



Pergamon

International Business Review 9 (2000) 363–382

---

---

INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS  
REVIEW

---

---

www.elsevier.com/locate/ibusrev

# SME marketing management competencies

David Carson<sup>\*</sup>, Audrey Gilmore

*University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB, UK*

---

## Abstract

The nature and scope of marketing and managerial competencies in the context of growth SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) are discussed. This is illustrated using a conceptual framework of how SME owner-managers develop experiential learning built upon existing knowledge, experience, communication and judgement and through experiential learning in their own SME work environment. The key issues are relevant to all SMEs in developed economies. The emphasis of the empirical study is on understanding and applying the conceptual framework, hence a qualitative methodology has been employed for gathering and interpreting findings from a study of 60 SME owner-managers. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Management competencies; Marketing competencies; Decision-making; Experiential learning; Knowledge; Experience; Communication; Judgement

---

## 1. Introduction

Management competencies are essential to sound business practice, this is particularly so in relation to marketing issues because of the strong and sometimes adverse competitive environment the enterprises must exist within. SME, because of the severe limitations and lack of resources must rely heavily on developing suitable and appropriate competencies for marketing. Such competencies, because of the SME characteristics, must either be different or at least have different emphasis and priority within an SME. Questions therefore arise as to what competencies are appropriate for SME marketing activity and how do SMEs develop such competencies? This paper examines the scope of management competencies for SMEs and focuses

---

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +44-1232-366397; fax: +44-1232-366868.

*E-mail address:* djcarson@ulst.ac.uk (D. Carson).

on those appropriate for SME marketing. In so doing, a conceptual framework of key marketing management competencies for SMEs is postulated which is positioned against 'technical' competencies other than business competencies in order to illustrate competency development and change over time. This conceptualisation is evaluated against empirical evidence from sixty SMEs who meet specific criteria in relation to competency development stages of their life cycle. Various anecdotal examples are given. The paper ends with a summary of the conceptualisation and its importance for future research.

Recognition that managers should have competence in decision-making has been well documented (Boyatzis, 1982; Wrapp, 1967; Yau & Sculli, 1990). The debate surrounding management competencies is as relevant in the context of SME marketing management decision-making as in any other context; especially in growth firms. Indeed the competence of SME owner/managers is of crucial importance, given the nature and characteristics of SMEs and in particular, the dominant role and influence upon decision-making of the owner/manager.

## **2. Scope of management competencies**

A competency is both an attribute and a skill. For example, in a general sense a competency is: "An underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job" (Klemp, 1980); or: "a combination of knowledge, skills and attributes which are given reference in the task environment" (Middleton & Long, 1990). Research has identified a vast array of competencies covering the whole spectrum of management decision-making. The early work of Fayol (1949) and Katz (1974) offers some interesting insights, but the most widely cited studies have been published in management and personnel journals and texts (see for example, Boyatzis, 1982; Mintzberg 1973, 1983; Koontz, O'Donnell & Weinrich, 1984; Whetton & Cameron, 1984; Albanese, 1989; Greatrix & Philips, 1989; Colloff & Goodge, 1990; Tichy & Charan, 1991).

Cunningham's (1999) extensive review of the experiential/'action' learning literature which focuses on managerial learning and development contends that there are "two virtually discreet streams of literature dealing with this area—one European—mostly UK, and one USA dominated" (p. 692). He illustrates this in a table that is reproduced here as Table 1. One of the contributions of this work is that it recognises the extensive work in this area, it illustrates the similarity of the work developed in different parts of the world relatively simultaneously (Piaget in Europe and Dewey in the USA). Cunningham highlights that these works were largely unconnected and yet they are "virtually identical except for the nomenclature—a classic illustration of one idea divided by a common language" (p. 693).

The experiential/action learning theory is based on the relationship between knowledge and learning, democratic values such as co-operative leadership and dialogue, experience as an organising focus for learning, development with purpose, and learning from experience. In application, emphasis is placed on the competencies of individuals, it recognises lifelong learning and career development, and experiential edu-

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات