They may work with non-profits, but still have the focus on impact. Impact and the ability for their employees to engage with the community appears to be a dominant force in small business community engagement.

The second research question focuses on how small business decision makers and their organization engage in and what do they plan for in the strategic planning process. The research question was addressed on the survey instrument by the questions: 1. How does your organization engage in the strategic planning process? 2. What does your organization plan for in the strategic planning process? The questions will be addressed in detail in this section, leading to a possible answer for the research question.

**Engaging in Strategic Management**

**Engaging in Strategic Management (Hand Analysis).** The participants provided a variety of comments on this topic, leading to 48 unique codes that were collapsed down into 4 themes. The 4 themes were Timing, External Support, Disregard, and Planned v. Ad Hoc. The four themes capture the perspective of the participants in this study.

Timing was discussed frequently by participants with this question, even though the study never asked them about their timeline for engaging in this practice. In this theme, the time frame was typically annual, with some people discussing quarterly planning.

The theme of External Support appeared in the comments with participants noting that they rely on external groups or individuals to assist them with strategic management of their organizations. A participant discussed that if they had a moderator, it would make the process more efficient.

The theme of Disregard also was prevalent in the responses, with participants uncertain about the strategic planning process and one stating that he had "no idea."

Other participants discussed their daily focus on their business and are not able to effectively plan of their organization, they are purely worried about putting one foot in front of the other and must be flexible to adjust to the environment.

The final theme of Planned v. Ad Hoc emerged from the participant comments. Some participants discussed using techniques such as a SWOT analysis to aid in the planning of their organization. Other participants noted they have a more ad hoc approach to their strategic management for their organizations, stating that they haven't done it in a few years or rely on their prior experience for making organizational decisions.

**Engaging with Strategic Management (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis produced similar themes to the hand analysis with the software picking up more words associated with meetings, making this a minor significant theme. The primary themes found by Leximancer were Planning (67), Business (48), Hold (27), and Opportunities (23). Figure 4.5 is the Leximancer Map for understanding engagement with strategic management amongst small business decision makers.

Figure 4.5 Strategic Management Engagement



The four major themes, while not having the highest connectivity figures,

especially the themes "hold" and "opportunities", should not be overlooked because

reviewing the hand analysis would dictate they have relevance. One of the primary

concepts in Planning is year, which give an association to the hand analysis that found

time as a theme. The hold and opportunities dimensions may not have the largest

connectivity score, Hold overlaps with Planning and Opportunities and is associated with

Planning through the Process theme which speaks to the goals set by organizations.

Business gives a glimpse into to what small business decision makers plan for in the strategic planning process. A topic addressed in the next question.

**What is Planned for in the Strategic Planning Process**

  **Planning (Hand Analysis).** The participant responses led to 48 unique codes that were collapsed into 2 themes, Financial Aspects and Growth. The Financial Aspects theme described the participant's primary tendency to address their need to secure financing for their business. In this theme, they also focused on the need to try to plan for profits.

  The next theme of Growth examined the intention of the small business decision makers to want to grow their business. The business adage of if you're not growing you're dying is what appears to be a guiding principle for the sample of participants in this study. The growth activities that many sought were gaining more clients and customers.

  **Planning (Leximancer).** Leximancer produced two major themes, Strategic (74) and Business (36). Business does not have a large connectivity score but as previously discussed, multiple factors could have led to the score not being as high as other analysis. A possible peripheral theme is Plan. The concepts of opportunities and needs that comprise the theme aid in explaining what small business decision maker's plan for in the strategic planning process. Figure 4.6 presents the Leximancer map for planning in strategic management.

Figure 4.6 Planning in Strategic Management Leximancer Map
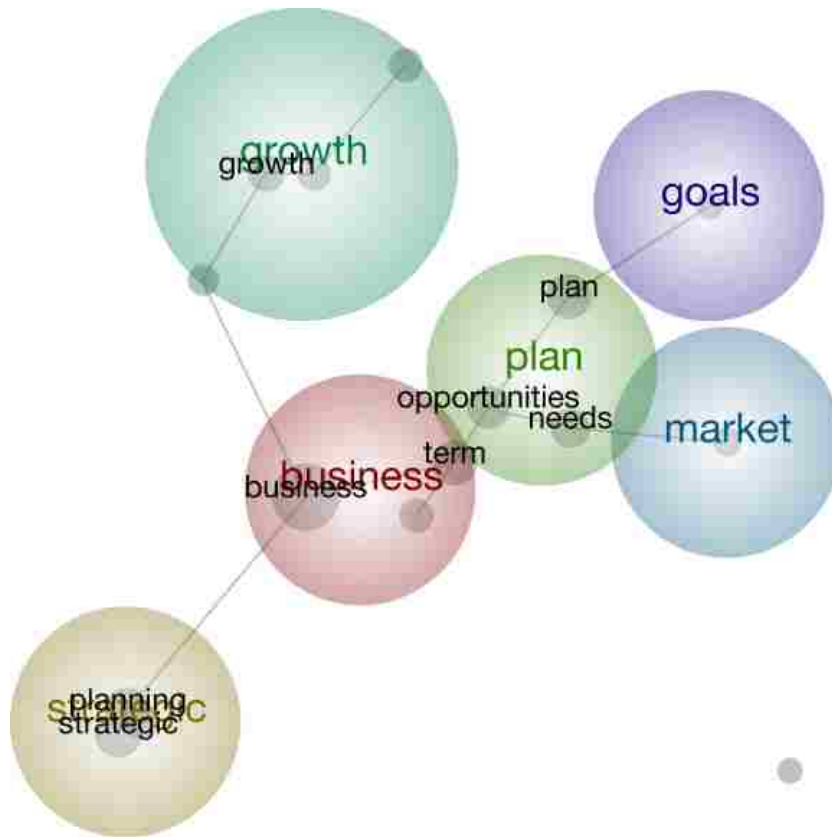


**Combined Results for Research Question #2**

In this section, the responses for each question were combined to answer the second research question. Figure 4.7 presents the Leximancer map for Research Question 2. The primary themes are Planning (137), Opportunities (52), Hold (45), and Plan (34). The theme Planning and Opportunities are the two dominant themes with overlap on other themes, like Business, Plan, Hold, and Meet.

Figure 4.7 Strategic Management Leximancer Map
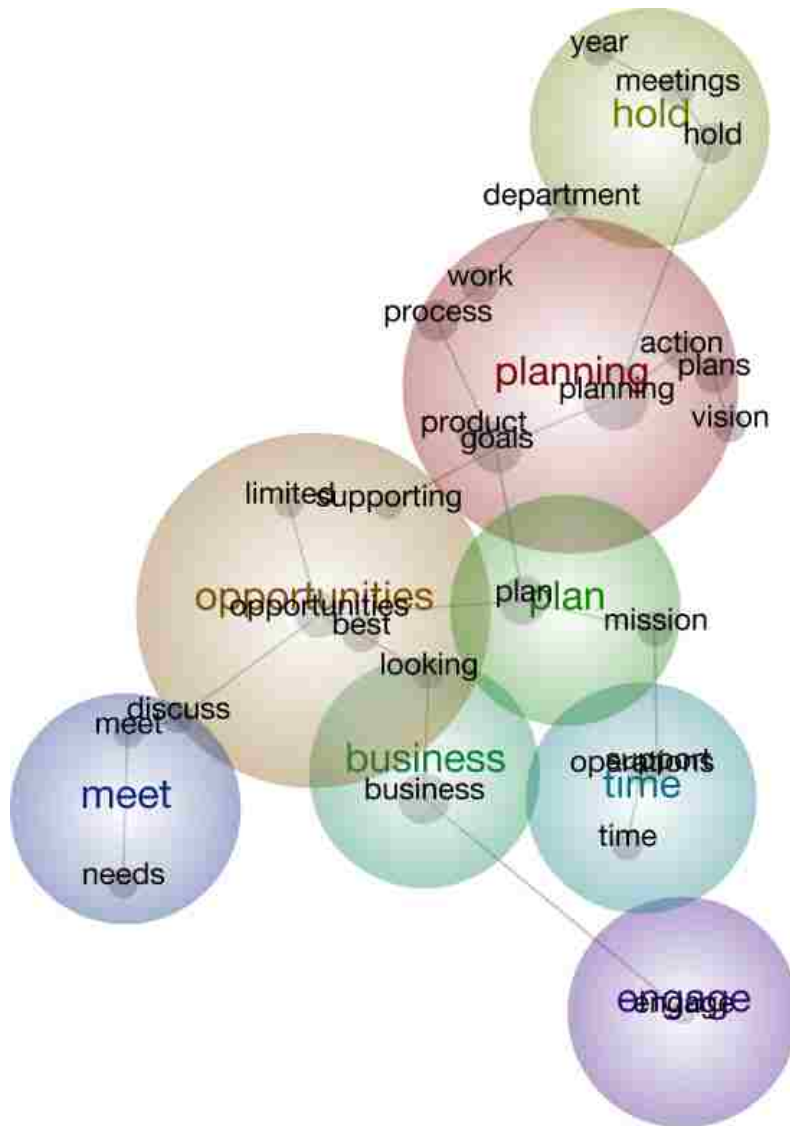


Planning being the largest and most connected theme, with most of the concepts focused on business practices, including products, work, but also discussing classic strategy techniques including goals and visions. Opportunities is the second largest and connected themes, has concepts focused on finding the best opportunities that lead to business and supporting goals planned for in the strategic planning process.

**Conclusions for Research Question #2**

The element of strategic management in small business is one that appears to focus on the daily operation of the business. In the combined results, small business decision makers do engage in planning for both business goals using classical strategy techniques and meet to discuss the business. They often do this on a yearly basis, but time can be a limiting factor in their ability to execute their strategy. It appears they may engage in strategic planning and strategy, because they are taught this in school or it is what they should do, but they don't have the time to fully act-on the strategy. The inability to act on the planned strategy leads to an ad hoc mentality with the management of the business. In the sample, there appeared to be a split between those who engage in strategic management and then there are those businesses that do not engage in strategic management.

Reflecting on the definition provided by Mintzberg (1972), strategy is a "pattern in a stream of decisions." The way small business decision makers appear to address strategic management appears to be in a more emergent manner than deliberate decisions. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) discussed the difference between emergent and deliberate decision-making regarding strategic management. They noted that in entrepreneurial firms, one should "relax the condition of precise, articulated intentions; because one can impose their own will on an organizations direction, dubbing these entrepreneurial strategies (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 260). The "entrepreneurial strategies," one person can steer the organization, the entrepreneur has the vision for the general direction of their organization and are able to adapt their vision, because it is personal to the

entreprenneur. Adaptability brings it away from a deliberate strategy to a more emergent

strategy for dealing with organization decision-making.

Overall, strategy and strategic management are areas that are important for small

business to engage in for their overall operation. Small businesses appear to actively seek

opportunities where they can improve their business through planning for goals and how

their process can improve the business.

### Research Question #3 – Strategic Partnerships

The third research question addresses partnerships and how small businesses

engage with partnerships, included is their engagement with sport organizations in

sponsorships or partnerships. The questions on the survey instrument that addressed this

subject were the following: 1. How and with which organizations does your organization

seek strategic partnerships. 2. Why or why not does your organization seek strategic

partnerships. 3. What does your organization consider when deciding to sponsor an event

or organization? 4. Have you sponsored a sport organization or sport event? The final

questions depending on the answer selected, branched into three other questions. If they

selected yes (What was the benefit to your organization and what motivated you to

sponsor the sport organization or event?), no (Why have you not sought to sponsor a

sport organization or event?), and Considered it, but no (What prevented you from

sponsoring a sport organization or event?). The final question was not included in the

summation analysis, because it would not mesh with the other questions and it asked

sought specific points from the participant. Adding this into the analysis could have

served as a distraction to the other questions.

**Strategic Partnerships**

**Strategic Partnerships (Hand Analysis).** The analysis of "How" and with which organization does the participants organization engage in strategic partnerships led to 35 unique codes, collapsed down into 3 themes. The themes were Business, Financial, and Customers. Some of the participants also discussed the term "strategic partnerships," stating it was a "loaded term." The comment typically appeared as the first thing that was written by the participant, possibly leading to a point that made them think for a moment. Participants also presented a peripheral theme of discussing why strategic partnerships didn't work for them, opting to provide more information in the next question.

