

An Exploration of how Japanese and Canadian SME's use the Internet for Export-Import Purposes

Conor Vibert¹; Dermot Vibert²

¹Ph.D., Associate Professor (Business Strategy), Fred C. Manning School of Business, Acadia University, Conor.vibert@acadiau.ca

²M.A. Tokyo, Japan

Abstract

This paper reports on the findings of an exploratory study of the use of Internet technologies and online information sources by managers of fourteen Nova Scotian and fifteen Japanese small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) to make sense of foreign market opportunities. Conducted during 2004, it explores common environmental scanning strategies, practices and technologies and suggests differences when target markets are domestic as opposed to foreign.

Keywords

small and medium sized enterprise, exporting, environmental scanning, online competitive intelligence, international business.

Introduction

For most of us, it is now quite uncommon to walk through an airport or down a busy street and not see some individual using a cell phone, black berry, hand held computer, lap top or other digital computing or communication device. Regardless of their design or use, these technologies now play an important role in our daily lives. The same can be said of the Internet. We can now track global news up to the minute using news aggregators such as News.Yahoo.com. Web sites such as Accuweather.com offer us insight into local weather at our fingertips. Google Earth allows many of us to view satellite photos of our homes and our vacation destinations. Along with changing our personal lives, communication technologies and information found on the Internet are also transforming the commercial landscape. In some areas of business, their impact is well understood. In other areas, such as the management of small and medium sized enterprises, their effects are unclear.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) are an integral part of the Canadian economy, accounting for over 55% of total business employment while those with fewer than fifty employees account for 97% of all businesses (Stats Canada, 2001). A recent survey of SME's (Mallett and Kisekka; 2000) sponsored by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) <http://www.cfib.ca>, implies why it is important to understand the export practices and activities of SME's. The survey findings suggest that Internet use drives Canadian SME export behaviour by increasing the possibility of targeting appropriate markets. The survey findings also suggest an association of Internet usage with stronger performance in the export market and a significant impact on the number of full-time equivalent hires. Unfortunately what is not well understood is how SME's might improve their export performance through

the use of the Internet and associated technologies. One means of improving our understanding of this important topic is to compare the use of online information sources and Internet technologies by different firms in different countries. Of interest is comparing how these sources and technologies are used to identify and understand foreign market business opportunities by firms operating from nations with strong traditions of export effectiveness with those in nations whose export prowess is not as well recognized. As a result we compare and contrast the activities of Japanese SME's with those located in Canada.

This paper proceeds as follows. A literature review is offered. The methodology used in this study is then described. Following this, the results are discussed and a conclusion offered that suggests implications, shortcomings of the study and ideas for future research.

Literature review

The topic of how organizations seek to understand their competitive environment is not one which is new. Interest in it goes beyond the walls of the academy. Associations that seek to represent the interests of marketing researchers, competitive intelligence professionals, and business analysts might suggest a role for their members in this regard. Indeed, one organization, the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP) appears dedicated to this area of endeavour. It defines competitive intelligence (CI) as a "systematic and ongoing process for gathering and analysing information to derive insights about the competitive environment and trends in order to further the organization's business goals" (*SCIP, 2005*).

Fields of research including history, computer science, strategic management, organizational theory, marketing, and strands of economics might all make a claim to having an interest in this topic. Exemplars would include the literature related to the history of warfare which is replete with stories of how military commanders have sought to understand and then outwit their enemies (Sawyer, 1994; Preston, Roland and Wise, 1991). A large and expanding literature related to environmental scanning has also arisen, that documents how large businesses and organizations learn about their competitors' commercial opportunities (Daft, Sormunen and Parks, 1988; Thomas, Clark and Gioia, 1993; Auster and Choo, 1994)

In this latter context, existing research has focused primarily on three important issues. These include the factors that explain environmental scanning practices, the characteristics of these practices and the identification of information sources (Nkongolo-Bakenda, 2003:25). Unfortunately much of this existing research is has been conducted in the context of large organizations.

Why does this matter? It matters because much of this insight may not be generalizable to SMEs. Smeltzer, Fann and Nikolaisen (1988) argue that dissimilarities between large and small organizations may create differences in environmental scanning practices. In terms of large organizations, these differences may be caused by more formal policies and procedures, a greater capacity to influence competitive environments, more extensive and information rich external linkages, the existence of specialized departmental structures and, different roles and functions played by large organization executives.

