

**3/1998 *An Investigation into the Process of Strategic Marketing Planning in SMEs and its Attendant Problems***  
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Strategic marketing planning is seen as being a daunting task by many small and medium enterprise (SME) managers. The very complexity of the planning process and the fact that it is generally viewed as being only appropriate for 'big business' means that only in a few SMEs is the task taken seriously. It is viewed as taking up valuable time which could be more usefully spent meeting the everyday need of customers. Research was carried out among twenty senior SME managers who almost unanimously agreed that an informal 'rule of thumb' strategy was better than a formal structure. However, further probing established the fact that many of these managers were totally ignorant of the marketing concept, saw explicit planning as being a waste of time, and did not perceive it to have any real value.

From the research and from the literature surveyed, a number of barriers to formal marketing planning have been identified. The paper concludes that a new methodology is needed to motivate SME managers towards a more meaningful system that suites their particular needs.