The first theme of business appeared in the participant comments, noting they formed partnerships with "vendors" and "suppliers." It appears based on their comments that their vision of a strategic partner is one that ties directly back to their business, and impacts the bottom line. Vendors and suppliers are critical for a business to operate and it appears they are in the mindset that if they can have a partnership with their supply chain, it could reduce overhead for the business.

The second theme that emerged was Financial. Financial was focused on the concept of bookkeeping and securing capital for the operation of their business. The concept gives way to possibly understanding that small businesses place their financial recordkeeping in the hands of an outside accountant or book keeper. It also provides a possible understanding of the small business decision maker's mindset in that if they can form a partnership with financial institutions, they would have a higher probability of securing capital for their business.

The third theme of Customers emerged from the coding because of participants

discussing relationships with customers. They noted that they wanted to "better serve

clients" and working within their supply chain to get products to customers. They

discussed the need for networking in relation to customers, where they could discuss their

business and engage customers.

**Strategic Partnerships (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis for this question

brought out two dominant themes, Strategic (26) and Clients (26). Strategic overlapped

with Clients in the concepts of companies and market. Strategic gives an understanding

of how small businesses engage, specifically with clients. Within Strategic, the concept

of suppliers is connected to providers and networking. Per the Leximancer analysis, they

view suppliers to network and expand their business, whereas they want to build

relationships with clients. Figure 4.8 provides the Leximancer map for how small

business decision makers engage with strategic partnerships.

Figure 4.8 How Small Business Decision Makers engage in Strategic Partnerships

Leximancer Map
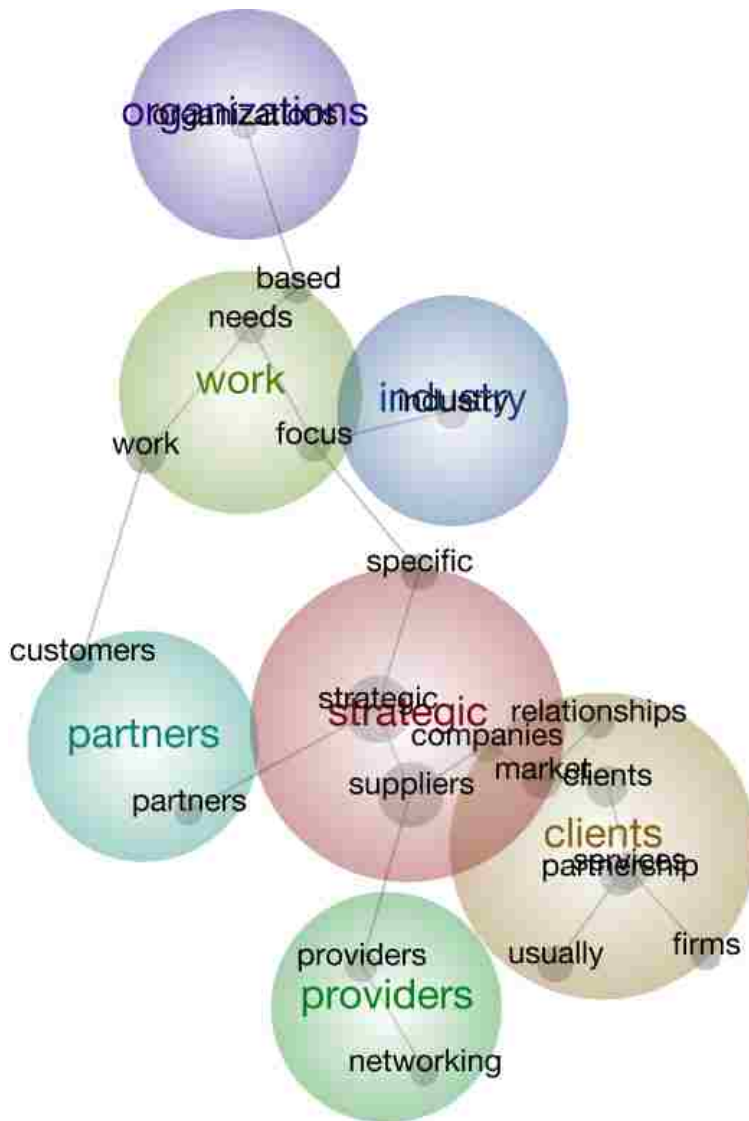


Clients appears to focus on partnerships and services, these are connected directly to the concept of clients. During this analysis, small business decision makers appear to communicate a desire to be closer with clients and leverage their network of suppliers to advance their business. Under this analysis, small business decision makers appear to be straddling two different realms, attempting to work with suppliers to better serve clients/consumers. It could be presumed that small business decision makers are

attempting to understand how the can derive the greatest value for their consumers, through a strong relationship.

**Why or Why Not Engage in Strategic Partnerships**

**Why or Why Not (Hand Analysis).** The analysis of this question led to 36 unique codes that collapsed into two themes. The themes were Prior Experience and Business Model. The themes expressed the barriers that small business decision makers may face in not seeking strategic partnerships. Through a review of the comments, much of comments were geared toward why not engage with strategic partnerships, very few addressed the positive reason of engaging in strategic partnerships.

Prior experience explained a great deal of why the participants of the study did not seek strategic partnerships. One of the concepts attached to prior experiences was time. Participants noted that seeking strategic partnerships was a waste of time and no luck previously working in partnerships. Small business decision makers appear to either engage with partnerships if it is in their nature and can have a positive impact on their business, or will steer clear of partnerships if they have had a bad prior experience.

The theme of Business Model explained how small business decision makers saw partnerships as either a positive or negative for their business model. Some of the comments were geared toward their ability to build their customer base and grow the company. Other comments and the majority in this theme were geared toward the business not needing partnerships because it can hinder their business. A participant noted that they didn't need a partnership because "one brain can make a decision; two brains complicates decision-making." Then sentiment was expressed by others stating that it didn't fit their business model or that "companies tend to focus on running their

own businesses" and "too busy running business." The theme expressed a focus from participants on their own businesses and making sure their business runs effectively, if a partnership can assist in it they will seek the opportunity until they get burned or loose trust.

   **Why or Why Not (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis for why or why not engage in strategic partnerships produces two major themes with one peripheral theme. The two major themes were Business (57) and Needs (41), with the peripheral theme of Partnerships (32). Figure 4.9 displays the Leximancer map for Why or Why Not engage in Strategic Partnerships. Examining these two themes with those discovered through the hand analysis produces a different analysis, because the hand analysis produced a different theme of Prior Experience that wasn't picked up in the Leximancer analysis.

Figure 4.9 Why or Why Not Engage in Strategic Partnerships Leximancer Map
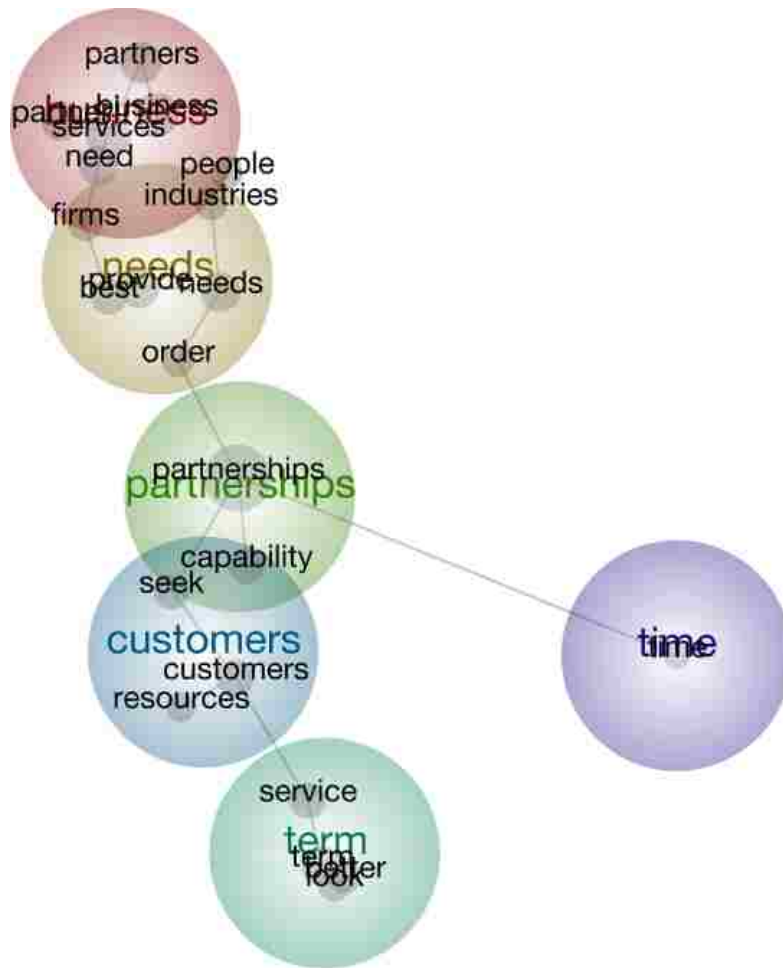


The difference between the Leximancer and hand analysis in this question could be attributed to the researcher reading each response and conducting a quasi-sentiment analysis, seeing that most of the comments were geared toward negative experiences with partnerships. Leximancer may have read the text a bit differently, but still deriving at similar concepts. An example of this is the hand analysis theme of Business Model, which Leximancer addressed in the Business theme that comprised the concepts of partners, need, services, firms, and people. Upon further examination of the theme Needs, more information can be gleaned regarding Leximancer's development of this theme.

The Needs theme included the concept of industries, which during the hand analysis led to the development of Prior Experiences theme, because the participants spoke to having negative experiences with partnerships outside of their industry. The presence of overlap between Business and Needs, especially in the concepts of industries, people, firms, and need speak to the complexity of strategic partnerships. Based on the corpus and, as noted in the hand analysis, adding more people to the mix of making business decisions can complicate the situation, especially when they come from different industries. Diversity can be a positive for intra-organizational innovation, but it can slow the process for small companies. It could be concluded that Leximancer was headed in the similar direction of the hand analysis but it should be noted the difference between the two analysis techniques, where Leximancer may overlook some of the more finite details in the corpus.

The peripheral theme of Partnerships discusses some of the positive aspects of why small business decision makers may seek partnerships. The concepts of partnerships, capability, and seek were all present in this theme. It should be noted the overlap between the themes Partnerships and Customers, where Partnerships leads to seeking new customers and resources, but leads to a potential negative of time.

**Sponsorships**

**Sponsorship Considerations (Hand Analysis).** The next question focused on understanding what an organization considers in making the decision to sponsor another organization or event. The question is relevant to sport because many sport organizations rely on sponsorships to be sustainable. It is certainly beneficial to obtain a sponsorship

from a large organization; the question is intended as an attempt to understand what a small business considers in sponsorship.

The question led to 53 unique codes that were collapsed into four themes. The themes were Return on Investment, Match, Resources, and Benefit to Community. The most discussed theme in amongst participants was Return on Investment, coming up many times, especially in discussion of financial return for their business. One participant discussed return on investment in two both modes, financial and social. The participant commented "while a financial return is important, the ability to show commitment to community and gain a social return is important." The theme, Return on Investment, expresses the transactional thinking that appears to dominate their day to day operations of the business.

The theme of Match was prevalent in the participant comments, due to their desire to make sure there was a match between their business and the event. The match didn't have to be specifically geared toward their business model, it could have been geared toward the interest of their employees. One participant commented "we look to sponsor events that are tied to our employee's interest, and the activities of their children." The theme of Match also includes the concept of worthiness to the participants. A participant commented "the value of sponsoring and the market exposure." It appears from their comments a greater intention to sponsor an event or organization if they perceive it as being a worthy cause or organization.

Resources is a theme that could be expected, based on the previous questions and the transactional nature of thinking most small business decision makers display. They are concerned with how resources will be utilized and what resources will be needed

from them for the event. Small businesses do not have the luxury of large corporations, in an abundance of resources, so they are focused on how these resources are utilized. The participant's discussed how much an event could cost, time commitment, and if their employees could participate in the event. Often the discussion focused around financial resource need, but the participates shared a desire to contribute other resources for a sponsorship opportunity.

The final theme of Benefit to Community is expressed in the corpus through the participant's desire to sponsor or give to organizations that will have a direct benefit on the community. It appears that if they are going to relinquish some of their resources, whether it be financial or physical, they want to ensure that they are contributing to their community. Based on this finding, it would be advantageous for organizations seeking sponsorships to discuss the benefits toward the community when soliciting sponsorships.

