

WHAT IS MARKETING STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC MARKETING? SURVEY DATA REFLECTS CONFUSION.

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Abstract

Most marketing texts use the terms "marketing strategy" and "strategic marketing," but very few books provide definitions of the two concepts. Also the literature addressing marketing strategy and strategic marketing includes almost no empirical evidence about how firms use these strategic concepts. This void represents a problem for marketing students and faculty. We list the following reasons for justifying this study;

1. There is a lack of consensus in defining marketing strategy and strategic marketing. The literature reflects many inconsistencies and much disagreement that leads to confusion.
2. Despite the importance attached to these strategic concepts in the prescriptive literature, empirical evidence on how companies actually address marketing strategy and strategic marketing is limited.
3. The overlap between the marketing strategy literature and the strategic management literature provides competing labels for strategy concepts that appear to be the same (see Slater and Aaby 1989), adding to this confusion.
4. Many leading authorities claim that we must do much work in order to achieve advancements in this area. For example;
 - ⇒ Chaffee (1985) cites several authors who are concerned about this lack of consensus in explaining marketing strategy;
 - ⇒ Gardner and Thomas (1985) said, "separating marketing strategy from corporate strategy is important but difficult"
 - ⇒ Wind and Robertson (1983) conclude that "sound and consistent definitions are needed in order to advance research in this area."

This article reports exploratory empirical evidence on management perceptions related to marketing strategy and strategic marketing. The paper is an early contribution to the lack of empiricism related to

these two marketing labels. It concludes that there are no commonly accepted definitions of marketing strategy and strategic marketing. Many writers present different definitions and there appear to be inconsistencies by individual writers as well as between writers. The result is a set of confusing scenarios for the reader. This daze influences academic research, management thinking and perception.

The conclusions confirm the prescriptive literature's confusing state. Respondents perceive marketing strategy and strategic marketing to be relatively unimportant. Most managers suggest that non-marketing strategies are more important than marketing strategies. They are unable to contrast the two concepts with respect to location in the management hierarchy, are unclear to which time periods the concepts relate, and what managers formulate these aspects of strategy.

Also, the results demonstrate little consistency in management perception. They confirm the confusion with respect understanding marketing strategy and strategic marketing. Managers are unable to relate characteristics of these concepts in line with the prescriptive literature. They are unable to distinguish the two concepts with respect to location in the hierarchy, to time horizons and what managers formulate these aspects of strategy. While thinking related to these concepts seem confused, these managers consider them more important than reflected by actual practice in their organizations.

References

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