

# THE MODERATING INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERS' TEMPORAL ORIENTATION ON THE FRAMING OF SOCIETAL NEEDS AND CORPORATE RESPONSES IN CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

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**ABSTRACT:** The benefits associated with cause-related marketing (CRM) campaigns to both the sponsoring firm and its partnering nonprofit are well documented. However, the combination of the manner in which CRM messages are framed in advertisements and consumers' temporal orientation potentially alters a campaign's success. In an initial experiment, we assess the moderating role of temporal orientation on effects of the temporal framing of CRM messages. We extend these findings with a second experiment in which we evaluate whether an individual's temporal orientation affects their response to a CRM campaign based on the immediacy of the need and the timeliness of the response to the need. Findings indicate that consumers' temporal orientation (present or future) moderates the influence of the temporal framing within the ad (either proximal or distal) for a CRM campaign on attitudes and purchase intentions. In addition, attitude toward the CRM campaign mediates the effect of the three-way interaction on brand attitude and purchase intentions. Implications for both corporations and the nonprofits benefiting from CRM campaigns are offered.

Cause-related marketing (CRM) is a promotional strategy that combines public relations and sponsorship strategies where a company makes a philanthropic commitment to a societal need or "cause" through a specific campaign that is promoted to and requires participation from consumers. More specifically, CRM is considered "for-profit giving" (Varadarajan and Menon 1988), as these campaigns ultimately channel support to nonprofit social causes each time consumers perform a required behavior, which typically is associated with a purchase behavior. Because they can benefit the societal need and/or nonprofit organizations, CRM campaigns have implications for policy and consumer welfare, as well as the corporate sponsor. These benefits have stimulated a large body of research in marketing (e.g., Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000; Dean 2003/4; Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 2000; Grau and Folse 2007; Nan and Heo 2007; Pracejus, Olsen, and Brown 2004; Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998).

Many CRM campaigns emphasize societal needs and corporate responses to those needs in both immediate and delayed terms.<sup>1</sup> For example, American Express's famous 1983 campaign concerned the immediate needs facing the historical Statue of Liberty landmark and the corporation's response by restoring it with funds generated by consumers' use of American Express credit cards. Also, McDonald's Ronald McDonald House features immediate needs facing families of children with diseases and its immediate solution of housing those families while their children receive treatments at nearby hospitals. Other brands, including Estee Lauder, Aveda, and Ford represent only a few of the corporations aligned with various research and awareness groups for National Breast Cancer Awareness Month each October. These examples convey how consumer participation in CRM campaigns can help brands contribute financially to both immediate and long-term solutions for those currently afflicted with or those facing a future risk of breast cancer.

Recent research concerning temporal orientation suggests consumers might respond differently toward temporally framed messages promoting the campaigns based on their orientation toward the present versus the future (e.g., Joireman, Strathman, and Balliet 2006; Lasane and Jones 2000; Zimbardo and Boyd 1999). Individual differences in consumers' orientation toward the present versus the future have been shown to influence attitudes, evaluations, and certain behaviors among those presented with messages highlighting threats to both health (i.e., smoking) and environmental issues (i.e., recycling) (e.g., Strathman et al. 1994). Furthermore, in the persuasive communications literature, Chandran and Menon (2004) found that differences in the temporal framing of health problems (more immediate versus more distal problems)

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resulted in effects on perceptions of risk. Protection motivation theory (Rogers 1975) emphasizes that behaviors can be promoted by focusing on both needs *and* coping strategies, but prior studies concerning temporal orientation and societal needs have not directly examined the temporal aspects related to the responses utilized to cope with the need. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, these three issues (consumers' temporal orientation, temporal aspect of the societal need, and temporal aspect of the corporate response) have not been fully integrated within a prosocial behavioral context.

In this current research, we combine these emerging research domains related to temporal framing in persuasive communications and consumers' temporal orientations in the context of corporate use of CRM promotional campaigns. Specifically, our objective is to examine whether consumers' temporal orientation moderates the effects of the temporal framing presented in advertisements related to CRM campaigns. In our first study, we examine the moderating effects of consumers' temporal orientation on responses to the temporal framing of a corporation's response to a societal need (i.e., more immediate or delayed response). We extend our findings in the second study where we also examine the temporal framing of the social issue/threat (i.e., more immediate or delayed need). More specifically, in the second study we examine whether consumers' temporal orientation moderates the effects of the temporal framing presented in the CRM campaign for both the (1) societal need to be addressed and (2) the corporation's response to the social need. We consider effects on primary dependent variables of attitude toward the campaign, brand attitude, and product purchase intentions.

In this paper, we first briefly examine background literatures related to CRM, temporal framing in promotion, and temporal orientation as an individual difference variable. We then offer specific predictions and present the methodologies and results from two experiments used to test proposed hypotheses. Lastly, we offer a brief discussion with implications for marketers and for public policy.

## STUDY 1

### Conceptualization and Hypotheses

#### *Brief Overview of the Cause-Related Marketing Literature*

While not without its critics, CRM represents a viable promotional strategy for companies attempting to improve or sustain a favorable image or reputation among consumers (Brown et al. 2006). According to the 2004 Cone Corporate Citizenship Study, consumers trust companies aligned with causes. Although there have been some recent publicized breaches of trust with corporations sponsoring CRM campaigns (e.g., Strom 2007), CRM still represents an important promotional strategy. The 2004 survey highlighted consumers'

brand switching, where companies were rewarded for their supportive behaviors. These results are evidenced by the results of several campaigns launched in the marketplace. The 2003 "TUMS Helps Put Out More Fires Than You Think" campaign benefiting the First Responder Institute resulted in a 16% increase in sales, and the Calphalon Corporation campaign supporting Share Our Strength resulted in a 250% product sales increase (Stannard-Friel 2004). The academic literature generated over the past 20 years concerning this specific promotional strategy is consistent with this recent consumer survey and CRM campaign results. For example, it has been shown that CRM activities can influence choice (Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000). Strahilevitz and Myers (1998) reported benefits to firms in terms of sales. In addition, desired outcomes including brand switching (Smith and Alcorn 1991), improved organizational image (Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992), and enhanced brand loyalty (Van den Brink, Odekerken-Schroder, and Pauwels 2006) have resulted from CRM campaigns. Grau, Garretson, and Pirsch (2007) found consumers even enjoyed the campaign participation process, which produced more favorable brand attitudes. As with the evidence in the marketplace, academic researchers have noted benefits to nonprofits from such partnerships (Lafferty and Goldsmith 2005).

The messages used to promote CRM campaigns can be important. For example, framing the campaign outcomes as a positive (i.e., survival rates) rather than negative (i.e., death rates) (Grau and Folse 2007) can yield different consumer responses. Also, some consumers appear to respond more favorably toward campaigns emphasizing immediate (feeding victims of a natural disaster in a lesser developed country) versus ongoing needs (feeding the victims of poverty in general in a lesser developed country) (e.g., Cui et al. 2003; Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 2000). Ellen, Mohr, and Webb (2000) attributed these differences in part to the view that consumers may perceive the response to disasters to be more altruistic, whereas the response to an ongoing cause may produce more skepticism and thoughts of self-interest by the sponsoring company. Although these studies looked at immediate versus ongoing causes, they did not directly examine the temporal aspect of these causes.