**Sponsorship Considerations (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis for this question produced themes like the hand analysis. The themes produced from Leximancer were Event (60), Market (52), and Community (49). Overall, the connectivity scores are close to each other, which means the themes were similar and focus around possibly one larger or latent theme of Involvement. No data suggest a larger latent theme, as this is not possible to compute at this moment, but the themes give way to possibly something larger driving their decision-making in sponsoring an event. Figure 4.10 displays the Leximancer map for this question.

Figure 4.10 Sponsorship Considerations Leximancer map
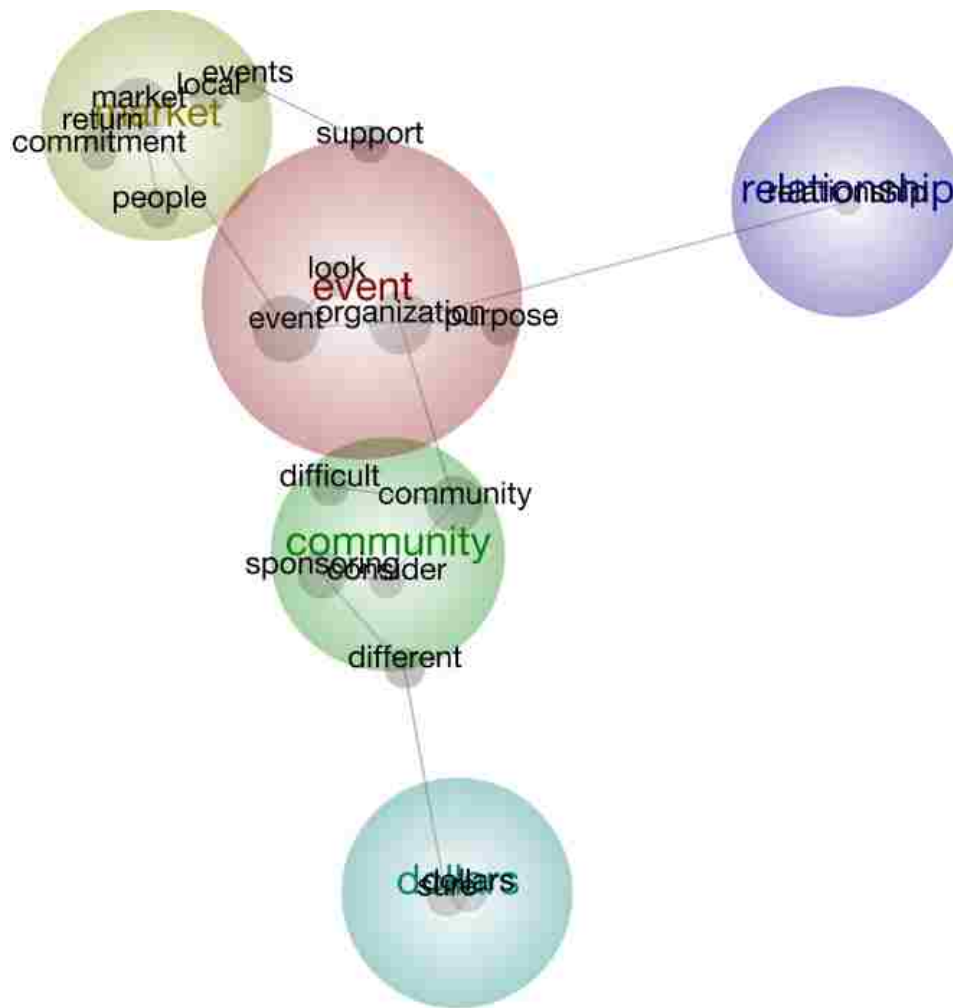


The findings from the Leximancer analysis and its three themes discuss the same concepts as the hand analysis. The primary theme of Event, includes the purpose, organization, and look. The same concepts were discussed earlier in the theme Benefit to Community. The theme of Market discusses the concepts that were evident in the themes Resources and Return on Investment. The concept of return is present in Market as well as people and commitment. Leximancer could pick up on the discussion of resources allocation and necessary commitment by the organization for the sponsorship. The concept of people, based on the corpus, is speaking to the participants comments that

focused on people from their organizations participating in the event or aiding in putting on the event. The desire for businesses to have their employees either participate or aid in putting on an event or organization, is evident because they can view the events as a reward for the employees.

The theme of Community speaks to the hand analysis theme of Benefit to the Community. The participants in the study continually discussed the desire to impact their community in organization/event sponsorship. They do not want their resources to go toward benefiting some other community in which their consumers or suppliers may not reside. They viewed sponsorship to connect with the community, but expressed difficulty in selecting an event because of not properly understanding the community or finding an organization that they can work with to mutually achieve their goals. It could also be that the participants of the study who had difficulty in deciding to sponsor an event are those who don't have the financial resources to do so in their business or do not actively seek partnerships.

**Sponsoring a Sport Organization or Event**

To better understand how small business decision makers, perceive sponsorship of sport organizations or events, the question was posed if they every sponsored a sport organization or event. The participants were given three options to choose: yes; no; consider it, but now. Depending on their answer selection, a secondary question would pop up relating to their selection. 12 participants selected "yes," 19 selected "no", and 1 selected "considered it, but no." The analysis left out the selection of "considered it, but no" because it was a singular response. The response was from an art gallery, who said they wanted to work with their local university athletic department, but the department

didn't want to work with them because the gallery sold nude portraits. The following

analysis was also not included in the summation analysis for this research question, it will

be addressed separately and worked into the conclusion for this research question.

**Yes (Hand Analysis).** The hand analysis produced 22 unique codes, collapsed

down into two themes, Youth Sport and Exposure/Marketing. The two themes are

indicative of how one could conceptualize an organization sponsoring a sport

organization. The Youth Sport theme discussed that companies often look to youth sports

as their primary form of sponsorship because it ties back to their employees. One

participant noted that "they look to sponsor their employees' kid's sports teams." The

sponsoring of youth sport also affirms a commitment toward their employees. Another

participant discussed that "slapping your company's name on the back of a sports team

uniform, immediately shows the community you're engaged with what it values."

Sponsoring sport overall was discussed as an "employee motivation" technique.

In discussing why they sponsored a sport organization, the theme

Exposure/Marketing was generated in the analysis. Participants cited "networking" and

"name recognition." One participant noted that "there is not benefit unless it leads to a

sale." The cynical nature of this participant's comment is reflective of the overall nature

of transactional behaviors of small businesses.

**Yes (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis for this portion of the question

produced two total themes, Sports (31) and Employees (21). The total of 12 comments

for this question are a possible reason for low connectivity figures, but two themes

emerging from the corpus also means that there was more consensus from the comments.

Figure 4.11 is the Leximancer map for this question.

Figure 4.11 Yes Leximancer Map
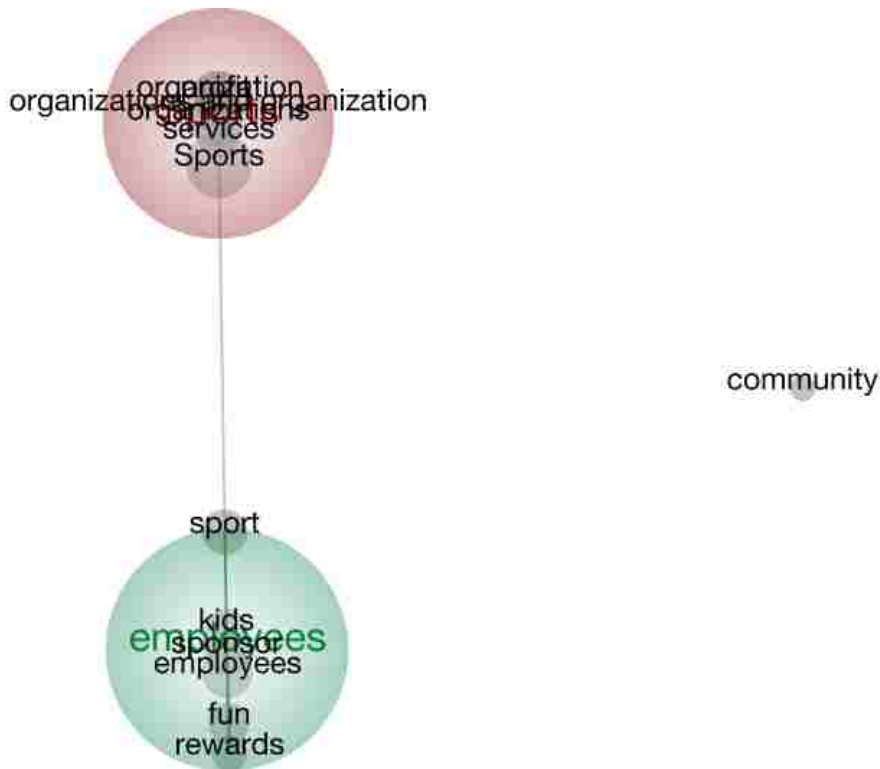


The two themes in this analysis are like those created in the hand analysis. The theme Employees is interesting because it was included as a concept in the hand analysis. Per the Leximancer analysis, the theme Employees includes the concept of kids, sport, fun and rewards. Small business decision makers in this study perceive sport sponsorship as a vehicle to engage with their employees and give them fun rewards, and fun is also linked to participant comments of "it's just fun to contribute to sport." It isn't expected that everybody will embrace sport, but those small business decision makers in this study, envisioned sport to engage with the community and motivate employees.

**No (Hand Analysis).** The question that had a great deal in intrigue for the research was why the participants did not seek sponsorship of sport organizations. The analysis produced 26 unique codes, collapsed into three themes: Lack of Interest,

Business Fit, and Cost. The main theme of Lack of Interest was evident in the responses, mainly through participants stating, "no interest" or "invest another way." Participants also noted that the were skeptical of sponsoring sport organizations and how it can relate back to their business.

The theme of Business Fit was displayed in the corpus through comments focused on "not a relevant audience" or "not in our purview." Participants in the study who selected no, tied it back to the business model and how it didn't fit their business. The other theme that was discussed was cost.

The theme of Cost was discussed by the participants of the study, noting often the high cost associated with sponsoring sport organizations. The question had a very wide definition of sport organizations, ranging from youth sport to professional sports, but the participant comments though cost was a factor in not sponsoring a sport organization or event. They cited cost and "lack of funds" as reasons why they didn't sponsor sport organizations. The comments from the earlier question regarding sponsorships, could mean that small business is willing to sponsor, but may not be able to give money, instead sharing resources or other resources.

**No (Leximancer Analysis).** The Leximancer analysis produced one largely connected theme in Audience (234) followed by Support (24). The overwhelming large theme of Audience includes many concepts in this analysis. In why they didn't sponsor sport organizations was due to the audience being not that matches their business, it isn't the target for where they want for their consumers, and that they support locally in other means. The responses expressed other means of supporting the community. Figure 4.12 is the Leximancer map for No responses.

Figure 4.12 No Leximancer Map
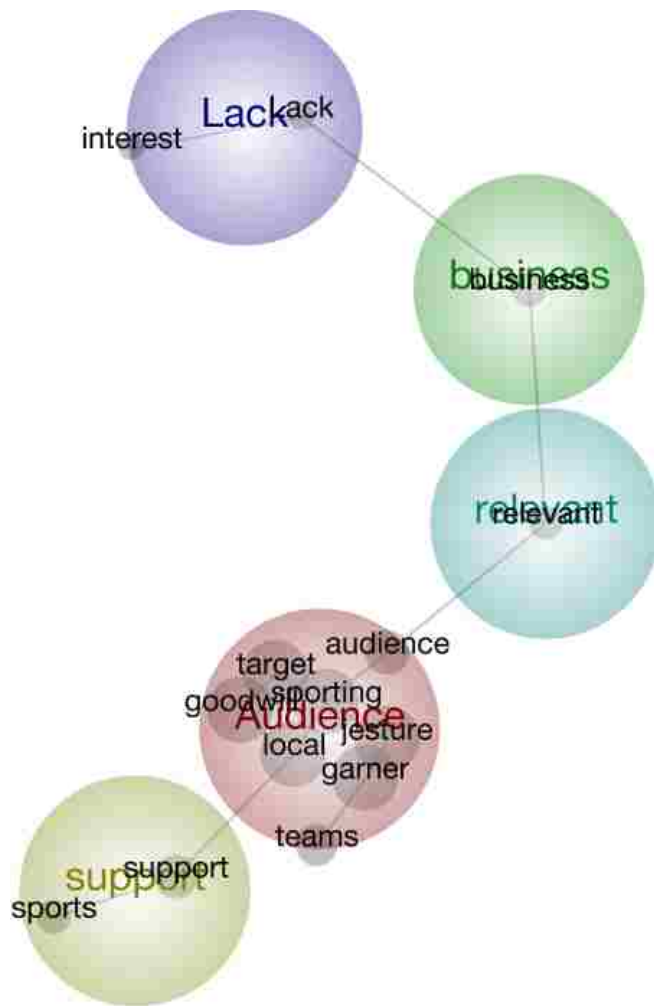


**Combined Results for Research Question #3**

The combined analysis for Research Question 3 includes the first three questions

of the analysis with the question pertaining to sport sponsorship being discussed amongst

the results. The Leximancer analysis displayed three themes: Partnerships (191), Business

(65), and Industry (47). The largest theme, Partnerships, had a drastically larger

connectivity score than the other two themes, and included concepts that overlapped with

company. The concepts of products, services, and companies. The finding could mean

that partnerships are engaged by small businesses as they could benefit products and services.