So how do SME's learn about their competitive environment? Some studies suggest the most important sources of information for SME's are their own experiences, traditional customers and suppliers (Malecki and Poehling, 1999). Contingent conditions related to the industry, the organization, and the owner/manager guide the choice of appropriate information sources and the need to systemically scan each sector of the environment. In turn, the need to scan a sector and the information sources used may be dependent upon the level of uncertainty aroused by the sector, the amount of pertinent information contained in the source and its accessibility (Nkongolo-Bakenda, 2003).

By what other means might SME's learn about or strive to understand their external environments? The following quote neatly summarizes one set of ideas. "Small business managers are regular consumers of external information and their primary sources are verbal exchanges with marketing channel members, personal sources of information are used more in planning than impersonal sources, written sources are more frequently used than oral sources, and customers, and suppliers are used as information sources more than competitors, and consultants are the least frequently used" (Hartman, Tower and Sebor, 1994: 37).

Despite this growing body of insight, our understanding of how SME's identify business opportunities is incomplete and immature. A number of reasons suggest why this is so. First, the rise of the Internet as a tool for learning about such behaviour is recent. New, free, online research aids such as Google Earth, Hoover's CEO's on Camera, and customer feedback sites such Planet Feedback have placed at the fingertips of analysts and observers of commercial activities, information never before so freely accessible. We know little about how widely these new information sources are used and for what purposes. Second, much of the insight that does exist was developed using data collected prior to the wide spread adoption of the Internet as a communication and information search tool. Third, few studies have focused on the international aspect of business. For instance, little is known regarding how information sources are being used by SME's to assess foreign market opportunities especially from the point of view of SME's operating in different nations (Cui, 1992). Also not well understood are the differences regarding how information is obtained when seeking to pursue domestic as opposed to foreign market opportunities. In instances where the studies examined how firms sought information, they did so in regards to domestic markets (Malecki and Poehling, 1999; Fuellhart and Glasmeier, 2003) or international markets (Nkongolo-Bakenda, 2003), but not both.

To summarize, our understanding of how large companies assess foreign market opportunities fairly well understood. The same cannot be said for SME's. The remainder of this paper describes an exploratory study that examines how Canadian and Japanese use online information and Internet technologies to better understand foreign market opportunities.

Methodology

The unit of analysis of this study is the small and medium sized enterprise (SME) that is actively involved in exporting. The SME has been chosen as the unit of analysis because of its important role in the Canadian economy. As noted earlier, evidence suggests an association of Internet usage with stronger performance in the export market among Canadian SME's. Unfortunately there are few studies that explain why and how this is occurring.

The research sites for this study were Nova Scotia, a province of Canada and the Tokyo area of Japan. A number of reasons exist for these choices. First, both sites offer an opportunity to observe the practices of organizations operating in business cultures where exporting is an increasingly desirable form of operation. Second, the budgetary, logistical, and temporal constraints of the researcher necessitated a limit to the geographical scope of this study. In terms of Nova Scotia, its companies are well advanced in regards to wired Internet usage. Small in terms of population and limited in terms of population base, these two characteristics offered the researcher an opportunity to gather data within a reasonable time frame and at a reasonable cost. In terms of Japan, its economy is heavily export oriented and is an important trading partner of Canada. Like Canada, Japan is well advanced in regards to Internet usage although the primary vehicle is wireless as opposed to wireline access (Kunii and Ihlwan, 2003; Annan, 2004; Fri, 2004).

Addressing the issues of control factors and sample size allowed parameters to be put on the study. These factors included *reputation*, *office location*, and *firm size*. The first control factor was *size*. By limiting the sample to SME's we were able to ensure similarity in terms of the availability of resources. In general, relative to large corporations or multinationals, SME's are resource constrained. The second control factor was reputation in the local business community as an active exporter or importer. This allowed us to focus our study on the behavior of SME's actively engaged in exporting. The third control factor was location. By studying the practices of firms operating in Nova Scotia and Japan, we ensured that the issue of national business cultures (Hofstede, 1984) did not serve as a biased influencer of the results. SME's are normally defined according to the number of individuals employed or by yearly revenue yet little agreement exists regarding specific figures (Nasierowski, 2005). This study defines an SME as a company employing between 5 and 500 individuals.