The prior work on CRM suggests that these campaigns are generally good for the sponsoring companies, and consumers generally view them favorably. However, research has shown that some CRM efforts are perceived as more effective than others. For instance, Ellen, Mohr, and Webb (2000) examined the immediacy of a need and the level of commitment from the retailer. Findings suggest that CRM efforts directed at more immediate, emergency situations can be more effective, although not always. Surprisingly, participants did not perceive the CRM effort as more effective when the retailer's commitment was high (versus low). Drumwright (1996), on

the other hand, noted that increases in the time commitment to the cause enhanced the likelihood of the campaign's success. Also, there may be some consumers who are especially prone to favor certain types of message appeals in CRM campaigns. For instance, Youn and Kim (2008) examined psychological factors that influence consumer support for CRM campaigns and found that consumer public self-consciousness and a sense of responsibility in one's life were very influential in consumers' evaluations of CRM campaigns.

Although there has been considerable research to examine the specific characteristics of CRM campaigns that resonate with specific types of consumers, there are still many important issues that remain unresolved. For example, would consumers who have more of a long-term outlook be more likely to respond favorably to CRM campaigns for which there is a difference in the temporal framing of the advertisement? In this research, we examine how consumers' temporal orientation may influence their response to differences in the temporal framing of a CRM ad message. As discussed previously, there have been studies on various factors that influence the effectiveness of communicating CRM campaigns to consumers. To our knowledge, however, there has not been research that integrates temporal framing with consumers' temporal orientation within a CRM advertising context. The purpose of this research is to examine these important advertising issues in the context of a CRM campaign.

#### *Conceptual Background: The Roles of Temporal Framing and Temporal Orientation*

In addition to the design features addressed in prior CRM studies, we propose that temporal aspects of the CRM, combined with consumers' temporal orientation, are also influential. For example, research on time styles suggests that individuals differ in the ways in which they perceive and use time (Cotte, Ratneshwar, and Mick 2004). A popular conceptualization of time orientation is construal level theory (CLT), which suggests that the mental representation of events change as they move closer in time (Chandran and Menon 2004; Liberman and Trope 2003; Trope and Liberman 2003). Generally, CLT suggests that consumers have a more abstract view of distant events, but as the event becomes closer in time, the mental construal becomes more concrete.

In addition, there is literature that focuses on consumers' *differences* in perceptual orientation toward time. Some consumers have a long-term perspective that renders future events as more concrete, and this perspective results in differences in temporal attitudes and behaviors. For example, in one study, Strathman et al. (1994) examined how individual differences in consideration of future consequences (CFC) influenced consumers' attitudes toward offshore oil drilling. Findings show that consumers with high levels of CFC (i.e.,

long-term perspective) reported less favorable attitudes toward oil drilling (due to future consequences to the environment) than low-CFC consumers (i.e., short-term perspective). Other recent studies have demonstrated that individual differences in time orientation can influence attitudes toward colorectal cancer screening (Orbell, Perugini, and Rakow 2004), likelihood to get tested for HIV (Dorr et al. 1999), and recycling behavior (Lindsay and Strathman 1997). Thus, temporal orientation potentially moderates perceptions of long-term versus short-term needs and reactions. Many of these health-related studies have manipulated the perceived temporal distance of benefits and risks of an event. For example, some research has framed threats occurring in the short term and benefits occurring in the long term or vice versa (Orbell, Perugini, and Rakow 2004; Strathman et al. 1994). As far as we are aware, there have not been studies that have posed the benefits and needs as both happening at the same time (either proximally or distally). We extend prior research on temporal framing into a CRM advertising context, and specifically, we examine the interaction of the temporal framing within the advertisement and consumers' temporal orientation on attitudes and intentions to buy the advertised products.

Some literature has suggested that individuals who are more future oriented have a lower discount rate compared with individuals who are present oriented. For example, Joireman, Sprott, and Spangenberg (2005) have shown that people who are more present oriented are more likely to make impulsive purchases and discount future monetary windfalls compared with future-oriented consumers. Thus, it appears that there is a greater difference in consumers who are present oriented and those who are future oriented given a future situation due to discounting. The differences between future- and present-oriented consumers should not be as large when an event is in the near future since not much discounting will have taken place.

Some of the recent literature in marketing has drawn from CLT to examine the effects of temporal framing manipulations. Specifically, Chandran and Menon (2004) found that health risks framed in "day" terms were construed to be more threatening than those represented in "year" terms. Consistent with CLT, results showed that the more proximal, day frame led to lower levels of self-positivity bias, higher risk perceptions for health risks related to contracting mononucleosis and effects of cell phone radiation, and higher intentions to engage in preventive health behaviors.

As noted previously, CRM organizations generally have a societal need to be addressed that often may be framed in more proximal or more distal terms (i.e., more immediate versus delayed). Following from the literature that views consumers as varying in their personal temporal orientation, we propose that CRM temporal framing effects in an advertisement will be contingent on the individuals' temporal orientation. A consumer who is present oriented is expected to have more

positive evaluations regarding a corporation's response that is framed as more proximal compared with one that is more distal because present-oriented people will discount the future outcome. There is not expected to be a difference across the temporal framing conditions for intentions and attitudes for future-oriented consumers because a more rapid response by a company will not be perceived negatively by future-oriented consumers. Future-oriented consumers, however, are less likely to discount a corporate response that occurs in the future, compared with present-oriented consumers. Given the findings from the literature on temporal orientation, H1 proposes this moderating effect for brand attitudes and product purchase intentions, and predicts the following:

*H1: The effects of the temporal frame of a corporate response on purchase intentions and brand attitude will be moderated by consumers' temporal orientation.*

Specifically, *H1a: Consumers that are present oriented will have higher purchase intentions and brand attitudes when the ad is framed in terms of a proximal (rather than a distal) corporate response.*

*H1b: For consumers that are future oriented, there will be no difference in purchase intentions and brand attitudes across the temporal ad framing conditions.*

## Method

### *Experimental Design and Stimuli*

To address Study 1 predictions, a 2 (temporally framed corporate response: proximal and distal)  $\times$  2 (consumer temporal orientation: present and future) between-subjects design was conducted. Two versions of an advertisement for a nutritional supplement were designed. In the advertisement, the text indicated the number of people who suffer from heart disease, the number who go undiagnosed, and a product shot of the cardio-support nutritional supplement. The advertisement described the CRM campaign as providing a way in which money from the sale of the product would be used to support a program associated with the American Heart Association. A copy of the ad stimuli is provided in the Appendix.

The temporal frame was manipulated in the advertisement by varying the time required to raise sufficient funds through the campaign to initiate the heart disease prevention program. In the proximal and distal framing conditions, the time it would take to raise sufficient funds was either one month or five years, respectively. All other aspects of the ad stimuli were invariant.

Our prediction concerned how the consumers' temporal orientation would moderate the effects of the temporal frame of the corporate response included in the print advertisement. As in prior research (Strathman et al. 1994; Zimbardo, Keough,

and Boyd 1997), the temporal orientation of participants was a measured variable. We used a temporal orientation scale (Lasane and Jones 1999) consisting of 15 items that were presented near the end of the survey as part of the general information section. All items were measured on a seven-point scale and respondents indicated the degree to which each statement was an appropriate description of them personally, with responses ranging from "not true" (coded as 1) to "very true" (coded as 7). Prior studies using this measure have consistently produced three factors reflecting the present-, future-, and past-orientation items, with each factor consisting of five items each. Preliminary factor analyses of these data verified this factor structure for the current study participants. For the 15 original items, three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1, and each item loaded on its appropriate present-, future-, and past-orientation factor following a varimax rotation. Hypotheses in this study were specifically related to the moderating effect of temporal orientation for present- versus future-oriented consumers. Examples of items measuring present orientation include: "Generally, I am more focused on what is going on now than on what will happen in the future"; "I try to live one day at a time"; and "If I take care of the present, the future will take care of itself." In contrast, future-orientation items include: "When I want to get something done, I make step by step plans and think about how to complete each step" and "I get things done by working at a steady pace." For the five-item present-orientation measure, coefficient  $\alpha$  was .74, and for the five-item future orientation scale coefficient,  $\alpha$  was .68.