Partnerships also overlap with the themes Business and Customers. The overlap with Business is on the concept of clients. Partnerships appear to aid in the small business in the cultivating and servicing of clients and customers. In the Customers overlap, it includes the concept of suppliers. Small business decision makers appear to favor partnerships with suppliers because it benefits suppliers.

The third theme addressed is Industry, which is connected to the concept of partnerships through industry. The connection between industry and partnerships appears to be the connection to a negative aspect of partnerships, based on a detailed examination of comments. The question of industry is speaking to the need of partnerships to be within their industry to be beneficial, cross-sector partnerships appear to not be beneficial to small business decision makers in this study. Figure 4.13 is the Leximancer map for Research Question 3 combined analysis.

Figure 4.13 Research Question #3 Combined Analysis Leximancer Map
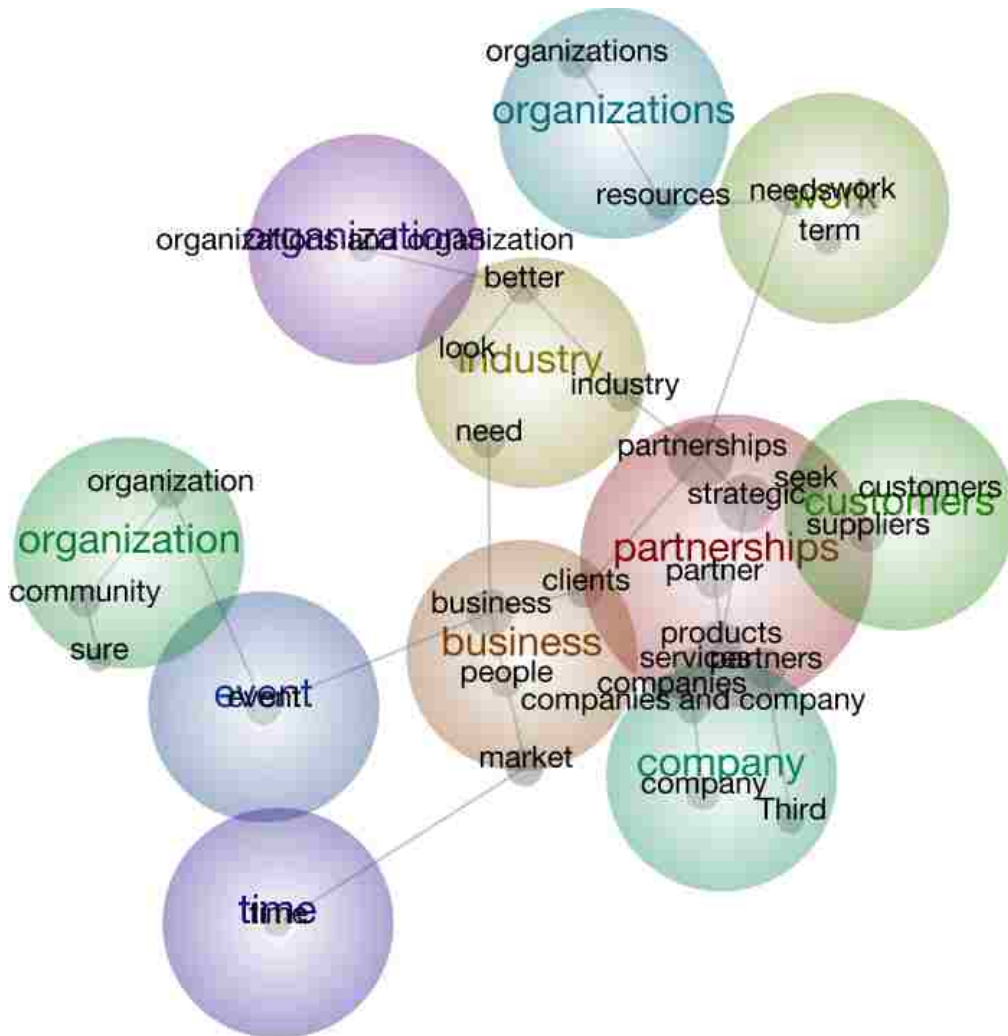


To fully address the research question, a discussion of sport sponsorship must be included. The discussion of sport sponsorship is congruent with the discussion of partnerships and finding the right fit, but it varies in that small businesses appear to engage in partnerships with vendors because it's good for customers and other business because it can lead to growth and new clients. Sport organization and sponsorship present a means to connect with the communities and potential new markets and clients, but it is overlooked because of cost or not the right fit with their business. While the participants of the study discussed a need for the right fit for partnerships, a question of why is this

not applied to sponsorship of sport organizations. The one factor is physical cost of money that can have a negative impact if a return isn't seen by an organization, compared to joining in a partnership could decrease opportunity cost, which are not immediately recognized on an organization's balance sheet.

**Research Question #3 Conclusions**

Research question 3 is a large question seeking to understand how small business decision makers in this study engage in strategic partnerships and sponsorships. The findings indicate that small businesses are willing to engage in partnerships as they can benefit the organization and its customers/clients. Room for growth in small businesses is realizing the value of sport as means partnership development and organizational growth. Participants appeared to weight the opportunity cost vs. actual cost of sponsorships and partnerships. Small businesses appear to be more engaged in partnerships because the opportunity cost appear to be lower than the actual financial cost upfront with a sponsorship. Overall, small businesses appear to be open to new forms of business, if they can realize an actual (financial) return to their business for the input of their resources.

## Research Question #4 – Leadership & Strategic Management

The fourth and final research question explored the topic of leadership amongst small business decision makers. Leadership in small businesses is often the driving force behind the development of institutional logics and other systems that guide decision-making by employees. The research question was addressed in the survey instrument through two questions: 1. How did you develop your leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills? and 2. What do you currently do to develop your

leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills? The analysis of these questions and combined analysis will follow in this section.

**Developing Leadership & Strategic Management Skills**

  **Developing Leadership & Strategic Management Skills (Hand Analysis).** The analysis of how participants described developing their leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills produced 34 unique codes that collapsed down to three themes. The three themes that emerged were Trial & Error, Education, and Network. The three themes speak to different areas of how the participants developed their skills.

  The first theme was Trial & Error. It was expressed in the corpus through comments explicitly stating, "Trial and Error." The theme also stated and described learning from experience. Experience appeared to be a large concept for how small business decision makers learned their leadership and strategic management skills.

  The second theme of Education was prevalent in the responses. Reflecting to the demographical data, 22 participants had a graduate degree. In the responses, participants state "MBA" as their way of learning leadership and strategic management skills. The traditional educational space appears to be the common method that many participants learned these skills, outside of experience. The theme also had a minor concept of reading and books.

  The third theme of Network, expressed by participants in their ability to leverage a network to learn these skills. Participants noted that they learned from "mentors" or "professional associations" for their development of leadership and strategic management

skills. They also discussed learning and developing their skills through working with consultants or business coaches.

**Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis for leadership and strategic management skills development produced two themes. The themes Leadership (59) and Experience (24) capture the same general sentiment of hand analysis. Figure 4.14 is the Leximancer map for this question.

Figure 4.14 Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills Leximancer Map
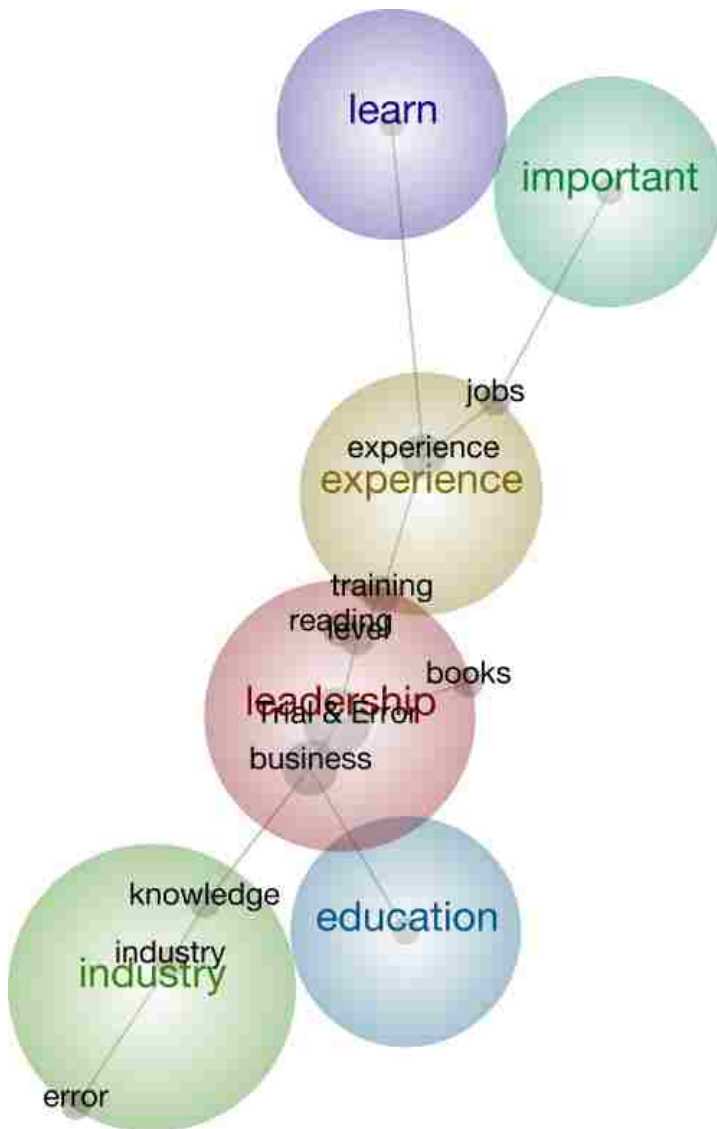
The theme Leadership captured the concept of trial and error, a coded theme in the hand analysis. Looking at the map, trial and error is located directly in the middle of the theme bubble and overlaps with the concept of leadership. The theme also captures much of the other concepts, including books and reading. The theme overlaps with the secondary theme of Experience.

Experience is a secondary theme, but its overlap with the Leadership theme, expresses a connection between the two through the concept of training. Experience includes the concept of jobs that is reflective of the hand analysis of Trial and Error that brings more emphasis to experience. The participants noted that their jobs could be a good source of education and development of their skills and knowledge.

**Continue to Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills**

**Continue to Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills (Hand Analysis).** The analysis of this question led to 38 unique codes, collapsed into three themes. The three themes are Reading, Hands-on Experience, and Trade Associations. The themes aid in understanding how participants in the study continue to enhance their skills in leadership and strategic management.

The theme of Reading was prevalent in the participant responses. The participants noted that they read "trade journals, books, and other web sites." The continued reading of trade journals, books, and online materials is important, but it can overlook the academic journals that are methodological sound advice, instead of anecdotal news from trade journals. The use of online materials is expected because it would lead to decreased time and in finding and using these resources, but are the sources of information valid and empirically tested?

