

Strategic Marketing Management Cases (The Irwin Series in Marketing)

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EJM
37,3/4

Strategic marketing planning: a grounded investigation

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Received July 2001
Accepted June 2002

Keywords Strategic marketing, Strategic planning, Grounded theory

Abstract Using grounded theory, the authors present an inductive model of strategic marketing planning (SMP) which extends the domain of the marketing planning literature. Based on a field investigation of four large organisations drawn from a single industry using a multiple-case design, the authors present findings using the views and perspectives of those involved in SMP development and implementation, and identify and group relevant variables into seven major themes or "core categories" that characterise the SMP process. The authors integrate a broad literature search, both within and without of marketing, with the exploratory research results, to develop a grounded theoretical description of multiple layered factors that characterise a SMP process. This grounded "picture" supports the innovative work of Piercy and Morgan, and Greenley and Ohtengli who advocate a broader domain of SMP. We suggest that extending practitioners' understanding of the nature of these inter-related factors may lead to better insights of how a SMP process can be managed more effectively.

Introduction

Since the early 1960s, planning and managing the planning process have become more important as a means of coping with a turbulent business environment (e.g. Drucker, 1964; Hussey, 1979). A number of forces have contributed to this, including an increase in environmental uncertainty, the external interdependence of organisations, organisational diversification and size, societal performance demands on organisations, and more recently the disappearance of conventional marketing structures (Hussey, 1979; McDonald, 1982, 1996; Moorman and Rust, 1999; Homburg and Workman, 2000). We note that the marketing literature has begun to broaden its focus and consider the perspective of those organisational actors involved in planning processes. However, empirical studies have been few in number. This paper represents an attempt to take account of the organisational context in which strategic marketing planning (SMP) activity takes place, as perceived by SMP actors, to generate a framework of factors that characterise the process of SMP. For the purpose of this study, we operationally define a strategic marketing plan as a



Emerald
European Journal of Marketing
Vol. 37 No. 3/4, 2003
pp. 429-440
© Emerald Group Limited
0309-0566
DOI: 10.1108/03090560310490032

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