Participants were categorized as present-oriented if their mean score for the present-orientation scale was greater than their mean scores both for future and past orientation. We categorized respondents as future-oriented if their average future-orientation score was greater than both their past and present scores. Using this procedure, respondents classified as present-oriented had mean scores of 5.7 and 4.4 for the present- and future-oriented scale measures ( $F = 65.4, p < .001$ ), respectively. For those classified as future-oriented, the mean score for future orientation ( $M = 5.5$ ) was significantly greater than the present-orientation scale ( $M = 4.9, F = 23.8, p < .001$ ). Thus, reliabilities were acceptable and there are significant differences between the means.<sup>2</sup>

### *Procedures, Sample, and Measures*

Study participants received a survey that included the measures of interest and one of the two ad stimuli that were randomly assigned to members of the sample of adult consumers. Participants were members of a geographically dispersed statewide household research mail panel who were entered into a prize drawing in exchange for their participation. Approximately 525 members were mailed packets includ-

ing the package stimuli, a survey that included questions of interest, and a stamped, self-return envelope. Thirteen were sent back as undeliverable due to incorrect addresses. The response rate for the study was approximately 35%. Study participants ranged in age from 27 to 79; 65% were female, and the median household income was between \$40,000 and \$60,000. A total of 179 participants responded to the study survey.

The dependent variables of interest in our study included attitude toward the brand and intentions to purchase the supplement advertised. For attitude toward the brand, a three-item scale was used. This brand attitude question asked the following: "My attitude toward the featured brand (Vitabase) is . . ." (endpoints of "negative/positive"; "unfavorable/favorable"; and "bad/good"). Coefficient  $\alpha$  for this three-item measure was .98. All items for this multi-item measure used seven-point scales. The purchase intentions variable consisted of a single item that asked respondents, "I would consider purchasing this brand in order to provide help to the cause" (a seven-point scale with 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). To assess the effectiveness of the corporate response manipulation presented in the ad stimuli, the following seven-point scale item was used: "Vitabase's campaign will provide new heart disease prevention money . . ." with endpoints of "in the immediate future" (coded as 1) and "in the distant future" (coded as 7).

## Results

### *Manipulation Check*

To test efficacy of the temporally framed corporate response manipulation, we performed a *t*-test on the check variable. Results suggest that the temporally framed corporate response had a significant effect on the manipulation-check measure ( $t = 6.44, p < .001$ ); the mean in the distal condition ( $M = 5.3$ ) is greater than the mean for the proximal condition ( $M = 3.3$ ). As desired, the pattern of means indicates that in the distal condition, the campaign was providing money in the distant future, supporting the operationalization of the time frames used in the experimental ads.

### *Tests of Predictions*

In initial data assessments, it was found that the age of the participant was significantly negatively correlated with the dependent variables of interest but did not interact with and was not correlated with the independent variables in the study. Thus, participant age was included as a covariate in analyses relevant to predictions H1a and H1b. Participant age is significantly correlated with both attitude toward the brand ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ) and purchase intentions ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ),

with older consumers having somewhat lower values on the two dependent variables. (We speculate that older adults may possibly be more skeptical about the motives of the company, and future research appears relevant for this association.)

To assess these predictions regarding the moderating effect of consumers' temporal orientation on the corporate response manipulation used in the ad, we performed a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with univariate follow-up tests of simple effects. As predicted, there were significant interactions for the dependent variables of brand attitude ( $F = 4.78, p < .05$ ) and purchase intentions ( $F = 4.48, p < .05$ ). Figure 1 displays the means for the dependent variables shown in the upper and lower portions of the figure, respectively.

As shown in the upper portion of Figure 1, present-oriented consumers have a more positive purchase intention when the CRM ad includes the proximal rather than distal corporate response ( $M_s = 4.56$  and  $3.45$ ;  $p < .05$ ). In contrast, for future-oriented consumers, there is not a significant difference ( $p > .10$ ) between the proximal ( $M = 3.21$ ) and distal ( $M = 3.64$ ) corporate response conditions. The plot for brand attitude at the bottom of Figure 1 is similar to the purchase intentions plot. For present-oriented consumers, brand attitude is more positive when the CRM ad presents the corporate response in proximal rather than distal terms ( $M_s = 4.87$  and  $3.98$ , respectively;  $p < .05$ ), but the difference is nonsignificant for future-oriented consumers ( $M_s = 3.56$  and  $4.03$ ,  $p > .10$ ). This pattern of findings offers support for H1a and H1b.

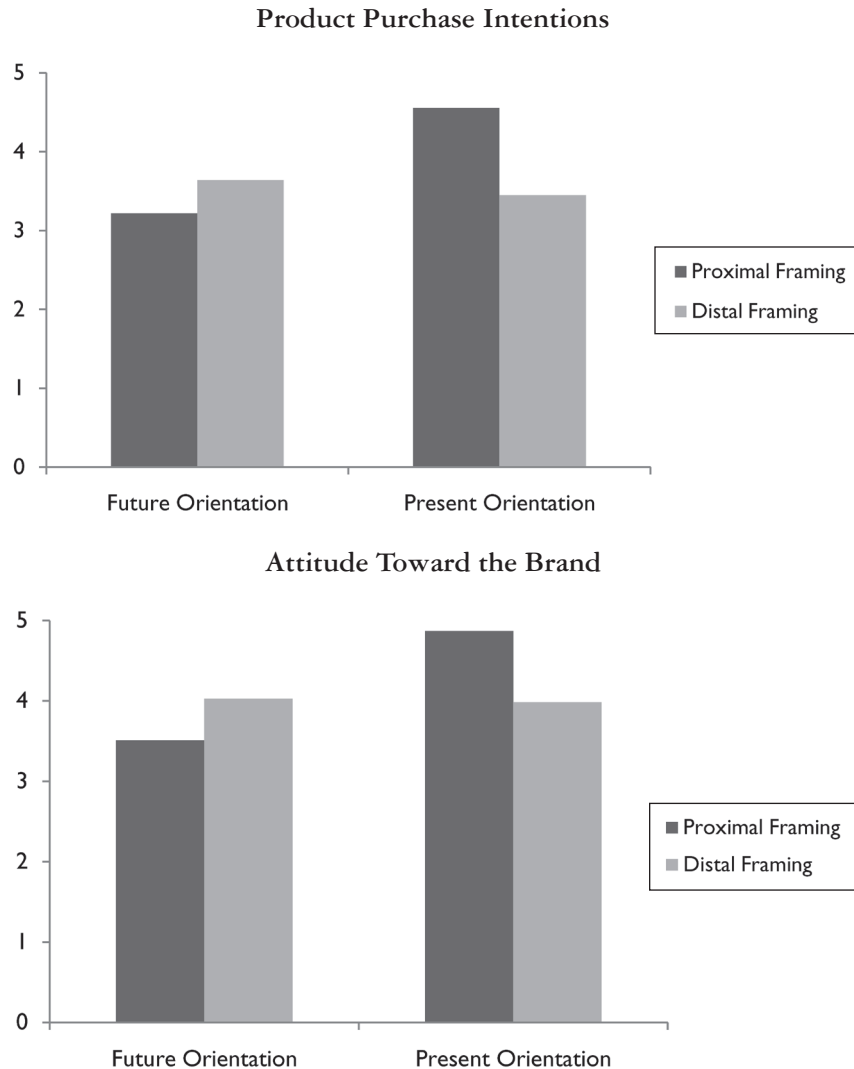
These results support the moderating effect of a consumers' temporal orientation on the relationship between the temporal framing of the corporate response and critical outcome variables to marketers (i.e., purchase intentions and brand attitudes). However, CRM campaign messages also may vary temporally in terms of the specific focal need or cause, as well as the speed with which the corporation will respond to the need. Similarly, consumer attitudes toward the specific campaign itself may be a critical dependent variable that may have implications ultimately for consumers' intentions to purchase the product. Thus, the primary purpose of Study 2 was to extend findings concerning consumers' temporal orientation by considering the temporal framing of both the societal need *and* the corporate response to this need. In addition, we address the role of attitude toward the campaign as a potential mediator of the advertising framing effects on the focal dependent variables of brand attitude and purchase intentions.

