Examining The Nature of Marketing Decision-Making Competencies in SMEs Over Time

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Abstract: Marketing decision-making in SMEs tends to be simplistic, haphazard, unstructured, intuitive, unplanned, and with a short-term focus. Moreover, decision-making in the small firm is strongly influenced and characterised by the inherent competencies of the owner-manager. Thus, an identification of these competencies are crucial in any study of SME marketing decision making, given the dominant role and influence of the owner-manager in this area.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine the key competencies in small firm marketing management decision making over time. These have been identified as knowledge, experience, communication, judgment, and networking. There are also "situation specific" competencies, which are specific to a particular owner-manager at a particular time. These vary in importance and relevance from company to company and over the time period under investigation.

Another key aspect of this paper is to examine how competencies develop or evolve over time. A number of learning typologies are presented and discussed in relation to this.