The second theme of Hands-on Experience was expressed by the participants through a personal reflection of their business and its operations. They discussed this as "self-organization monitoring" or "owning a business is a practical lesson." Learning in a hands-on method appears to be a consistent theme with small business decision makers in this study. A question should be raised of this result and if it is indicative of the whole small business decision maker population. This topic will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The third theme was Trade Associations. The theme includes concepts that focus on seminars & conferences, networking, a business coaching. Reflecting on the demographics of the study, the average of was 56 years old and 22 participants had a graduate degree. They may have learned skills in a traditional school setting and seek out similar opportunities through trade associations to continually learn and enhance their skills.

**Continue to Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills (Leximancer).** The Leximancer analysis produced two themes, Leadership (72) and Books (26). The connectivity score of 26 for Books isn't close to Leadership, it could be viewed as a peripheral theme, but it is higher than the other themes and logic would dictate the theme to be pertinent to the analysis. Figure 4.15 is the Leximancer map for continue to develop leadership and strategic management skills.

Figure 4.15 Continue to Develop Leadership & Strategic Management Skills Leximancer
Map
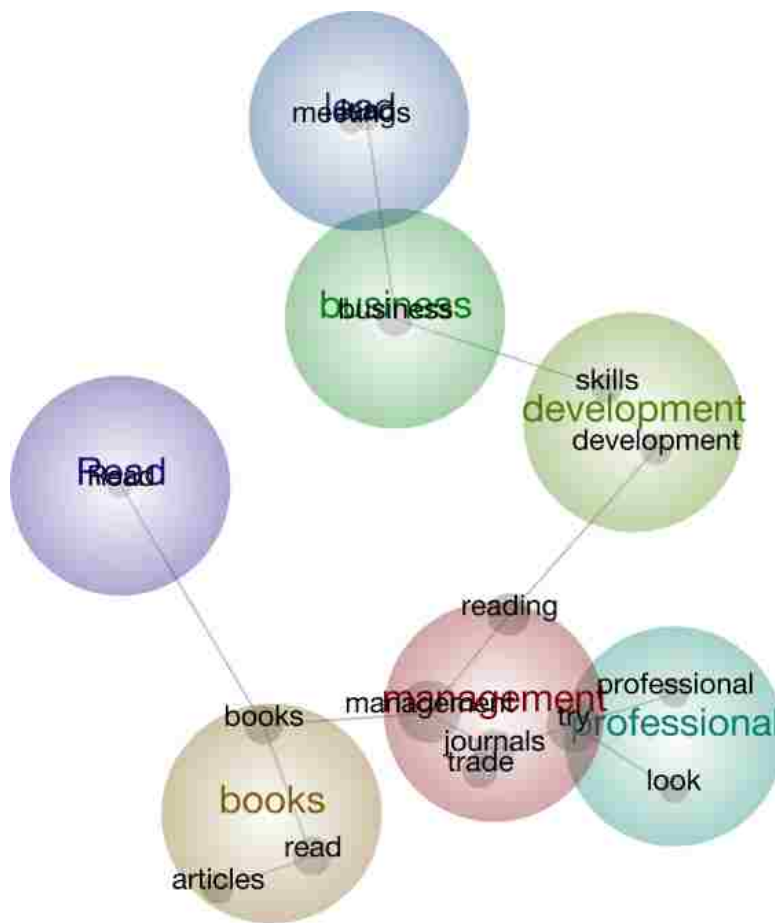


Leadership, the primary theme in this analysis, contains the concepts of reading,
management, journals, trade, and try. The concept of management is associated with
books, read, and articles. Management overlaps with professional and is not overlapping
with the second largest theme of books. The overlapping theme of Management with
professional, gives an association with the hand analysis pointing out the hands on
professional development.

The secondary theme of Books spoke to what the participants citied in their
comments as to what they read to enhance their skills. The books and articles are

explained previously in the hand analysis of reading. The hand analysis described this theme as Reading as opposed to Books. Leximancer utilizing the term of Books gives way to books being most often cited by the participants as their source for reading.

**Research Question #4 Combined Analysis**

The combined analysis for this research question gives an understanding of the overall picture of how small business decision makers developed and continue to develop their leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills. The Leximancer analysis produced three themes: Company (186), Leadership (140), and Experience (61). Figure 4.16 is the Leximancer map for the combined results for research question #4.

Figure 4.16 Combined Results for Research Question #4 Leximancer Map
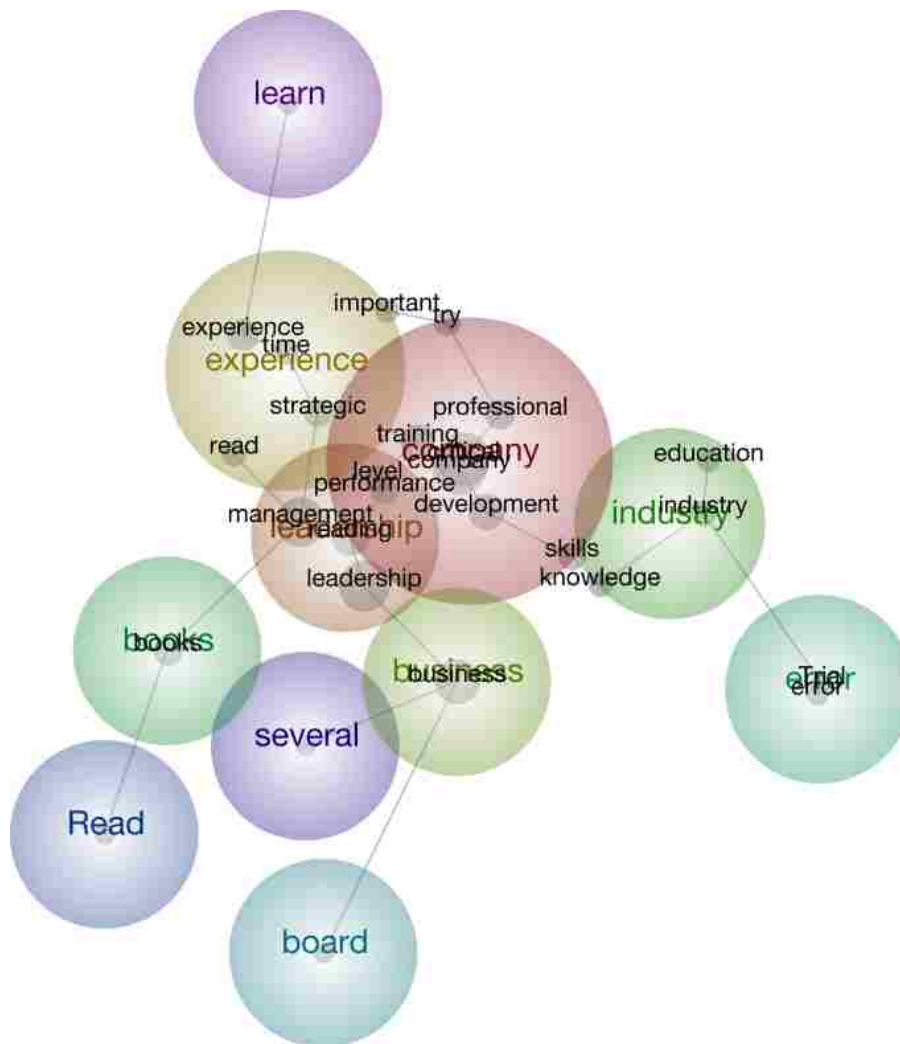


The theme of Company includes a great deal of concepts, including professional,

training, development, company, and skills. The theme of Company places a great deal of

emphasis on the business organization to provide the leadership skills and aid in the

development of these over the career. The participants of the study continually discussed

how their company is a learning laboratory and provides practical, hand-on experiences

for the development and continual enhancement of their leadership and strategic

management skills.

Company overlaps with the Leadership theme, sharing the concepts of level, performance, and reading. In this theme, performance speaks to learning on the job and trial and error. The on-the-job performance is viewed as a leadership development incubator. The other concept of reading was prevalent in both developing and continue to develop their leadership skills. Reading was discussed, consuming a variety of materials to aid in their leadership development.

The final theme of Experience contains concepts of experience, time, and important. The emergence of the concept of time is important to note, because it has emerged in many of the other analysis in this chapter. The emergence of time gives an insight into the ideals of the participants to pursue avenues of professional development, but time is the overarching agent that can regulate the ability to sit down and read, possibly explaining why they rely on experience instead of classical educational techniques such as school or trade associations.

**Conclusions for Research Question #4**

The fourth research question sought to gain a greater understanding of how small business decision makers interact with leadership, developing and continually enhancing their leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills. The examination of the questions used to understand this led to many interesting results that displayed a variety of methods for the development of the skills. The development of these skills is essential to the longevity of a small business, but time demands, the participants discussed a reliance on hands-on experience and trial and error. In conclusion, the participants in this study discussed a variety of methods of enhancing their leadership and strategic

management knowledge and skills, but the most important component is time and having

the ability to engage in these personal and professional development practices.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION

The results of this study have confirmed previous theory regarding strategic management and small business decision maker actions, while also raising new questions surrounding how strategic management is addressed in these firms. The purpose of this chapter is to address these differences and associate them back to theory, explaining them in greater detail than in chapter four. This chapter will address a broad range of topics and discuss the results in greater detail.

## Sample Size

The sample size in this sample was a total of 45, with two having to be removed from analysis because their organizations were over 500 employees. The sample size could be viewed through two lenses, quantitative or qualitative. Each lens produces its perspective and pre-conceived notions about the way a study should be organized and executed. The present study utilized perspectives from both methodological guides while pushing the envelope on a new means of conducting research. The purpose of this study was to replicate qualitative face-to-face interviews, using quantitative large sampling technique for participant recruitment.

### Quantitative Perspective

If you were to examine this study from a purely quantitative methodology, it would raise eyebrows because of the low response rate. The survey had a response rate of .11%, which is low for distributing the study to a potential participant pool of 77,699 (38,898 Effective Distribution Rate). The participants were recruited from a mailing list purchased from B2Bdata.co. A mailing list is not the perfect means of obtaining contact

information, but when attempting to reach a larger portion of the population, the list enabled the researcher to contact a larger segment of the population for participant recruitment.

Participants in the study were not contacted ahead of time, asking them to participate in the study. Instead, they were delivered the survey with the introductory email. The Effective Distribution Rate of 38,898 is substantial and represents a significant portion of the small businesses in the three markets utilized in this study. A goal of quantitative studies is to produce generalizable results to the population. While a larger sample size is always desired, in this study, the researcher believes the results are representative of the small business decision maker population in the three markets utilized in the study. Making a stretch to say the results are generalizable to the whole small business decision maker population in the United States is not possible and was not the original intention of the study. The original purpose of this study was to explore and learn from small business decision makers regarding their understanding of strategic management and how they connect with the community.

Examining the sample size through a quantitative lens could raise question to the small number of responses. A rough analysis using the Effective Distribution Rate as the total population, displayed a need for a sample of 381 participants to be able to generalize to the larger population. When the analysis was conducted with the overall total of over 77,000 the need only increased by two more participants to 383. The analysis was conducted with a 95% confidence interval and 5% standard error. Taking the new figure of 381 participants needed to generalize and 43 participants would produce a response rate of 11% instead of .01% when using the whole population.

In conclusion, the results when viewed through purely a quantitative lens may be conceived a limitation of the study. The qualitative explanation will follow in the next section, providing support for why the present study could possibly be viewed as representative of the small business populations in the markets utilized in this study. If someone to focus solely on the response rate, they would be missing the whole picture and value of the data collected from participants. The study utilized the large sampling technique but was focused on the replication of face-to-face interviews with small business decision makers, to learn and explore how they engage with the community and engage with strategic management in their organizations.

**Qualitative Perspective**

To be transparent and open regarding this study, was it a purely qualitative study. No, the researcher wanted to push the envelope of qualitative studies by expanding the ability to obtain possible participants and gain more data through using technology to aid in the data collection process. During a review of the literature surrounding qualitative studies that employed face-to-face interviews with small business owners, it was found that these studies had between 10-20 participants (M. P. Johnson, 2017; Kanchanapibul et al., 2014; Wieland, 2016). Qualitative studies typically require greater resources in the shape of time, physical researchers, and cost to conduct face-to-face interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2015).

The study obtained 23 more participants overall and 12 more participants that completed all the open-ended question in the survey instrument, then the reported 10-20 participants in the general face-to-face interview qualitative study in small business management. The study employing the use of technology obtained more participants than

the typical face-to-face interview study while receiving a large quantity of data. The data were obtained at the cost of $11.11 for each participant, most studies do not denote the acquisition cost of a participant, but the ability to try to contact most of the population and obtain more responses than a typical qualitative study is a possible step to advancing qualitative methodology.