## STUDY 2

### Predictions

As noted above, CRM organizations generally have both a societal need or threat and a potential corporate response that

**FIGURE 1**  
**Study 1: Moderation of Consumers' Temporal Orientation for Effects of Corporate Response on Attitude Toward the Brand and Product Purchase Intentions**



often may be framed in more proximal or more distal terms. In Study 2, we seek to extend Study 1 results by examining both of these temporal issues in the framing of the promotional campaign within the advertisement. Based on Study 1 results and the temporal orientation literature, we propose that future-oriented consumers should react more favorably to distal (versus proximal) framed needs and corporate responses, as compared with present-oriented consumers. Prior research related to construal-level theory has demonstrated that present-oriented consumers consider and value short-term benefits strongly and discount future benefits (Eyal et al. 2004). Present-oriented consumers tend to underappreciate and place less value on the benefits of responses to longer-term problems relative to future-oriented consumers, indicating a

moderating effect of the consumer's temporal orientation. H2 also extends these predictions to a measure of attitude toward the campaign, in addition to brand attitudes and product purchase intentions, and predicts the following:

*H2: A societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in distal terms leads to more favorable (a) attitude toward the campaign, (b) brand attitude, and (c) purchase intentions for consumers with a future orientation compared with consumers with a present orientation.*

In contrast to H2's proposed moderation effects for distal framing, individuals that are present oriented should respond more favorably to corporate responses that occur in a proximal (i.e., more immediate) time frame. Strathman et al. (1994)

found that when subjects were presented with a scenario illustrating the benefits of offshore oil drilling that were immediate but with disadvantages that were in the distant future, subjects who were present oriented had more positive attitudes toward the offshore drilling compared with future-oriented subjects. In general, present-oriented consumers will have greater appreciation for immediate action, even when the societal need may *not* be immediate. Because these individuals are oriented toward quick action and taking care of the present, we anticipate that they will have more favorable attitudes and purchase intentions from a proximally framed corporate response than will future-oriented consumers.

*H3: A societal need framed in distal terms coupled with a corporate response framed in proximal terms leads to more favorable (a) attitudes toward the campaign, (b) brand attitude, and (c) purchase intentions for consumers with a present orientation compared with those with a future orientation.*

How will consumers' temporal orientation affect responses to a proximal need coupled with a proximal response? Clearly, present-oriented consumers, with their concern with immediate, current concerns and behaviors, should respond favorably. However, the future orientation literature suggests nothing that would indicate that a future orientation leads one to discount existing needs that require immediate responses. Thus, based on this literature, future-oriented consumers should not be viewed as disregarding short-term needs that require a more immediate response, suggesting little difference based on temporal orientation. Similarly, if there is a current need that is coupled with a distal response from an organization, it is not clear that either future- or present-oriented consumers would have a distinctly more favorable reaction, given that the organization's response does not match the immediacy of the need. Thus, in contrast to the differences proposed in H2 and H3, attitudes and purchase intentions resulting from these temporal societal need and corporate response framing combinations should not differ between present- and future-oriented consumers.<sup>3</sup>

With a new and/or relatively unknown brand, the attitude toward a CRM campaign based on an advertisement with focal message appeals related to the campaign itself should have a substantial impact on the overall ad effects related to the more general consumer evaluations of the brand and their purchase intentions. That is, CRM attitude is anticipated to at least partially drive these other evaluations, indicating there will be a mediating impact of the CRM on brand attitude and purchase intentions. Specifically, we predict mediation of the moderating effect of the consumers' temporal orientation in which the interaction effect on brand attitude and intentions is mediated by the attitude toward the CRM (Baron and Kenny 1986, p. 1179).

*H4: Attitude toward the CRM mediates the moderating influence of consumers' temporal orientation on (a) purchase intentions and (b) brand attitude.*

## Method

### *Experimental Design and Stimuli*

To address our Study 2 hypotheses, a 2 (temporally framed societal need message: proximal and distal)  $\times$  2 (temporally framed corporate response: proximal and distal)  $\times$  2 (consumer temporal orientation: present and future) between-subjects design was used. Four different versions of an advertisement for a nutritional supplement were designed; the ads and the specific supplement differed from Study 1 to enhance the generalizability of findings. The specific brand in this study was chosen based on a pretest indicating consumers were unfamiliar with it. In the advertisement, the text indicated specific consequences of bone cancer and a societal need related to the disease (i.e., an end to federal funding for bone cancer research). The CRM campaign was positioned as the corporation's response to the need; the ad described how a portion of the purchase price of nutritional supplement sales would be donated to support bone cancer research.

The temporal frame was manipulated for both the presentation of the need (i.e., when federal funding for research would end) and the corporate response to address the need. In the proximal and distal framing conditions for the need, federal funding for bone cancer research would end in either one month or five years, respectively. Similarly, the temporal frame used for the corporate response to the need through the CRM campaign was either proximal (one month) or distal (five years). Except for the two temporal frame manipulations, all other aspects of the ad stimuli were invariant.

Specific predictions concerned how the consumers' temporal orientation would moderate the effects of these two temporal framing manipulations. Consistent with Study 1, we used the temporal orientation scale of Lasane and Jones (1999).<sup>4</sup> For the five-item future-orientation measure, coefficient  $\alpha$  was .79, and for the five-item present orientation scale coefficient,  $\alpha$  was .69. As with Study 1, participants were categorized as present-oriented if their mean score for the present-orientation scale was greater than their mean scores for both future and past orientation. We categorized respondents as future-oriented if their average future-orientation score was greater than both their past and present scores. Using this procedure, respondents classified as future-oriented had mean scores of 4.94 and 3.68 for the future- and present-oriented scale measures ( $F = 80.70, p < .001$ ), respectively. For those classified as present-oriented, the mean scores for the future- and present-oriented scale measures were 3.84

and 4.77 ( $F = 50.27, p < .001$ ), respectively. Thus, scores indicated significant differences in the means, as desired. Participants who were neither future nor present oriented were not included in the analyses.