In Nova Scotia, the firms were selected to participate in the study using convenience sampling. Target firms were identified in consultation with business associates of the researcher and Nova Scotia Business.com. The sampled firms were varied in terms of the products or services that they provided to the market place. The types of firms included a transportation services provider, a publisher, a trade show manager, a software developer, an I.T. solutions provider, a mining company, a fruit grower, an agricultural grower, a food security consultancy, a provider of video production services, a media management and product company, a meat wholesaler, a market research company, and a manufacturer of safety training equipment. The size of these firms ranged from 4 to 250 employees.

In Japan, our method of firm selection was also through convenience sampling. Target firms were identified in consultation with business associates of the researcher employed in Tokyo. The sampled firms were varied in terms of the products or services that they provided to the market place. These products and services included industrial ceramics, automotive paints, automotive components, crystal for the telecommunication industries, scrap metal, software development and computer hardware installation, restaurants, steelmaking, financial services, construction, coal, and electronics. The size of these firms ranged from 2 to 800 employees with ten of the companies employing less than 30 individuals.

In order to undertake this study, the research strategy employed a three phase approach. In Phase 1, exploratory interviews with representatives of fourteen Japanese SME's were

conducted during January of 2003. This allowed the researcher to gain practical insight into the use of Internet technologies and the practice of environmental scanning for export purposes. Insights obtained from these open ended interviews suggested a number of points. Cell phone conversations and text messaging played an important role in conducting business in Japan. Employees of firms that were less well established tended to make use of the Internet more than individuals employed by well established companies. The search engine Yahoo!, was well used by SME managers seeking to understand foreign market opportunities. This led to the development of this study's concepts, and survey instruments.

Phase 2 of the research included the development of a series of funding proposals during the Spring and Summer of 2003. As a result of a successful proposal, data was collected using the new survey instrument during the Winter and Spring of 2004 from fourteen Nova Scotia based SME's and fifteen Japanese SME's. This paper represents an initial outcome of Phase 2. In Phase 3, the study will be expanded to include in depth case studies of SME's operating in other nations. It will take the form of a series of more in depth case studies. Funding proposals for this last phase will be prepared in late 2005.

In Nova Scotia, the English language research instrument was administered through one of two means. Where possible, a pre-arranged one hour interview was conducted by the principal researcher at the premises of each participating firm with its owner/manager. In other instances, a phone interview was conducted. The data was collected over a two month period during April and May of 2004. Data was analysed during May and June of 2004. In Japan, the English language research instrument was administered during a pre-arranged one hour interview by the principal researcher in the presence of a bilingual business associate. The data was collected over a one month period during January and February of 2004. Data was analysed during March and April. In accordance with Japanese custom, a token gift, specifically a jar of Nova Scotia produced strawberry jam, valued at approximately \$5.00 Canadian was offered to interviewees. The study conformed to the host academic institution's research ethics guidelines.

The survey instrument comprised open ended questions and 5 point Likert scale style measures. It was created by modifying research questionnaires developed by Choo, Detlor and Turnbull (2000), Granovetter (1973), Wakelin, (1998), Javalgi, White and Lee, (2000) and others. The survey instrument was pre-tested by knowledgeable industry observers prior to being administered to the survey respondents in Nova Scotia and Japan. It addressed two broad issues – use of Internet technology and information sources, and success in the export/import market. The questions and scales associated with these first two issues are noted below.

To explore technology and information sources usage more fully, the latter concept was broken down into two sub-categories, those traditional in nature and those of an online nature. Respondents were asked to respond to questions in the context of a number of Internet technologies: E-mail, white board sharing, discussion forums, Web browsers, discussion forums, search engines/directories, translation software, Web casts, Web logs, online conferencing, database aggregators, Internet monitoring and clipping service, global online procurement or distribution systems, a university online library, a small company online network, handheld devices, and notebooks or desktop computers. In terms of traditional information sources, the following were posed to respondents: Customers, government trade

commissioners or consultants, embassy contacts, trade consultants on retainer, export/import/trade associations, suppliers/dealers/agents, seminars, trade shows, competitors, world wide Web, radio/tv/newspapers, external reports/studies, internal reports/memos, internal library, academic research, and colleagues. Finally the list of online information sources included Web sites of companies, professional associations, industry associations, government, industry regulators, business consultancies, specialty research companies, online scientific and academic journals, online magazines and trade journals, online newspapers, chambers of commerce, special information services, activist organizations, commercial database or catalogues and those labelled other.