It is possible that a pure qualitative research methodologist would not approve of the research methodology in this study, due to its ability to gain high-quality rich data to learn from the participants. The methodology employed in this study presents an opportunity to expand the paradigm of qualitative research methodology, leveraging technology to learn from a possible larger sample at a more economic figure in financial and opportunity cost. The ability to leverage technology and big data analysis techniques could provide greater insight from a population, instead of a limited sample that probably is not either representative or generalizable to the overall population.

In this study, time was an important consideration when developing the methodology for small business decision makers. In discussions with two business incubators in Albuquerque and informal conversations with small business owners, never having enough time was discussed as a common hurdle they face in their daily business concerns. The researcher did not feel they would have received as many participants if they conducted face-to-face or phone interviews at multiple times, as conducted in prior studies. The ability for the participant to complete the survey when they had an available 10-20 minutes could have possibly led to an increase in participants in this study.

**Representativeness of Sample**

A possible critique and limitation of the sample size is the ability for it to be representative of the overall population of small businesses in the United States. Per the 2016 U.S. Small Business Administration's profile of small businesses in the United States, there are 28.8 million small businesses with 17.3 percent of them having between 1-19 employees, 16.7 percent of 20-99 employees, and 14.1 percent with 100-499 employees (Small Business Administration, 2016). In the present study, 67 percent of participants represented organizations that had less than 20 employees. The figure is larger than the national average of 17.3 percent, but per the Small Business Administration, 80 percent of all firms are non-employers or sole proprietorships. Based on the figures provided by the Small Business Administration, the representativeness of the sample is like that of the United States small business landscape.

**Analysis Technique**

To maintain rigor in the analysis of the data, triangulation was utilized in analyzing the research questions. Triangulation was used by first doing a hand analysis and then using Leximancer to analyze the results. Triangulation allowed for the comparison of results to try to understand the "true" meanings or interpretations for themes and concepts. The ability to use triangulation authorized for a greater examination of Leximancer's analysis compared to the hand analysis.

The comparison of the analysis led to an understanding that Leximancer can miss some of the smaller details that emerge when one reads the corpus and can understand the meaning. An example of Leximancer's analysis varying from the hand analysis occurred during the analysis of research question #1. If the word community were removed from

the Leximancer thesaurus, the meaning of the analysis would have been drastically differently. When reviewing the participant comments for the question, it became apparent that the use of community was tied to small business decision maker discussed how their actions were socially responsible toward the community. Leximancer is an impressive tool, but it should be utilized in conjunction with a hand analysis to ensure minor details are not overlooked.

## Research Questions

The research questions in this study were designed to explore four distinct areas of concern regarding small businesses, areas where the academic literature has overlooked. An example of this is the topic of strategic management in the *Journal of Small Business Management*. A review of the journal revealed that 10% of their articles addressed strategic management in small business. Often the articles focused on a top-down approach, discussing strategic management in a model of corporate office down to franchise business or traditional strategic management skills (BarNir & Smith, 2002; Besser, 1999; Brečić & Simintiras, 2016).

The research questions addressed the four areas of community engagement, strategic management, strategic partnerships, and leadership. The following is a discussion of the four research questions, associating the results with the literature discussed in the review of the literature. After the discussion of the research questions, a brief review will focus on the model introduced previously focused on strategic management, responsible leadership, and social capital.

**Research Question #1 – Community Engagement**

The first research question addresses community engagement, especially seeking a definition for "community social responsibility." Per the social capital literature, this question should have provided guidance regarding how small business decision makers build social capital amongst their community stakeholders. The definitions of social capital from Putnam (1995) and Adler & Kwon (2001) stressed the importance of networks and relationships.

The responses in this study discussed an effort to connect with the community, but no mention of the word "relationship." In the question asking for a definition of "community social responsibility" they used terms like "responsibility, obligation, and give back." The communication of their efforts was tied to transactional relationships, not one of working together to build up networks or relationships. The comments were geared toward their direct benefit to the community or perceived responsibility to impact the community.

The lack of language that would have communicated more transformational relationships with the community makes one wonder of the mindset of small business decision makers and their ability to think in a transformational manner. The question unquestionably made the participants reflect on the concept, due to participants stating, "don't think a definition exist for this question" or "this is a tough one." Making the participants think about concepts enabled real and raw thoughts to be shared in the study. But it still does not possibly explain why in theory business should act in a manner that produces social capital amongst their community stakeholders and especially the stakeholders that utilize their business.

A possible area to explore in understanding the connection back to the community is deeply rooted need to focus on profits, as it is the only means to ensure the business is successful. One of the participants in this study represented a non-profit organization when asked what prevents them from engaging with the community; they had a very simple answer of "nothing." The other participants in the study listed a variety of reasons that prevent them from engaging with the community as much as they wished. One of the primary reasons was time, and a secondary reason was a lack of understanding of the community needs or where they could benefit the community. If a business is not skilled at engaging with the community, it could place them at a possible social capital deficit that can help the community.

The participants who discussed connecting with the community expressed a need to leave an impact and know whom they could directly benefit the community. They discussed working with non-profit organizations or helping where they could to help the community. One of the primary points of discussion was knowing where they could impact the community; it was their primary concern. In the development of social capital, the direct impact is a possible step in the right direction, but how are these actions working to build relationships that can lead to sustained social capital development amongst community stakeholders.

The actions of the participants who discussed seeking a direct impact for their actions, it still reflects a transactional relationship between their business and the community. The transactional nature of small business decision maker thinking could be a possible hindrance to the overall success of small businesses if they are not able to

develop social capital amongst their community stakeholders and stakeholders of the organization.

**Research Question #2 – Strategic Management**

The second research question focused on how participants engaged with and what they planned for in the strategic planning process. The need for strategy and strategic management is important for the continued success of business over a long duration. Understanding how a small business engages with strategic management is an attempt to understand how to more effectively work with these organizations and make them sustainable. The sustainability of small businesses is important to the overall economic vitality of the United States, with small businesses making up 98% of all businesses, and employing around 48% of all Americans according to the Small Business Administration (2016). Per the academic literature, the view of small business strategic management is viewed from a planned method and doesn't account for the practical day to day nature encountered in the workplace.

During preliminary discussions with practitioners and small business decision makers, it became apparent that academia and the business world are two separate entities, both with their views of how each works. A participant in the study, emailed the researcher and noted that the questions in the study were "very academic and overlooked the practical nature of small business, noting that he hadn't done nor thought about the concepts in the 30 years he had been in business, but looking back wishes he had done some of them now that he is later in his career." The participant also noted that "small businesses are typically focused on the ever-changing environment, and must be flexible." A question should be raised regarding the necessity of strategic management in

small business if a business can be successful for 30 years without relying on the concepts.

The comments from the participant speak to the very reason for strategic management and the ability to forecast and plan for changes in the business environment, making decisions to differentiate itself from competition. When participants were asked to discuss how they engage with the strategic planning process, they often discussed the timing of when they plan. The question was not intended to ask about timing, but they discussed engaging with strategic management on an annual or semi-annual basis. In this concept, they also discussed using both traditional modes such as a SWOT analysis, but more commonly appeared to do so in an ad hoc manner.

When asked what they plan for in the strategic planning process, they discussed a wide variety of topics but most often referenced financial topics and resources. Reviewing the comments, it appears that small business decision makers could subscribe to the resource-based view of strategic management, forwarded by Barney (2001). The resource-based view focuses on leveraging an organization's resources to gain a competitive advantage over the competition in their respective industry.

In financial topics, multiple responses referenced profits. It is apparent that a business needs profits to be successful, but is it everything? Viewing strategic management through the stakeholder theory lens provides an interesting perspective to analyze the actions of the comments of the participants.

During a 2016, keynote address at the Daniels Ethic Fund Teaching Workshop in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Ed Freeman's address centered around value in business. He said "while there is not denying that businesses need profits to survive, and humans need red

blood cells to survive, but humans don't wake up every day thinking about how they are going to make red blood cells in the day. So why do business owners and key decision makers think about making profit constantly, instead of focusing on how they can derive more value for their stakeholders" (E. Freeman, 2016). Freeman's discussion summed up the exact point regarding participants in this study's understanding of using strategy to make profits. It is undeniable that business must make profits, but it doesn't have to be the central purpose of the business.

Freeman and Auster (2015) discussed the importance for businesses to bridge the values gap to lead to a more sustainable form of business. Freeman (1984) discussed how capitalism could be a catalyst for collaboration with for economic enhancement. The lack of potential collaboration was expressed in the next research question in dealing with strategic partnerships.

The discussion of emergent vs. deliberate strategy forwarded by Mintzberg and Waters (1985) brings about a discussion of entrepreneurial strategies. The discussion from Mintzberg and Waters perspective of the entrepreneurial strategies is important to note, but most participants in this study were either sole proprietorships up to 20 employees. The emergent nature of strategic management in small firms appears to not come from a deliberate nature pressed forward by collaboration with many stakeholders. The ad hoc nature that emerged and led to the theme, speaks to a variety of forces that can impact decision-making and strategy in smaller firms. Small business decision makers may need more understanding of how expressing their deliberate strategy, can lead to the strategy being enacted for their stakeholders and more collaboration to move a firm forward, as opposed to continually changing the overall direction of their business.

Overall, participants in this study discussed strategy, but often it was done in an ad hoc manner. Stakeholder theory could be a practical guide for small business decision makers, but they would have to change their overall system of operation to move away from a profit-centric viewpoint and more towards a mission of delivering value. Small business decision makers in this study displayed the aptitude to be flexible and change, but they must change their mindset, a topic that will be addressed in the next chapter.

<div align="center">

**Research Question #3 – Strategic Partnerships & Sponsorships**

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Strategic partnerships are discussed in this project as means for understanding if small business decision makers engage in strategic partnerships and what this looks like for their business. The participants discussed a variety of partnership activity and raised many issues that prevented them from going into partnerships.

**Strategic Partnerships**

The analysis of the participant comments led to a theme to emerge of partnerships that spoke to seeking partnerships with vendors and suppliers, but not necessarily with other companies. The discussion of partnerships focusing on relationships with vendors and suppliers has expected after the prior analysis of strategic management led to participants discussing how they could best use their resources to benefit the organization and delivering better products and services to their customers/clients. The focus on resources speaks to the desire to try to form partnerships with vendor/suppliers to reduce their overhead cost to increase their profit margins. The focus on profits and profit-driven decisions at the root of the system, speaks to why partnerships were not sought between other organizations. Participants did discuss seeking partnerships that could benefit the

community, speaking of partnerships with non-profits, but said they didn't seek partnerships with other businesses.

When asked what prevents them from forming strategic partnerships with other organization, it was common for participants to answer, "not in my industry" or "no interest." Participants also spoke about "bad experiences previously when doing these partnerships" and "one brain can make a decision, why do I need two?" The participant's comments spoke to a tendency to engage in partnerships or think about going into partnerships, but once they get burned in a partnership, they are hesitant to re-enter into them in the future. Reflecting on Freeman's (1984) discussion on collaboration and capitalism, the small business owners should be encouraged to enter these partnerships.

**Sponsorships**

A concept of inquiry to the researcher understood what small business decision makers consider when deciding to sponsor an organization and what benefit they receive from sponsoring a sport organization. Having worked for a sport organization, I know how difficult it can be to solicit sponsorships from organizations. The sport industry is often reliant on the business community for sponsorships, but sports are often perceived to be expensive (Slack & Bentz, 1996). The analyzed comments provided a wealth of information regarding sponsorships.

Small business decision makers discussed a desire to sponsor events that had a great deal of impact overall, with minor comments toward the sponsorship having an impact on the community. While sponsorships were discussed in a means of impacting the community, the theme didn't come up when the participants discussed community engagement in the earlier questions. The sponsorship questions were designed to be at the

end of the study, where community engagement was at the beginning of the survey. The researcher did not want to bias the participants for sponsorships.

Participants discussed a desire for their employees to be involved in the sponsored event or organization. The participants expressed sponsoring to give their employees a reward or the opportunity to participate with the community. Small business decision makers are conscious of their organizational brand and sponsorship of an event or organization would allow them to have their employees participate to ensure the organizational brand was represented in the manner intended by the owner.