#### *Pilot Test*

A pilot study was performed to assess whether the time frame associated with the corporate response (i.e., one month or five years) affected other variables that it was not designed to affect, including perceptions of the (1) perceived amount of money being given, (2) perceived size of the problem, and (3) perceived amount of the product the company sells (i.e., a little or a lot of product). We developed measures for each of these constructs and assessed whether use of the two different time frames had a significant impact on these variables. For example, to measure the total amount provided by the program, we asked respondents about the amount of money they thought would be given using two, seven-point scale items: "How small or large do you think the funding amount will be for bone cancer research provided by BioCalth?" (endpoints of "very small funding" and "very large funding") and "From the information provided, I think that the amount donated by the BioCalth company will be a large amount" (endpoints of "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Eighty-seven student respondents answered these questions for the corporate response occurring within one month ( $n = 44$ ) or five years ( $n = 43$ ). Results showed that for the summed measure of two scale items ( $r = .81$ ), there were no significant differences in perceived donation amount between the one-month ( $M = 4.03$ ) and the five-year ( $M = 4.02$ ) conditions ( $t = .04; p > .90$ ), as desired. Similar findings found no significant mean differences between the proximal and distal corporate response time for other measures, including perceived size of the problem (or cause) and perceived amount of product sold (all  $ps > .10$ ).

#### *Procedures, Sample, and Measures*

For Study 2, we conducted an online survey of 141 undergraduate business students who were members of a subject pool; 48% of the participants were male and the mean age was 22. Participants received course credit for their participation. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the four ad treatment conditions in which they viewed an advertisement presenting the societal need and response-framing manipulations and then responded to the dependent measures, temporal orientation scale, and manipulation checks.

The dependent variables of interest in our study include attitude toward the campaign, attitude toward the brand, and intentions to purchase the brand. Attitude toward the campaign is a three-item scale ( $\alpha = .96$ ) assessed in response to

the following question: "My attitude toward this promotional campaign launched by the brand is . . .", with endpoints of "unfavorable/favorable"; "bad/good"; and "dislike/like." Measures for attitude toward the brand ( $\alpha = .96$ ) and purchase intentions were the same as used in the prior study.

We used two manipulation-check measures to assess the effectiveness of the two temporal frame manipulations presented in the ad stimuli. To assess whether the societal need manipulation is perceived as addressing the need in the near term or more distant future, participants were asked (according to information in the ad) whether "Federal funding for ALL bone cancer research will end . . .," with endpoints of "in the immediate future" and "in the distant future" using a seven-point scale. To assess the temporal frame manipulation for the corporate response to the need, a seven-point scale was used that stated the company's "campaign will provide new bone cancer research money . . .," also with endpoints of "in the immediate future" (coded as 1) and "in the distant future" (coded as 7).

## Results

### *Manipulation Check Findings*

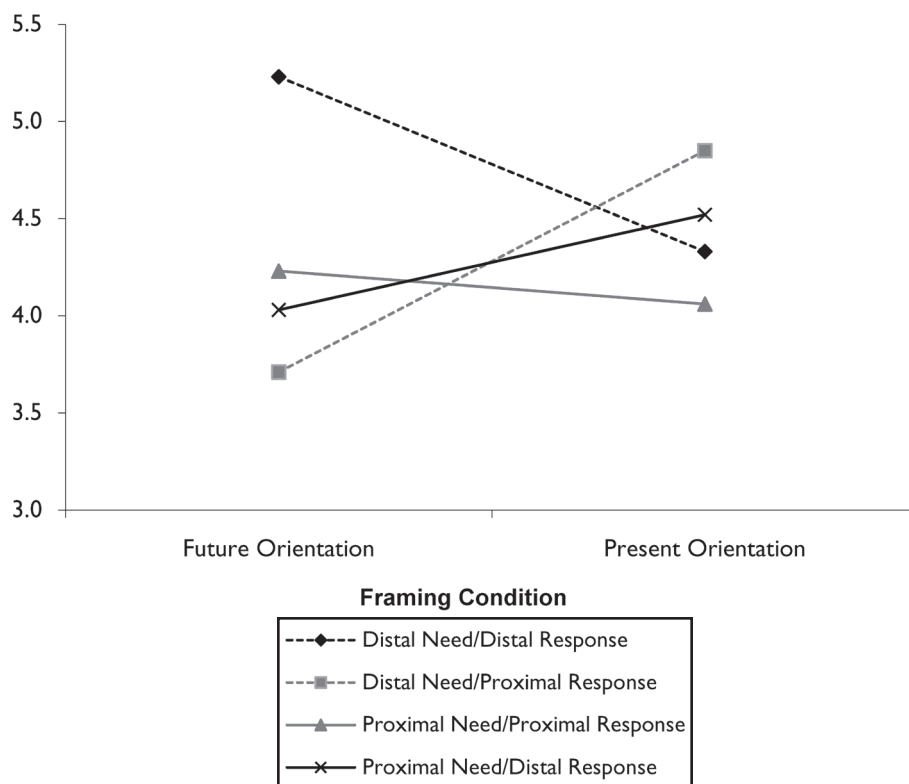
To assess the manipulations,  $t$ -tests were performed to ensure that the two temporal framing manipulations operated as intended. The temporal frame manipulation for the corporate response had a significant effect on the manipulation check variable ( $t = 7.92, p < .001$ ); the manipulation check in the distal condition ( $M = 4.57$ ) was greater than the proximal condition ( $M = 2.32$ ), as desired. The temporal frame manipulation for the societal need also had a significant effect on its check measure ( $t = 6.74, p < .001$ ), indicating differences between the distal ( $M = 4.10$ ) and proximal ( $M = .24$ ) conditions. Thus, effects of the two temporal framing manipulations on the respective checks are both significant, and the means for the check measures are both in the expected direction.

### *Tests of Hypotheses*

The hypotheses for the framing manipulations across consumers' temporal orientation indicate a three-way interaction in which consumers' temporal orientation moderates the effects of the temporal framing manipulations in the ad. We performed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with univariate follow-ups to assess these potential interactions on the attitude toward the campaign, brand attitude, and purchase intentions dependent variables. As predicted, there were significant three-way interactions for all three dependent variables ( $p < .05$ ). Specifically, the interactions are significant for campaign attitude ( $F = 6.52, p < .015$ ), brand attitude ( $F = 5.00, p < .05$ ), and purchase intentions ( $F = 6.22, p < .05$ ).



