
Book Review

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Marketing for Entrepreneurs and SMEs. A Global Perspective
by: Maja Konečnik Ruzzier, Mitja Ruzzier and Robert D. Hisrich
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There is an evident paradox in writing about marketing in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). On the one hand, SMEs are traditionally closer to their clients than multinational firms (MNEs) and directly “hear the voice of [their] customers” (Hill, 2001a, 2001b). On the other hand, SMEs use mental models and managerial frameworks that can differ substantially from the ones described by the mainstream marketing literature mostly addressed to bigger firms. SMEs plan their marketing strategies much less frequently than MNEs do. Many SMEs do not even have a marketing function or marketing-dedicated managers. Most of SMEs do not manage any market research activity, either directly or through external providers (Romano and Ratnatunga, 1995; Siu and Kirby, 1998; Hill, 2001a, 2001b).

Given such premises, how can it be possible to keep together ‘marketing’ and ‘SMEs’? It becomes possible by moving from a ‘functional’ perspective (a firm does marketing when a marketing function exists) to an ‘activities-based’ perspective (a firm does marketing if it manages marketing activities independently from the existence of a marketing function and marketing managers).

It is my opinion that the authors of the book *Marketing for Entrepreneurs and SMEs*, Maja Konečnik Ruzzier, Mitja Ruzzier and Robert D. Hisrich, were particularly effective in applying an activity-based perspective to the study of marketing in SMEs. They were not the first authors to do so. Other authors also successfully applied an activity-based perspective to SME marketing (i.e., Carson, 1985; Bhide, 1994; Carson and Gilmore, 2000; Pacitto et al., 2007).

However, what differentiates the attempt advanced by these three authors from the previous contributions is their global perspective, which is more than just the subtitle of the book. The authors claim that applying a global perspective to marketing and SMEs

means to completely re-think the ways such firms approach the market, target their consumers, deliver value to them and manage their communication, distribution, branding, pricing and innovation strategies. This is the common thread that binds the 14 chapters of the book and is the main additional contribution provided by these authors.

The book is well organised and easy to read because it combines explanations of concepts with case studies and examples that can be easily understood by every type of reader, including scholars, students, managers or entrepreneurs. The definition of specific learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter helps the reader remain focused on specific key concepts. Further, 'summary' and 'thought questions' sections at the end of each chapter help the reader to fix the main concepts in his mind and to practically apply them to plausible situations.

If I was forced to find a flaw in this book, it would be that a network-based perspective on marketing in SMEs could have provided additional interesting contributions. I personally support the perspective provided by Hill (2001b, p.223) who claims that networking is "de facto [the] operating system of the [small] firm." However, the work done by Konečnik Ruzzier, Ruzzier and Hisrich remains an excellent one, and even the above-mentioned potential drawback is compensated by a focus on open innovation and design-driven practices in chapter ten.

In conclusion, I would certainly recommend this book to entrepreneurs, managers and scholars. They should not only read it, but also use it.

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