The concept of sport sponsorship brought about almost twice as many responses for previously not sponsoring sport organizations, as those who sponsored sport. The participants who cited sponsoring sport organizations said it was a "fun way to be involved, and reward for employees." The participants spoke about sponsoring their employees' kid's sport teams to show they were committed to their employees. Small businesses tend to value their employees more than large corporations, knowing they lead to increased longevity of the firm, due to retention of organizational knowledge and expertise (Bates, 1990). The participants expressed sponsoring sport organizations to give a reward and a fun means to contribute to the community.

Most participants in the study expressed not sponsoring sports organizations, and cited a wide variety of concepts. The theme of Audience was expressed, mainly speaking to sponsoring sport as not fitting their business. The question of fit to their business is merited but not every business is a direct match to sport, especially if you look at major sport organizations like the National Football League (NFL).

The NFL has a lot of sponsors, not all are directly related to football or playing the sport. The NFL has sponsorships from Coca-Cola, Hyundai, and other organizations that are not pertinent to the playing of football (Masteralexis, Barr, & Hums, 2015). The description of not fitting the purpose of the business could be an example of small business decision makers not being properly educated or informed regarding the benefits to sponsoring sport organizations. The definition of sport organization was left vague on purpose to essentially include any organization or event that deals with sport, but participants still cited cost as being an issue for not sponsoring. Sport has been shown to play a role in the development of social capital (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008), small businesses could benefit from sponsoring sport at a higher level if they can be taught how to leverage sport for the growth of their brand.

Overall, small business decision makers appear to be willing to sponsor organizations in their community, but they are aware that of how their investment would be impacting the community. The focus on impact appears to be really important to small business decision makers who want to be sure their brand could be represented in a positive manner, thus their desire to have their employees participate in the event or organization. When discussing sport sponsorship, it appears that most of the participants in the study had not sponsored sport, raising the question as to why? Sport has been shown to be an asset to building social capital, but small business decision makers do not realize the full potential of sport sponsorships. Some of the participants appeared to be skeptics of sport sponsorships, accusing the researcher of trying to fish for sponsorship sales of UNM Athletics sports teams. Overcoming skepticism and educating small

business decision makers on the benefits of sponsoring sport, could lead to increased

support of the small business community of sport.

### Research Question #4 – Leadership & Strategic Management

Leadership is one of the most confusing, but most published upon, topics in

academia. Most of the participants in the study reported having either an undergraduate

or graduate college degree. When asked about how the participants developed their

leadership and strategic management skills, the responses often included "MBA" or other

comments directed toward education. Most of the comments would provide evidence that

leadership development occurred in a classical nature in the college classroom.

Leadership is an important aspect for a small business decision maker to develop

because the small business decision maker can be the moral compass of their

organization. Leaders of small business are critical for the ethical decision making of an

organization (Minkes, Small, & Chatterjee, 1999), but little to nothing was discussed by

the participants regarding ethical leadership or developing ethical leadership skills. The

literature also tells us that small business owners often lead with relationships as opposed

to an overall organizational culture or schemes, as seen in large companies (Marcketti &

Kozar, 2007). Participants responses communicated the notion that "learning never

stops."

Leadership is a skill that must continually be worked with to adjust to the

changing environment. The entrepreneur is wired to be a go getter and ability to be

flexible and adapt to the environment. The participant who emailed the researcher saying

they must be flexible and adjust to the environment, says that they must be able to

continually learn from the environment. Learning from the environment should not just be for the benefit of the bottom line but the development of the small business leader.

The participants noted that they continue to develop their leadership skills through reading and hands-on experience. Reading is a curious topic because they are reading trade journals and popular press material that appears on the internet. The reading of this material is better than nothing, but it does not lead to the best practices for leadership development. The time for reading dense leadership academic articles that take the time to process is something that may be too much for small business decision makers to manage their busy schedules.

Time is often the most valuable asset and resource for a small business decision maker. Improving leadership skills is important and the shortage of time, explains why they may prefer to learn from their experiences. During the review for this study, it was expressed that the notion that small business owners have time to "put their feet up on the desk and ponder the direction of the companies, is a far-fetched concept." While it would be ideal for small business decision makers to continue their leadership development, in the same manner, they learned their skills, with continued skill development through practical hands-on reflection, increased attention should be paid to the continual training of this demographic. Overall, learning should never stop, but more action should be done to ensure the resources available to small business decision makers are those based on empirically proven best practices, not those created from non-expert opinions from their experiences on leadership.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS

When looking back at a study, it is important to reflect on the original purpose and intention of the survey. The goal of this study was to explore how small business decision makers engage with their community, engage with strategic management, engage with strategic partnerships, and develop leadership and strategic management skills. With the purpose of the guide, the study found many interesting points of information related to small business and how it can deal with entrepreneurs moving forward. This chapter will address the conclusions for this project and recommendations for interacting with entrepreneurs, especially from a sport organizations perspective.

### System of Entrepreneurism

Stakeholder theory was the original theory utilized in guiding the conceptualization and execution of this project. Stakeholder theory has been coupled with a systems approach, but predominantly in discussions with business ethics and corporate social responsibility (Caldwell & Karri, 2005; Mason & Simmons, 2014). It appears that the literature has accepted stakeholder theory as a tool for enhancing corporate social responsibility and overlooking possibly the original intention of the theory as one of strategic management. The system of entrepreneurialism is one that is grounded in trying to maximize profits and make the most of the little bit of time available each day. What does this say regarding the quality of life afforded to entrepreneurs and if the system is not adjusted, can we expect small business to be sustainable.

Per the United States Small Business Administration, 33% of all small businesses will fail during their first two years in operation, asking questions of why are they failing

123

and is it a systemic issue (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016); According to Scott Shane,

Professor at Case Western Reserve University, in an article for Entrepreneur magazine,

he says possible reasons for a decline in the failure rate of small businesses are businesses

"shifting away from sectors like construction, to service industries, smarter entrepreneurs,

less competition from entrants, fewer marginal businesses being formed, and better

business management technology." The quote from Shane still speaks to the transactional

nature of doing business and the transactional nature many entrepreneurs have with their

business.

In an attempt of full disclosure, the researcher does not have experience at owning

their own business or being an entrepreneur, but plans on doing this soon. This project

was a significant research lesson in how to think about being a business owner. It is

unreasonable to ask every entrepreneur to go through a Ph.D. program and do a self-

analysis of their mindset and how to engage in business that does not make them a slave

to their business, instead of making their business work for them to achieve what they

want out of life. The comments from the participants in this study create a narrative that

was transactional in nature and focused on the bottom line. Some of the participants in

their comments appeared to be resentful of their businesses and wishing they would have

thought about or considered using strategic management earlier in their careers, to change

their business. If one cannot make an attempt to forecast and anticipate change, they will

be caught flat footed and react to shifts in the environment instead of leading the changes.

An analogy that comes to mind is a quarterback in football, the ones that can read and

predict a defense are successful, the ones that can't are left to ride the bench. I want to see

small business owners understand and predict the environment, so they are not left riding the bench in the market.

**Rethinking the System of Entrepreneurism**

How can we change the system of entrepreneurialism, to make sure more businesses can succeed in the market? I do not agree with Shane's comments on the many factors that are leading to a potential decrease in failure rates; his thoughts were transactional and more can be done to shape the way small business owners interact with the community. I believe change starts with a re-evaluation of stakeholder theory as a strategic management theory, not one predominantly for business ethics.

Much of the participants in this study reported having either a 4-year degree or graduate degree, and a theme when discussing continually developing their leadership skills was education. Some of the participants commented "learning never stops." The question should be asked, what are they learning and where? Why do business schools still teach the classical techniques of management and prepare students to enter a large corporation? Business schools have begun to change and match the environment, offering programs geared toward entrepreneurs and small business, but why has the system still been built on the backs of preparing for large corporations? In most communities around the country where universities reside, small business is the bedrock of their society and why are skills not being taught to prepare students to think entrepreneurial and foster this spirit, teaching them how to be successful and build a sustainable business, 98% of all firms in the United States are small businesses; more can be done to advance this initiative.

The curriculum at business schools working with entrepreneurs should not just focus on the nuts and bolts of running a business, but answering the question of how to derive value for customers, employees, and themselves. Often the question of deriving value for themselves is overlooked in the equation. Participants in the study when discussing strategic partnerships, discussed partnerships with vendors and customers, deriving value ultimately for the consumer. How is it rewarding for the owner if their business is failing in enhancing their happiness? The question is not addressed in business schools and is something that could aid in changing the system of entrepreneurialism.

The second element in changing the system is those entrepreneurs that are not fortunate enough to go through a business program at a university. They may have a degree from a different major or not attended a school of higher education in the first place. Consultants and educational systems like incubators should teach more than the nuts and bolts of business, as this will enable the entrepreneur to focus on deriving value instead of the bottom line. A mentor stated, "it is hard to change the mindset away from profits, especially if you have to answer to somebody." While the statement is merited, if the educational process can occur where these businesses shift their focus to something more than the bottom line, it will enable them to flourish according to Freeman and Auster (2015).

Time is what the entrepreneur or small business owner makes it and technology can be a gift and a curse for the entrepreneur. Shane's comment about technology being a reason for decreased fatality rates in small businesses, it is my perception that technology can be a hindrance to the business. Software like QuickBooks and the use of an IPad as

cash register is technology that can be beneficial, but the ever-connectedness of the 21$^{st}$

century can detach a small business owner from their life, shifting their priorities away

from their family and toward their business. The shift is rethinking the business in charge

of the owner and not the other way around; it is the classic tail wagging the dog scenario.

Controlling time is essential for a small business owner, and it was apparent from the

comments in this study that time is a major decision-making factor for many of the small

business owners.

## Strategic Partnerships

At the beginning of the project, a conceptual model was introduced showing the

intersection of social capital, stakeholder theory, and responsible leadership. Figure 2.1 is

included below to refresh your memory of the concepts. The purpose of introducing this

model was to understand what the ideal small business decision maker would be to seek

partnerships, potentially falling in the middle of intersecting concepts. Seeking

partnerships was the original conceptualization for this project over two years ago,

especially which businesses would be best partners for a sport organization. After

analyzing the data, the following descriptions for each are listed below, not only for

partnerships with sport organizations but in general with other businesses.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model
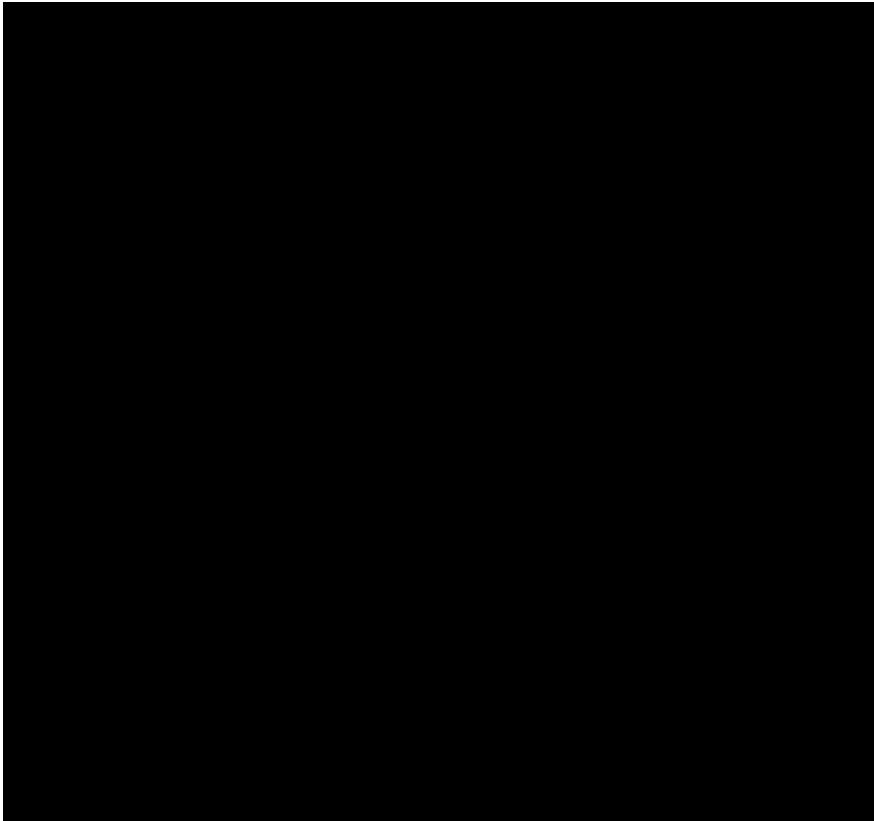


**Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory is grounded in the ability of an organization to develop

relationships with stakeholders, learning how to best derive value for either financial or

non-financial stakeholders of an organization (E. Freeman, 1984; R. E. Freeman &

Auster, 2015). In this model, small business decision makers who display more of an

aptitude for deriving value of a profit-centric motive would be better candidates for

partnerships. The decision makers who display more of a tendency for engagement with

the community as a central tenet of their company, as opposed to that of something that

obligatory would be preferred. It is not unreasonable for a decision maker to demand

accountability for the partnership or that their participation is going to benefit the

community overall directly, but this discussion should be had during the time of the

alliance formation. Engaging in a partnership could hold the partners accountable to each other and to society overall to seek value as the product, not profits directly.