**FIGURE 2**  
**Study 2: Moderation of Consumers' Temporal Orientation for Effects of the Framing of the Societal Need and Corporate Response on Attitude Toward the Campaign**



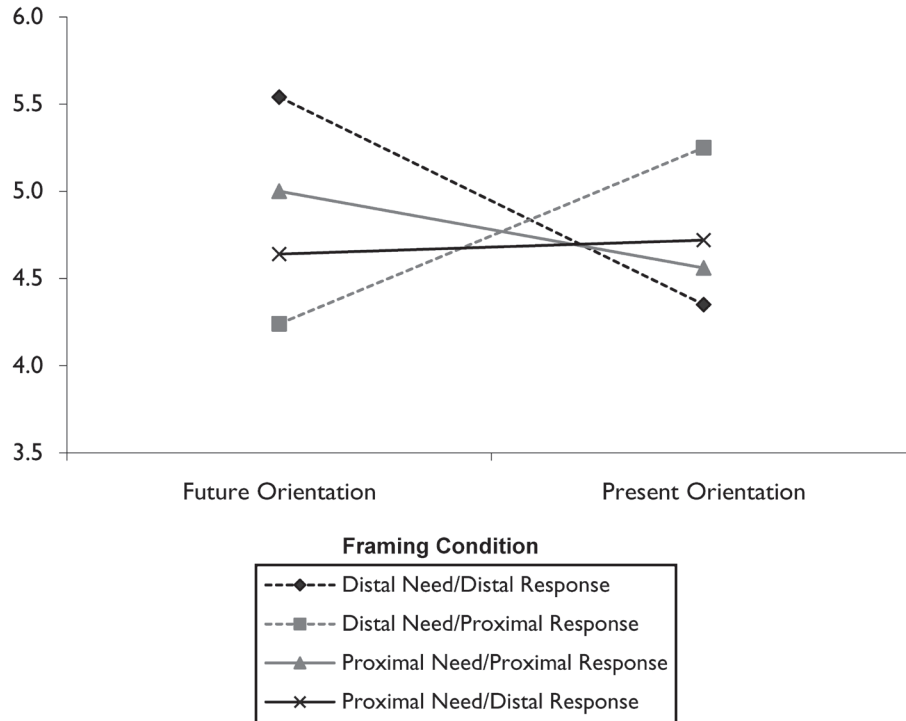
Plots of means for attitude toward the campaign and purchase intentions are shown in Figures 2 and 3, respectively, and cell means are in Table 1.

We performed follow-up contrasts for the specific tests of our hypotheses. H2 predicted that when a societal need and a corporate response are both framed in distal terms, consumers with a future (rather than a present) orientation would have a more favorable attitude toward the campaign (H2a), brand attitude (H2b), and purchase intentions (H2c). H2a for attitude toward the campaign was supported. As shown by the line representing the distal need and distal corporate response in Figure 2, consumers with a future orientation ( $M = 5.23$ ) had a more favorable attitude toward the campaign than consumers with a present orientation ( $M = 4.33$ ;  $t = 2.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ), when the ad was framed with a distal societal threat and a distal corporate response. As shown in Figure 3 (distal need/distal response line), we also found that purchase intentions were higher for consumers with a future orientation ( $M = 5.54$ ) than for consumers with a present orientation ( $M = 4.35$ ) when the framing of the societal need and the corporate response were both in distal terms ( $t = 2.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ), thus supporting H2c. H2b was also supported; for the distal need/distal response condition, brand attitude was more favorable for consumers

with a future orientation ( $M = 4.82$ ) than those with a present orientation ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $t = 1.73$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In H3, we predicted that a societal need framed in distal terms with a corporate response framed in proximal terms would lead to more favorable (a) attitude toward the campaign, (b) brand attitude, and (c) purchase intentions for consumers with a present orientation compared with those with a future orientation. H3a and H3c were supported. As shown in Figure 2 (distal need/proximal response line), attitude toward the campaign was greater for consumers with a present orientation ( $M = 4.85$ ) than consumers with a future orientation ( $M = 3.71$ ) when the ad was framed with a distal societal need and a proximal corporate response ( $t = 1.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The purchase intentions measure has the same pattern of results showing that present-oriented consumers ( $M = 5.25$ ) had more positive purchase intentions than future-oriented consumers ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $t = 1.70$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Figure 3). The test for brand attitude was not significant ( $p > .10$ ), but consumers with a future orientation ( $M = 4.21$ ) reported lower mean ratings regarding brand attitude than consumers with a present orientation ( $M = 4.63$ ) for the distal need/proximal response condition. Thus, H3a and H3c were supported, but H3b was not.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Study 2: Moderation of Consumers' Temporal Orientation for Effects of the Framing of the Societal Need and Corporate Response on Product Purchase Intentions**



**TABLE I**  
**Study 2: Cell Means for Purchase Intentions, Brand Attitude, and Campaign Attitude**

Independent variables	Purchase intentions	Brand attitude	Campaign attitude
<b>Proximal corporate response</b>			
<i>Proximal need</i>			
Consumer temporal orientation			
Future	5.00	4.65	4.23
Present	4.56	4.00	4.06
<i>Distal need</i>			
Consumer temporal orientation			
Future	4.24	4.21	3.71
Present	5.25	4.63	4.85
<b>Distal corporate response</b>			
<i>Proximal need</i>			
Consumer temporal orientation			
Future	4.64	4.27	4.03
Present	4.72	4.67	4.52
<i>Distal need</i>			
Consumer temporal orientation			
Future	5.54	4.82	5.23
Present	4.35	4.12	4.33

Further tests showed that consistent with our conceptualization, the differences between future-oriented consumers and present-oriented consumers regarding attitude toward the campaign ( $t = .30, p > .40$ ), purchase intentions ( $t = .84, p > .40$ ), and brand attitude ( $t = 1.39, p > .10$ ) were all nonsignificant when the ad is framed with a proximal societal need and a proximal corporate response. Similarly, results show that campaign attitude ( $t = .84, p > .30$ ), brand attitude ( $t = .97, p > .30$ ), and purchase intentions ( $t = .15, p > .80$ ) were not significantly different for future-oriented consumers compared with present-oriented ones when the ad is framed using a proximal societal need and a distal corporate response. Thus, the three-way interactions, in conjunction with the pattern of contrasts, offer support for the predicted moderating effect of consumers' temporal orientation.

#### *Test of Mediation*

In H4, we predicted that attitude toward the CRM mediates the moderating influence of consumers' temporal orientation on purchase intentions (H4a) and brand attitude (H4b). To test these hypotheses of mediated moderation, we used regression analysis (Baron and Kenny 1986). Following procedures suggested by Aiken and West (1991), we mean-centered societal need, corporate response, and temporal orientation predictors prior to creating the three-way interaction term. We drew from procedures for testing mediated moderation recommended by Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt (2005) and Baron and Kenny (1986). To test for mediated moderation, we tested for three conditions: (1) the moderator interaction term must have a significant effect on the dependent variable, (2) the moderator must have a significant effect on the mediator, and (3) inclusion of the mediator in the model reduces the relationship between the moderator term and the dependent variable to a nonsignificant level.

To test H4a, we followed the steps indicated above. We first assessed the effects of the three independent variable predictors and the three-way interaction on the dependent variable (i.e., purchase intentions). Our primary interest was on the significance of the moderation term and whether its effect on purchase intentions was mediated by the CRM campaign attitude. As illustrated in Model 1 of Figure 4, we found the relationship to be significant ( $p < .01$ ). Results for the second and third models for the test of mediation are shown in the bottom of Figure 4. In the second regression model, we tested the direct effect of the three-way interaction on the attitude toward the campaign (i.e., the proposed mediator) and found a significant effect ( $p < .01$ ). The third regression model included the moderator term (the three-way interaction), the mediator (attitude toward the campaign), and the three experimental (direct effect) variables with purchase intentions as the dependent variable. In contrast to Model 1, the three-way interaction

became nonsignificant ( $p > .40$ ) and the attitude toward the campaign was significant ( $p < .01$ ) (Baron and Kenny 1986; Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt 2005). This pattern of results supports mediated moderation and H4a.

