Marketing and Entrepreneurship Activities within a Small Business Strategic Development Context: Toward a Creative Future for Entrepreneurial Marketing?

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to elaborate a research focus and theme that will facilitate enhancement of understanding of the marketing/entrepreneurship interface within a small business development context.

The paper is based on the premise that our innovative, qualitative research methodology is unfolding deep contextual insight of small business development processes that provides an holistic frame of understanding within which to consider in detail the nature and form of the Marketing-Entrepreneurship interface. This research process has led to the development of a creative ‘small business entrepreneurship model’ that in turn is informing further investigation and ongoing refinement of the model. We anticipate that progression of the model may inform small business research activity of others and the work of support providers and small business practitioners. Our ultimate aim is to develop theory and concepts capable of guiding small business management practice. The paper commences by suggesting that in-depth examination of small business strategic development activities and integral strategic thought and learning processes provides an holistic focus for deriving better understanding of what marketing and entrepreneurship means and involves in a small firm development context. The paper proceeds to proffer that such depth of insight can be derived from application of a creative multi-disciplinary, case study research approach based on contextual analysis that facilitates investigation of the inter-relatedness of small business development process, content and context. Findings from utilisation of the research approach are then considered to demonstrate how the resultant insight into strategy development processes within small business and embedded distinctive small firm learning and management processes and activities provide context for conceptualising the marketing/entrepreneurship interface. One key area of progress in this respect is our ‘small business entrepreneurship model’ (Wyer, Barrett and Choong 2003: initially presented at the 8th Annual Symposium). The model is briefly re-visited and its potential utility for small business researchers, support providers and small business practitioners is considered.

The paper concludes with a proposed SIG theme that we would like to ‘drive forward’ in terms of progressing understanding of the marketing entrepreneurship interface: ‘Marketing and Entrepreneurship Activities within a Small Business Strategic Development Context’. For us, this involves moving forward elaboration of our ‘small business entrepreneurship model’ in a manner
that facilitates the addressing of the dichotomy between traditional marketing theory/concept and small business management practice. In so doing, we are looking to contribute to ‘ensuring a creative future for entrepreneurial marketing’ based upon close partnership between academia and the world of small business practice. Through such partnership our ultimate goal is to see theory leading small business practice – currently it can be argued that the reverse is the case.