

Strategic Marketing Planning Practices: A Study of Australian Small Business Organizations.

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Strategic marketing planning has received increasing attention over the last decade as a valuable weapon in the battle for long-term success in today's competitive environment. A review of the literature demonstrates that strategic marketing planning helps firms to identify opportunities, avoid threats and capitalise on the organization's strengths in order to gain some aspect of differentiation and competitive advantage (Cravens 1994; McDonald 1992). Strategic marketing planning provides many other benefits, allowing firms to: realign objectives and strategies to the changing environmental conditions; obtain an objective viewpoint of management problems; balance corporate resources and marketing opportunities; and, coordinate and integrate organizational members and functions leading to greater control of the total marketing function and company (Cravens 1994; Greenley 1986a, 1986b; McDonald 1989, 1992b). However, the accumulation of literature has mostly covered marketing planning in large organizations in the United Kingdom and United States (McDonald 1992). Little is known about marketing planning pertaining to small businesses, particularly in Western Australia. Therefore, this paper will be presenting the findings of a study in Australia that examined whether there are significant differences between high and low level marketing planners in terms of their marketing objectives, strategies, marketing orientation and performance.

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