To test H4b, we followed the same steps, but with attitude toward the brand as the dependent variable of interest. Results of the models are also shown in Figure 4. In the first model (upper portion of Figure 4), there was a significant relationship between the three-way interaction and attitude toward the brand ( $p < .05$ ). In the second model, there was a significant relationship between the three-way interaction and attitude toward the campaign ( $p < .01$ ). As shown in the lower portion of Figure 4, in the third model, the three-way interaction became nonsignificant ( $p > .60$ ) while attitude toward the campaign was significant ( $p < .01$ ). These results support H4b and mediated moderation (Baron and Kenny 1986, p. 1179).

## DISCUSSION

### Implications of the Findings for Organizations and Consumer Welfare

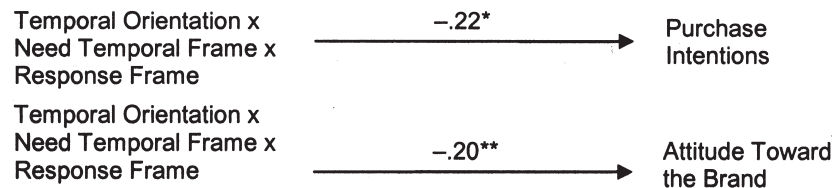
CRM campaigns represent a viable strategy for organizations seeking to promote sales, contribute to worthy nonprofit causes, and enhance their image or reputation. Although prior research has examined consumers' general responses to CRMs (e.g., Ross, Patterson, and Stutts 1992; Smith and Alcorn 1991; Webb and Mohr 1998) and effects of different types of CRMs on consumer responses (e.g., Barone, Miyazaki, and Taylor 2000; Dean 2003/4; Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), no research to date has examined how the temporal frame of a CRM campaign combines with a consumer's temporal orientation to affect consumer perceptions related to the campaign. We conducted two experiments that extend the research concerning campaign design elements through an examination of the temporal framing of messages in CRM promotional campaigns and the moderating effects of consumers' temporal orientation on attitudes and purchase intentions. In addition to the previously examined design factors, including product type (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998), donation type (Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 2000), corporate associations (Ellen, Webb, and Mohr 2006), and donation size (Strahilevitz 1999), the presentation of need and corporate response messages in proximal or distal terms should be considered in the CRM design process. Not only will such optimally presented messages potentially produce sales spikes for sponsoring companies, but they may also yield needed financial contributions for the partnering nonprofits.

Our findings extend recent advertising research on how CRM influences consumer attitudes toward the company (Nan and Heo 2007). Findings from Nan and Heo's study found

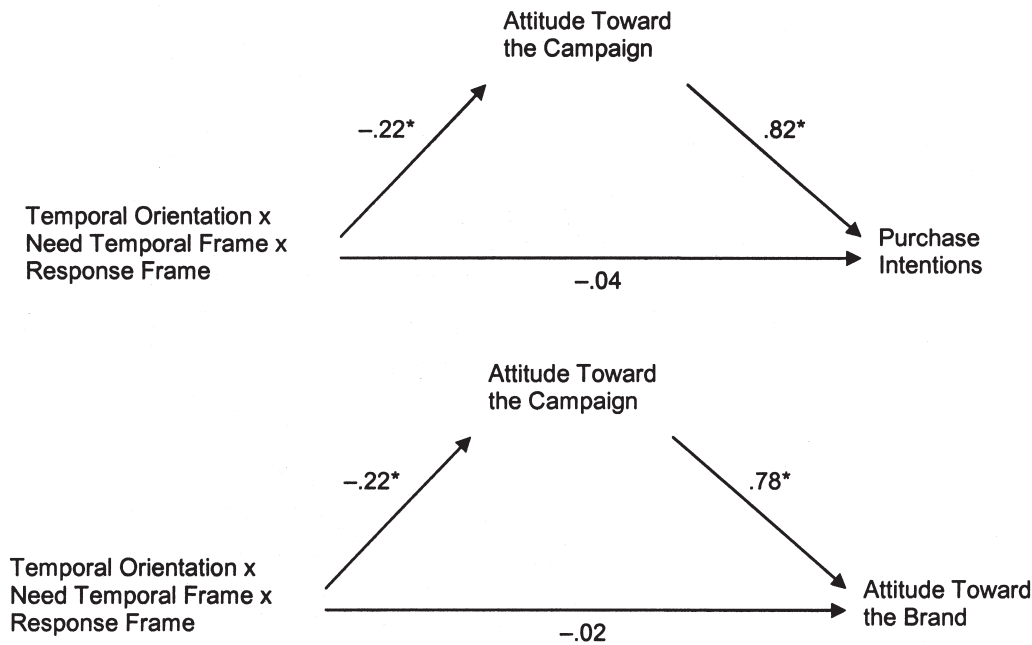
FIGURE 4

Study 2: Mediating Role of Attitude Toward the Campaign for the Effect of the Three-Way Temporal Interaction on Purchase Intentions and Attitude Toward the Brand

Model 1: Effect of Temporal Interaction on Dependent Variable



Models 2 and 3: Mediation Effect of Attitude Toward the Campaign on Three-Way Temporal Interaction



Notes: Results shown in Model 1 show the regression coefficients for the effect of the interaction on the purchase intentions and brand attitude dependent variables. The bottom portion of the figure shows the coefficients for (1) the interaction on the proposed mediator (campaign attitude; Model 2), and (2) both the interaction and campaign attitude mediator on the two dependent variables (Model 3). As shown in the figure, the effect of the interaction is significant in Model 1 for both dependent variables, but it falls to a nonsignificant level when the mediator is included as a predictor.

\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*  $p < .05$  (one-tailed tests).

that a CRM component in an advertisement created more favorable attitudes toward the company versus a control ad without a CRM component. These researchers also identified brand consciousness as an individual trait variable that moderates the effectiveness of CRM advertisements. Findings from the two studies in the present research extend Nan and Hoe's work in that we examine effects of a specific ad-framing technique (temporal framing) in conjunction with another individual-level trait (temporal orientation). These interactions are important to consider when developing advertisements with a CRM component.

Generally, our results indicate that a consumer's temporal orientation is an important factor to consider in the efficacy

of CRM messages. In the first study, we found that consumers with present orientations have more positive brand attitudes and purchase intentions when a corporate response is framed in proximal terms compared with when it is framed in distal terms. Consumers with a future orientation did not have significantly different brand attitudes and purchase intentions for the proximal and distal temporally framed corporate response. Although our results suggest that both present- and future-oriented consumers may respond favorably to immediate (proximal) actions, it should not be inferred that all CRM campaigns focused on long-term or ongoing causes will be ineffective. For example, past CRM research has suggested that a long-term dedication to a cause may signal to the consumer

that the sponsor is truly committed to the social need rather than simply capitalizing on the “need of the day” to increase sales (Drumwright 1996). Thus, while temporal framing and a consumer’s temporal orientation do appear to play an important role in how consumers respond to a CRM campaign, other factors should also be taken into account in determining the best approach for any given CRM campaign.

The second study indicated that consumers with future temporal orientations have more favorable attitudes toward the campaign, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions when the societal need and corporate response are both framed in distal terms compared with consumers with present temporal orientations. More specifically, for an ad presenting a distal need and a distal corporate response, future-oriented consumers had the highest rating for attitude toward the campaign, purchase intentions and brand attitude. This pattern is consistent with predictions drawn from construal-level theory where future-oriented consumers consider and value longer-term benefits more strongly than the short-term costs (Eyal et al. 2004). For the CRM campaign (where costs involve a product purchase), future-oriented consumers may be more willing to focus on the distal corporate response (benefit), leading to more positive attitudes and purchase intentions, than are present-oriented consumers.

