

# Diagnosing and treating operational and implementation barriers in synoptic marketing planning

Sally Dibb<sup>a,1</sup>, Lyndon Simkin<sup>b,\*</sup>, David Wilson<sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Open University Business School, Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK*

<sup>b</sup> *Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, UK*

Received 15 February 2006; received in revised form 18 July 2006; accepted 18 August 2007

Available online 29 September 2007

## Abstract

Strategic marketing planning is now widely adopted by business-to-business organizations. While marketing planning principles are well established, practitioners attempting to implement the process often find their progress impeded by a variety of barriers. These barriers are explored through a review of published evidence and case study analysis of several organizations. This analysis exposes three levels of barriers to effective business-to-business marketing planning, relating to (i) organizational infrastructure, (ii) the planning process and (iii) implementation. These barriers reflect the synoptic nature of planning in many organizations. The findings lead to the development of a practitioner-oriented diagnostic and treatment tool which guides managers through the marketing planning process. Although this diagnostic deals specifically with issues which are relevant to the marketing planner, its wider implications for strategic planning are also explored.

© 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Business-to-business marketing; Marketing planning; Marketing plan; Marketing strategy; Synoptic planning; Implementation barriers; Marketing management

## 1. Introduction

Strategic marketing planning is adopted by businesses-to-business organizations from all sectors (McDonald, 2002). Firms use this approach to develop a marketing strategy and a tactical plan which becomes the framework for directing, implementing and controlling marketing activities (Claycomb, Germain, & Dröge, 2000). With its focus on marketing activities, marketing planning is clearly distinct from strategic business planning, which takes a broader view of corporate goals and the strategic and tactical choices through which these can be achieved (Byars & Neil, 1987).

Marketing planning principles are well established (Gilligan & Wilson, 2004; Greenley, Hooley, & Saunders, 2004) and research shows that marketing planning is adopted by most

large businesses and many small and medium sized enterprises (Brooksbank, 1999; Dibb & Simkin, 1997). With evidence that successful marketing strategies and the application of planning approaches are linked (Brooksbank, 1991), the use of marketing plans is now widely endorsed in the literature (Claycomb et al., 2000; Jain, 2002). Confirmation of the specific benefits of formal marketing planning for business-to-business organizations has also been reported (cf: Ford, 2001; Gross, Banting, Meredith, & Ford, 1993).

Despite the reported advantages of marketing planning (Greenley et al., 2004; Hutt & Speh, 2003), practitioners often find that careful management is needed to achieve the claimed benefits. All too often, firms engaged in marketing planning find that their progress is impeded by a variety of implementation barriers (Simkin, 2002). Business-to-business organizations are no exception. Among the many reasons for these problems the need for a systematic and robust marketing planning process is a recurring theme (Gilligan & Wilson, 2004).

Robust marketing plans can only be developed and implemented if marketing practitioners move quickly to identify and overcome the barriers they encounter (Jain, 2002; Piercy &

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 2476 522168.

E-mail addresses: [S.Dibb@open.ac.uk](mailto:S.Dibb@open.ac.uk) (S. Dibb),

[Lyndon.Simkin@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:Lyndon.Simkin@wbs.ac.uk) (L. Simkin), [David.Wilson@wbs.ac.uk](mailto:David.Wilson@wbs.ac.uk) (D. Wilson).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +44 1908 652787.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +44 2476 523914.

Morgan, 1994). A practitioner-friendly approach is urgently needed which guides marketing planners through this process. This paper presents such an approach, by clearly framing marketing planning barriers within the context of the stages in the process in which they occur. The key contention is that managing planning impediments should fully reflect the synoptic process of marketing planning adopted by corporations. The term synoptic is used to reflect the sequential nature of the process: recognizing that barriers occur at different levels — some are present at the outset of planning; others affect the planning process itself, while a further set impacts upon the implementation phase.