With these in mind, the following questions were offered to the respondents. When seeking to identify and understand trends and events in foreign markets (export/import opportunities), please rate each of the following: a) *Internet technologies/ b) traditional information sources/ c) online information sources*, according to: its frequency of use, its reliability, its ease of use, user preference, the time and effort needed to use it, its accuracy, and its use for domestic versus export purposes. Table 1 below highlights the scales used in the survey instrument.

Table 1. Survey instrument scales

Scales associated with each of these questions were as follows:
i (1 - daily, 2 – weekly, 3 – monthly; 4 – quarterly, 5 – yearly, 0 – never used)
ii (1 – very high, 2 – high, 3 - moderate, 4 – low, 5 – very low, 0- never used)
iii(1- highest level of ease, 2- higher level of ease, 3- moderate level of ease, 4- lower level of ease, 5-lowest level of ease, 0 - never used)
iv (1 - highest preference, 2- high preference, 3 – moderate preference, 4 - low preference, 5- lowest preference, 0 never used)
v (1- highest level of time and effort, 2- higher level of time and effort, 3- moderate level of time and effort, 4- lower level of time and effort, 5-lowest level of time and effort, 0 - never used)
vi (1 - highest accuracy, 2- high accuracy, 3 – moderate accuracy, 4 - low accuracy, 5- lowest accuracy, 0 never used)
vii (1 – Significantly more use for domestic, 2- moderately more use of domestic, 3 – equal use for domestic and export, 4 – Moderately more use for export, 5- Significantly more use for export, 0 Not applicable).

In terms of data analysis, the nature of the data dictated the use of non statistical analytical techniques. In this particular case, qualitative data analysis (Huberman and Miles, 1994) was

used to enhance the generalizability of the findings and deepen the understanding and explanations. Qualitative research techniques were useful for this study for a number of reasons: (1) qualitative data samples tend to be purposive, rather than random; (2) hypotheses may be developed in conjunction with the reduction of data; (3) qualitative analysis does not draw on a large, well-established body of formal knowledge from mathematics and statistics; (4) there is a focus on information collected in a naturally occurring setting; and (5) the data contains valuable information which can enable a series of different lines of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

Data was displayed in matrix form. This allowed relevant information to be placed into an appropriate structure. Several rules were followed to ensure the validity of the results (Huberman & Miles, 1994). First, interview notes were written up within one day of the interview. Second, upon completion of the results tables, the categorisation of the data was checked to ensure that the results were truly representative of the interview data.

Results

This study furthers our understanding of how Canadian and Japanese SME's use online information sources and Internet technologies to help understand foreign market opportunities. To set the context for these results, one point is worthy of mention. In Nova Scotia only five of the sampled firms used fee-based online information sources. The remaining companies stated that they did not pay for online information aside from regular industry association fees or Internet connection charges. In Japan, almost all of the survey participants suggested a use of free as opposed to fee-based online information sources.

Further, most respondents did not characterize the sophistication of Internet technology usage by their employer as being highly sophisticated. The following paragraphs discuss the results of the survey. Table 2 summarizes the technologies and information sources that are used extensively by the SME's. By extensive we refer to a figure of at least 25% of sample respondents. Table 3 summarizes the non-usage of these technologies and information by these same SME's.

So how are Nova Scotia based Canadian SME's using Internet technologies and information sources? In *Internet technologies*, the data suggests that email, Web browsers, search engines and cell phones are used most frequently by both Japanese and Canadian companies. In both instances email is ranked as the most frequently used technology. Respondents also suggested e-mail was very ease to use and was used equally for making sense of both foreign and domestic opportunities.