Conversely, consumers with a present temporal orientation have more favorable attitudes toward the campaign, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions when the ads are framed with a distal societal need and a proximal corporate response, relative to future-oriented consumers. This indicates that consumers with a present temporal orientation respond more favorably to a company that takes immediate action even given a distant need. Present-oriented consumers have a “present” bias; therefore, they value action taken immediately more highly than future-oriented consumers.

We found no significant difference between present- and future-oriented consumers regarding attitude toward the campaign, brand attitude, and purchase intentions when the ad was framed in terms of a proximal societal need with a distal or proximal corporate response. This finding suggests that a proximal need affects both present- and future-oriented consumers similarly. It is also consistent with arguments that a future orientation does not lead the individual to discount existing needs that require immediate responses. In sum, based on the pattern of results, we found a complex relationship between the framing of a societal need, corporate response, and the temporal orientation of the consumer, and the findings demonstrate the conceptual usefulness of the procedure used here to form segments of consumers with future versus present orientations.

In combination, these results suggest the importance that marketers and their nonprofit partners need to place on the temporal nature of the cause. Furthermore, the temporal orientation

findings from this research may be important for designing messages directed at specific consumer segments. For example, in our student sample, we found that of the respondents who were future, present, or past oriented, 34% were future oriented, 45% were present oriented, and 21% were past oriented. In our nonstudent sample, however, we found that some 52% were future oriented, 32% were present oriented, and 16% were past oriented. These results suggest that there might be some differences in sizes of consumer temporal orientation segments during different life stages. In addition, temporal orientation has been found to correlate with certain demographic variables (e.g., education level) (Joireman, Strathman, and Balliet 2006). The results indicate that temporal orientation can influence message-framing effects, and taking temporal orientation into consideration may be important for advertisers and sponsors of CRM campaigns. While it may be difficult for campaigns to target consumers based on the degree to which they are present or future oriented, these messages can possibly be targeted to specific segments based on education level or age.

Finally, our results indicate the importance of creating favorable attitudes toward the CRM campaign, given that this construct fully mediated the impact of the temporal orientation of the consumer and temporal framing on the critical brand attitude and dependent variables for purchase intentions. Both the for-profit and not-for-profit firms should be concerned with designing a campaign that will promote positive company attitudes and purchase intentions, and this may be especially true for consumers without strong prior brand attitudes. To maximize attitude toward the campaign, however, it seems clear that CRM campaigns should have a relevant, well-recognized cause that has some association with the brand (Hoeffler and Keller 2002). As suggested by our findings, striving to create this positive CRM attitude has potential benefits for the brand and consumer participation.

### Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of our study should be acknowledged. Consistent with most experimental advertising research, these studies used less familiar brands so that respondents had little previous experience or biases that would influence the effects of manipulated variables. However, examining the effects of temporal aspects of CRM campaigns for more familiar existing brands and companies for which initial consumer attitudes vary (some positive and some negative) would be of interest. Also, although past CRM advertising research has utilized student samples (e.g., Nan and Heo 2007), the use of student samples in Study 2 limits the external validity of our findings. Given that age was significantly correlated with the dependent variables in Study 1, the study of age as it relates to responses to CRM campaigns may be an interesting area for future research.

Our study used specific time periods of one month as the proximal framing cue and five years as the distal framing cue. Although the two very different temporal frames in the ad conditions were intentional, it would be interesting to examine more closely what time periods may constitute “proximal” and “distal” perceptions. Other studies could vary the specific temporal framing cues; perhaps an extremely immediate threat, such as a natural disaster, would create different responses from consumers as well. For disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, there are needs that are immediate but also those that require responses and are far in the future. Thus, research could further examine the more direct impact of the temporal aspect of the corporate response and societal need, and whether the perceived severity of the need and impact of the corporate response can change attitudes and purchase intentions for the CRM campaign. Another interesting extension of this research would be to examine how the consumers’ temporal orientation affects information processing. For instance, research could examine individual biases in message or ad processing and how these biases might interact with temporal orientation or message-framing effects on self-regulation and the ability to delay gratification.

It is also important to note that our studies did not examine the impact of the relevancy or importance of the cause featured in the CRM messages (i.e., the importance of bone cancer to undergraduate students). Following Hoeffler and Keller’s (2002) recommendations, future research might want to integrate the awareness and relevance of the cause as this construct might further moderate the strength of temporal framing effects. A related area that seems ripe for future research is an examination of consumer concerns about whether the charitable cause is actually receiving money from the CRM firm. This would be timely given recent popular press articles criticizing some CRM efforts for being dishonest or deceitful (Strom 2007).

This study examined the temporal framing of ads combined with a consumer’s temporal orientation in the CRM campaign context. To our knowledge, it represents the first study to address the issue of the temporal framing of a CRM campaign and the moderating influences of a consumer’s temporal orientation. These findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating the complexity of temporal effects in a CRM context and the importance of considering temporal issues for corporations and their nonprofit partners when designing a persuasive campaign. Future studies that extend these findings to a market test in which actual behavior could be addressed would clearly offer a valuable extension.

## NOTES

1. Throughout the paper the term “societal need” is used; it is meant to be interpreted broadly enough to include charitable

activities such as support for the Special Olympics, as well as needs that may be more critical threats to consumer welfare (e.g., debilitating diseases). The term “corporate response” is used to refer to the for-profit company’s response to the societal need.

2. Using this procedure, if there were missing values on the temporal orientation measure or the respondent did not fall into either the present or the future orientation (i.e., responses indicated either a past orientation or no difference in the summed measures), these participants were not included in the analyses.

3. Given the nonsignificant effects suggested in these conditions, explicit predictions are not offered.

4. Both preliminary common factor and principal component analyses again verified this factor structure. For both analyses, three factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1, and each item loaded on its appropriate present-, future-, and past-orientation factor following a varimax rotation.

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## APPENDIX

### Study 1 Advertising Stimuli

#### Proximal Corporate Response Condition:

#### Benefit Your Heart and the American Heart Association



- Over 70 million people suffer from heart disease.
- Over 900,000 die each year.

As many as 300,000 people with heart disease go undiagnosed each year, leading to higher risk of death or disability from strokes or heart attacks.

**We can make a difference in just ONE MONTH.**

In ONE MONTH, we can raise enough money for the American Heart Association to begin a heart disease prevention program that will drastically reduce the number of people who go undiagnosed and get heart disease. Vitabase will donate 50% of every purchase of Cardio Support™ to the American Heart Association.



**Buy now, and 50% will go to heart disease prevention.**

#### Distal Corporate Response Condition:

#### Benefit Your Heart and the American Heart Association



- Over 70 million people suffer from heart disease.
- Over 900,000 die each year.

As many as 300,000 people with heart disease go undiagnosed each year, leading to higher risk of death or disability from strokes or heart attacks.

**We can make a difference in just FIVE YEARS.**

In FIVE YEARS, we can raise enough money for the American Heart Association to begin a heart disease prevention program that will drastically reduce the number of people who go undiagnosed and get heart disease. Vitabase will donate 50% of every purchase of Cardio Support™ to the American Heart Association.



**Buy now, and 50% will go to heart disease prevention.**



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