**Responsible Leadership**

Responsible leadership was intended to be the leadership theory to explain stakeholder theory. It was utilized in this project for this purpose, but it is still a very young theory, introduced in 2006. The inherent qualities of a small business owner who displays responsible leadership are those who focus more on the transformational components of their business and not the transactional aspects. It may be a challenge for the owners to see past the day-to-day nuts and bolts of the business, but in doing this, they can react and respond to the environment and enable their employees to take an increased psychological investment in the business.

Per Scott (2014), leadership comes in a variety of styles, but the effective leader is one who can understand themselves first. A self-understanding is important for small business decision makers because they must know their values and intentions to effectively communicate these with their employees, investors, and stakeholders. Responsible leadership is grounded in servant and ethical leadership, which is why the connection to stakeholder theory is evident. An ideal partner is one who displays a passion for serving their stakeholders in an ethical manner, through providing value to stakeholder whenever possible through fair and just business practices.

**Social Capital**

Social capital was the larger concept that was sought in this project, but none of the participants utilized these words in their response. It would have been reasonable to expect the participants to mention the word "capital" in their response because of the

business mindset, but it did not make an appearance. Social capital is conceptualized as the output or payback for engaging with the community and building relationships. The participants discussed a desire to know directly where their support was impacting the community. The idea of payback or boost in recognition came when sponsoring a sport organization was asked, and a participant noted that "putting your company's name on the back of a youth sport's team jersey is a direct means for the community to know your supporting the community."

The ideal small business decision maker for a partnership in social capital would be one who understands the return on investment, could come not in the form of real dollars but reputational boost or other non-tangible returns. One of the themes that emerged from this study was a discussion return on investment, which was perceived by both the researcher and Leximancer to be a physical return to the business in the form of revenue. One participant noted that "it was not worth it unless it led directly to a sale." The participant who made this comment probably wouldn't be a good fit in the middle of the model because they are purely focused on the transactional relationship. An ideal partner is one that understands social capital and transformational returns to the business.

### Sport Organization Sponsorship

The final concept that will be addressed in this project is sport sponsorship. The concept is near and dear to the participant's heart, due to the pursuit of the Ph.D. in Sport Administration. One of the most mesmerizing moments for the researcher was getting the opportunity to talk with the Vice President for Marketing of a multi-national cotton clothing goods manufacturer, who is the title sponsor of the New Mexico Bowl. During this conversation, it brought about the need to understand the needs of the sponsor and

how they want to leverage their sponsorship for the advancement of their business. The ability to understand the needs of the sponsor to organization forces more than just a sponsorship, it makes a partnership between the two organizations.

It is often the viewpoint of a sports organization that they are widely seen in a city or market and that sponsors should pay top dollar to become a sponsor, because of all the notoriety received for being associated with the sport organization. The comments from the participants in this study were very telling as to why they did not seek sponsorship of a sport organization. The theme of Business Fit is very present and one of the primary reasons discussed from the participants, or lack of interest in sport organization. It could easily be described that these decision makers are miss informed on the value of sport sponsorship and should not be considered for possible sponsorship opportunities going forward. The narrow-minded focus could be evident in sport organizations, only going after organization that has some interest in sport, but this means cutting off a sizable portion of the market. The participant pool is small in this study, but nearly two-thirds of participants said they had not sponsored a sport organization previously. It is not sound business practice to cast aside two-thirds of your market, especially if that market is small business who are connected to the community.

A possible solution would be to eliminate the typical sales pitch given to prospective sponsorship clients, instead of selling the potential sponsor on how their business can leverage the sport organization or event for their gain. One thing that has become apparent in doing this project is entrepreneurs most often do not understand all the elements of business, often going into business because they have a passion for an idea; leaving a large amount of need for education in other components of business. If a

sales pitch could educate the potential sponsor on how to leverage the event, it only benefits the sport organization because your brand is being extended into the small business decision makers network, at no cost to the sport organization. The sport organization must market itself to potential sponsors in a manner that can enhance the potential sponsors perceived and actual value associated with the sponsorship.

In conclusion, sport sponsorship is often critical to the overall success and longevity of sport organizations. One does not have to look any further than the loss of college football bowl games, due to the inability to secure title sponsorships. Small business is the lifeline of many communities, and sport is a great tool to build and enhance social capital; their matching is an assumed success when done properly. It is the responsibility of the sport organization to educate and work with the sponsor in a partnership because there is something to gain on both sides, producing an actual and transformational return on investment. The participants who did sponsor sport were all pleased and had an enjoyable experience, but why can't this be extended to other small business, possibly being a tool for economic development in the community. Sport can be a tool if used effectively to grow a community and lead to increased economic development previously unimagined in some communities.

**Project Takeaways**

So, what is the point of the roughly 140 pages that preceded this section and what are the key takeaways from this project? This section provides a key takeaway from the author's perspective for each research question. It should be noted that readers may derive other important takeaways based on their own perceptions and examination of the results.

**Takeaway #1: Community Engagement**

Small businesses appear to be focused on engaging their community, wanting to do so in a way that provides a direct impact on their community. Out of this need to be engaged in a manner that directly impacts their community, they seek a third party that can facilitate the engagement or can do so on their behalf, i.e. a non-profit. The small businesses are focused on profit maximization and growing their business and do not have the time to fully understand the needs of the community, leading to the need for a third-party facilitator for community engagement.

**Takeaway #2: Strategic Management**

Strategic management is critical for the longevity of business, the most consistent and dominant theme across the three research questions dealing with community engagement, strategic management, and strategic partnerships was profit maximization and growth of their business. Everything came back to how they can best use their resources to increase profits and it was the primary criteria for decision making within the small businesses. The focus on solely profit maximization is directly opposite to stakeholder theory and does not adequately reflect the resource based view of strategy from Barney. The notion of profit maximization as the sole focus of the business is the primary reason that there needs to be change in the System of Entrepreneurism.

**Takeaway #3: Strategic Partnerships**

Small businesses in this project discussed strategic partnerships as a means of working with vendors and clients, striving to achieve better products/services at lower prices. The notion of value generation is one of the primary tenets of Stakeholder Theory, but the small businesses did not discuss the leveraging of partnerships to better engage

with the community. The leveraging of the partnerships with sport organizations was overlooked by the majority of small businesses in this study, mainly due to a lack of education on how working with sport can build social capital within their communities. Greater education of small businesses by sport organizations when they are selling sponsorships to small businesses is necessary to show them how working with a sport organization can positively impact their business and the community as a whole.

**Takeaway #4: Leadership**

Small business decision makers in this study appear to rely on experience for their development and continual develop of strategic management and leadership skills. They are willing to read books and trade journals, relying on trade associations as their primary source of leadership education after their classical education at a university. More steps should be taken in the future to bring small business decision makers back into classical educational environments and/or innovative and effective mobile online training where they can be exposed to cutting edge leadership theories and best practices, instead of those developed through typical anecdotal evidence in trade journals.

## Future Directions

The present study was a stepping stone to future projects, examining how small businesses can best engage with their communities, potentially by leveraging sport. Many future directions are possible for work on this topic, but two will be addressed in this project. The first is through continued exploration with local Chambers of Commerce and the second is further examination of sport sponsorship tendencies by small businesses.

The first topic of future exploration is working with local Chambers of Commerce to understand how their interaction with the small business community impacts their

community engagement. To carry forward the discussion on the system on entrepreneurs, an exploration of educational programming produced by the Chambers for their membership would be intriguing. Another topic of exploration focuses on the environment of Chamber membership and its ability to either nurture or prohibit growth of these businesses.

The second area of exploration is focused on sport sponsorship. In the present study, a conscious decision was made not to examine only those firms that sponsor sport organization, because knowledge could be gained from examining the factors that lead to those organizations that don't sponsor sport. Continued investigation either through quantitative inquiry or focus groups could be critical to learn how sport organization can bring more small businesses into sport sponsorships.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A – SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Demographic Information:

(Personal Information)
Age (Entered by participant)
Gender
Ethnicity:
       African American
       Asian
       Hispanic
       Pacific Islander
       White
Marital Status:
       Single (never married)
       Married
       Separated
       Widowed
       Divorced
What is the highest degree or level of education completed?
       Less than high school
       High school graduate
       Some college, no degree
       Associate's degree
       Bachelor's degree
       Graduate degree

Company Information

Number of employees (full & part-time) employed by your company?
       1-10
       11-20
       21-30
       31-40
       41-50
       51-100
       101-200
       201-300
       301-400
       401-500
       501+

What is your role within the company?
       Owner
       Founder
       President
       Vice President
       CEO
       C level executive
       Board Member
       Other

Are you a decision maker for your company?

      A decision maker is someone with the authority to make decisions that guide the organization in a strategic manner. Someone who is able make financial and other critical decisions for the good of their company. You do not have to be the ultimate decision maker, but are involved in organizational decision making.

      Yes/No

What level of decision-making authority do you have for your organization?

      Final decision-making authority (individually or as part of a group)

      Significant decision-making or influence (individually or as part of a group)

      Minimal decision-making or influence

      No input

How is your business classified?

      For-Profit

      Non-Profit

Which best describes the type of business your organization conducts?

      Non-profit

      Retail

      Business to business

      Legal

      Real Estate

      Service oriented (auto repair, photography, etc.)

      Financial Planning/Management/Broker

      Food Service

Is your company a franchise?

      Yes

      No

What is your organization's annual budget for marketing/sponsorships?

      0 - $5,000

      $5,001-$10,000

      $10,001- $20,000

      $20,001 - +

      N/A

What is your annual revenue?

      Less than $100,000

      $100,001 - $250,000

      $250,001 - $500,000

      $500,001 - $750,000

      $750,001 - $1,000,000

      $1,000,001 - $2,000,000

      $2,000,001 - $3,000,000

      $3,000,001 - $4,000,000

      $4,000,001 - $5,000,000

      $5,000,001 +

What is your annual net profit?

      Less than $100,000

      $100,001 - $250,000

      $250,001 - $500,000

      $500,001 - $750,000

      $750,001 - $1,000,000

      $1,000,001 - $2,000,000

      $2,000,001 - $3,000,000

      $3,000,001 - $4,000,000

      $4,000,001 - $5,000,000

      $5,000,001 +

Qualitative Questions

Open ended questions, designed to replicate an interview.

1. Define "community social responsibility"
2. How does your organization engage with the community?
3. What prevents your organization from engaging with the community?
4. How does your organization engage in the strategic planning process?
5. What does your organization plan for in the strategic planning process?
6. How and with which organizations does your organization seek strategic partnerships?
7. Why or why not does your organization seek partnerships?
8. What does your organization consider when deciding to sponsor an event or organization?
9. How did you develop your leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills?
10. What do you currently do to develop your leadership and strategic management knowledge and skills?

Separate screen:
11. Have you sponsored a sport organization or sport event?
    a. Sport Organization is defined in this project as "a sport organization could be any entity within a community that is affiliated with sport. The organizations could be professional or collegiate programs, but more than likely could be K-12 schools that offer sport programs. A sport organization could be an organization that conducts sport events like a 5K run or other sport recreational events for a community. It could also be an organization that puts on a sporting event for entertainment consumption, like a college football bowl game."

    Yes: What was the benefit to your organization and what motivated you to sponsor the sport organization or event?
    No: Why have you not sought to sponsor a sport organization or event?
    Considered it, but no: What prevented you from sponsoring a sport organization or event?