In terms of Nova Scotia based SME's, search engines and browsers were most often associated with exploring foreign market opportunities as opposed to understanding domestic market opportunities. Not surprisingly, the use of handheld devices (in this instance cell phones) is greater for exploring domestic market opportunities rather those found overseas. Of interest as well is an understanding of the technologies that are not being used or that are experiencing little use. The results of this study suggest no use by participating firms of Web logs and database aggregators. Further, none of the respondent companies are linked digitally to the online services of a university library. Perhaps, most interestingly, few of the

respondents use Web casts, online conferencing software, Web based translation software or whiteboard sharing software.

In terms of Japanese SME's, in all cases, respondents suggest that the highest frequency of use for search engines is for exploring foreign market opportunities as opposed to understanding domestic market opportunities. The use of cell phones is also greater for exploring domestic market opportunities rather than foreign ventures. The results of this study suggest little use by participating firms of discussion forums, Web casts, Web logs, online conferencing software, and database aggregators. Further, few are linked digitally to the online services of a university library. Perhaps, most interesting, the use of Web based translation software is almost absent among respondents.

This question also addressed the use of *traditional information sources*. For Nova Scotia based SME's, the data suggests that customers, embassy personnel, suppliers/dealers/agents, competitors, and trade shows are the most frequently used sources of information. The respondents most often stated that customers and competitors are considered equally important sources for understanding both domestic and foreign opportunities. On the other hand, information from suppliers, dealers and agents, embassy personnel and trade shows were used more extensively for understanding foreign market dynamics. Finally, few of the respondents made regular use of trade consultants on retainer and seminars as avenues for improving their understanding of foreign market opportunities.

When referring to Japanese SME's, the data suggests that only two sources were used extensively, customers and suppliers/dealers/agents as sources of information. Both customers and suppliers/dealers/agents sources ranked very high in terms of reliability. Customers were listed by respondents as an important information source for domestic market needs. Suppliers, dealers and agents were used more extensively for understanding foreign market dynamics. Surprisingly, most respondents did not make regular use of seminars and trade shows as avenues for improving their understanding of foreign market opportunities.

A third issue addressed the *sources of online information* that were used fairly consistently by Nova Scotia based business respondents. The data suggested that company, government, and industry association Web sites as well as online trade newsletters fit this bill. In most cases, respondents indicated that the highest frequency of use for these online sources was for exploring foreign as opposed to domestic market opportunities. Which types of online information sources were generally not being used to understand foreign market opportunities? The list includes the Web sites of specialized research consultancies, chambers of commerce, and social activist organizations. Those types of sources that had few users included business consultancies, commercial databases, and online scientific and academic journals.

In regards to Japanese SME's, most respondents suggested that the highest frequency of use for company Web sites was for exploring foreign as opposed to domestic market opportunities. In terms of frequency of use, only two others were notable – government and industry association Web sites. Both of these were felt to be reliable in terms of their information content. Which types of online information sources were generally not being used to understand foreign market opportunities? The list includes the Web sites of professional associations, industry regulators, business consultancies, specialized research companies,

chambers of commerce, social activist organizations, and online scientific and academic journals.

Table 2. Usage summary for information sources and Internet technologies

	Useful For Identifying Foreign Market Opportunities	Useful For Identifying Domestic Market Opportunities
Extensive Use by Nova Scotian SME's	Web Browser Search Engines Company Web sites Government Web sites Industry Regulator Web sites Industry Association Web sites Online Trade Newsletter Customers Embassy Personnel Suppliers/Dealers/Agents Competitors Trade Shows	E-mail Cell Phones Customers Competitors Company Web sites
Extensive Use by Japanese SME's	E-mail Search Engines Web Browsers Company Web sites Suppliers/Dealers/Agents	E-mail Cell Phones Customers

Table 3. Non-usage summary for information sources and Internet technologies

Little or No Use by Nova Scotian SME's	<p style="text-align: center;"> Web logs* Database Aggregators* Online University Library* Specialized Research Consultancies* Chambers of Commerce* Social Activist Organizations* Translation Software** Whiteboard Sharing** Online Conferencing Software** Web casts** Business Consultancies** Online Scientific and Academic Journals** Commercial Databases** Trade Consultants on Retainer** Seminars** </p>
Little or No Use by Japanese SME's	<p style="text-align: center;"> Translation Software Discussion Forums Web Casts Whiteboard Sharing Web Logs Online Conferencing Software Database Aggregators Online University Library Seminars Trade Consultants on Retainer Trade Shows Professional Associations Industry Regulators Business Consultancies Specialized Research Company Chambers of Commerce Social Activist Organizations Online Scientific and Academic Journals Commercial Databases </p>