Three sets of strategic marketing planning barriers faced by business-to-business organizations are presented in this paper. These relate to: (i) the organizational infrastructure, (ii) the marketing planning process, and (iii) the implementation of the resulting plans. These barriers are explored through a review of published evidence and also by case study analysis. The case studies follow the experiences of three organizations as they progress through the marketing planning process. In each instance, the infrastructure, process and implementation barriers are explored. As many of these difficulties can be pre-empted, a managerial tool is then designed which practitioners can use to diagnose and treat the emerging barriers. This checklist-driven device enables managers to systematically work through a series of treatment action points. Although this diagnostic deals specifically with issues which are relevant to the marketing planner, its wider implications for strategic planning are also explored.

## 2. Marketing planning barriers

Business-to-business organization uses marketing planning to co-ordinate and control their marketing activities, among other uses (Doyle, 2001; McDonald, 2002). Through this systematic process marketing opportunities are assessed and the organization's marketing strategy is designed and implemented. All aspects of marketing management are involved: driving businesses through a process of marketing analysis, determination of competitive advantage (Varadarajan & Clark, 1994), strategy development, and the implementation of marketing programs (McDonald, 1996). The usual output, a written document known as the marketing plan, captures the analysis and strategic thinking at the heart of the planning process and focuses on the marketing programs and implementation activities which will be rolled-out.

When marketing textbooks describe marketing planning, the focus is on explanations of the process and the rationale for its use (Dibb, Simkin, Ferrell, & Pride, 2006). The marketing planning benefits which McDonald (2002) presents are typical: greater awareness of marketing trends, more informed decision-making, improved communication and co-ordination within and between functions, more efficient resource allocation, greater responsiveness to change, and a better fit between marketing strategy and tactical programs.

The problems for practitioners attempting to achieve these benefits are the implementation barriers they encounter when applying marketing planning in practice. Some of these

difficulties are reported in the academic and practitioner literature by authors who describe a host of organizational, operational, managerial and communications barriers (Doyle, 1998; Greenley, 1982; Simkin, 2000; Verhage & Waarts, 1988). As Table 1 shows, these impediments range from leadership, cultural, and communication issues, to shortages of data, personnel and other resources.

Guidance about managing and implementing marketing planning in the face of these problems is more difficult to find. Much of the available work draws on internal marketing principles (eg: Leeflang & de Mortanges, 1996; McDonald, 2002; Piercy, 2000). For example, in his discussion of internal marketing, Lings (1999) argues for the application of marketing principles within the company, using communication and guidance programs targeted at internal audiences to develop responsiveness and a unified sense of purpose among employees. Day and Montgomery (1999), drawing on the work of Deshpande (1998), agree, arguing that personnel involved in marketing activities (including planning) need to be cross-functional, cross-hierarchical and more cooperative in their practices in order to be effective. They suggest that without addressing who to involve in planning and how to facilitate their cooperation, there is less likelihood of a successful outcome.

A few authors go further, identifying a range of so-called marketing planning 'pre-requisites' (eg: McDonald, 1992), which

Table 1  
Barriers to marketing planning implementation

Sources	Marketing planning barriers
McDonald (1992), Giles (1991), Jain (2002), Pearson and Proctor (1994), Simkin (2002)	Strategy determined in isolation of analyses or formulations of tactical programs
Dibb (1997), Greenley (1982), Jain (2002), Simkin (2002)	Blinkered understanding of the external macro-marketing environment forces
Greenley (1982), Simkin (2002)	Inadequate marketing intelligence available within the organization
Dibb (1997), Pearson and Proctor (1994), Simkin (1996)	Little sharing of marketing intelligence between functions and tiers of management
McDonald (1992), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Simkin (1996)	Inadequate senior management support for marketing planning activity
Dibb (1997), McDonald (1992), Giles (1991), Greenley (1982), Pearson and Proctor (1994), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Simkin (1996)	Poor internal communication within marketing, between functions, business units and management tiers
McDonald (1992), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Simkin (2002)	Planning personnel losing impetus and motivation, owing to resource pressures
Dibb (1997), Greenley (1982), Jain (2002), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Simkin (2002)	Insufficient detail in marketing programs or the implementation plan
McDonald (1992), Simkin (2002)	Inability to break away from existing ways of operating
McDonald (1992), Piercy and Morgan (1994), Simkin (1996)	Lack of confidence/conviction amongst those responsible for marketing planning
Pearson and Proctor (1994), Simkin (2002)	Insufficient vision or the ability to think laterally

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