Conclusion

In summary, the results of this exploratory study suggest a number of points. First, the primary Internet technologies used to understand foreign market opportunities by managers operating in Nova Scotian SME's are search engines and browsers. In terms of traditional information sources, managers look to suppliers, dealers and agents, embassy personnel and trade shows for advice regarding foreign markets. In terms of online information sources, their choices were company, government, and industry association Web sites as well as online trade newsletters. When conducting business domestically, managers make extensive use of e-mail, cell phones, customers, competitors, and company Web sites.

The findings of this study also suggest that the primary Internet technologies used to understand foreign market opportunities by managers operating in Japanese SME's are search engines, company Web sites and e-mail. In terms of traditional information sources, managers look to suppliers and agents for advice. When conducting business domestically, managers make extensive use of cell phones and e-mail and most frequently tap into the ideas of

customers. The results suggest that small and medium size Japanese business may no longer rely on traditional commercial trading houses as a necessary component of the chain of activities associated with exporting and importing. The extensive use of Web based information sources for export but not domestic business activities suggests that Web based business information related to Japan may be lacking in reliability. Businesses, especially those operating from North America, seeking to export products and services to Japan may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage relative to Japanese firms seeking to undertake export activities to Canada and the United States. On the other hand, the extensive use of search engines by Japanese respondents supports the role of Web sites for attracting foreign market opportunities, if that market is Japan. Further, qualitative data collected from the survey respondents suggests that language is increasingly less and less of a barrier for the average export active Japanese business manager. A combination of a digital handheld language dictionary and e-mail appear sufficient in form to allow for commercial transactions to occur. Japanese exporters do not appear to be using Web based translation software preferring instead to use a digital language dictionary to guide their efforts.

A number of shortcomings characterize this study and limit the generalizability of its results. To begin, the sample size is small. Data was collected from only 14 firms in Nova Scotia and 15 firms in Japan. Second, the term convenience sample characterized the participation of survey respondents in the study. Further sampled firms were included in the survey based on three specific characteristics – size, location, and reputation in the local business community as an active exporter or importer. As a result the sample firms participated in a broad range of industries that were not necessarily similar in nature. Also to be noted is that the survey was not translated from English to Japanese. It was however, undertaken by survey respondents in the presence of a bilingual translator.

What are a few suggestions for future research? Future studies might explore the effectiveness of participation in SME business networks for disseminating Internet technology know-how. In other words, does membership in a trade or business association enhance the ability of an SME to understand foreign market opportunities and use Internet technologies to do so? A second suggestion for future research is to conduct a series of in depth case studies as a precursor to a large sample size study. A third suggestion is to limit the sample of firms under study to those participating in the same industry. Finally, future research activity might be undertaken to explore the relationship of national cultures and the use of Internet technologies for exporting.

References

- Amann, R. 2004. Internet Usage in Japan. The Big Tree, Available: www.tawawa.org. Sourced: April 16, 2004.
- Auster, E. and C.W. Choo, 1994. How Senior Managers Acquire and Use Information in Environmental Scanning, *Information Processing & Management*, 30(5) 606-618.
- Choo, C.W., Detlor, B. and D. Turnbull, 2000. *Web Work: Information Seeking and Knowledge Work on World Wide Web*, Dordecht, NE: Kluwer, Academic Publishers
- Daft, R. L. and K.E. Weick, 1984. Toward a Model of Organization as Interpretation Systems, *Academy of Management Review*, 9(2) 284-295.
- Daft, R.L., Sormunen, J., and J. Parks 1988. Chief Executive scanning, Environmental Characteristics and Company Performance: an Empirical Study, *Strategic Management Journal*, 9(2) 123-139.
- FRI Survey of Japan's Internet Users. Fujitsu Research Institute. Available: www.fri.fujitsu.com. Sourced. May 24, 2004.
- Fuellhart, K.G. and A.K. Glasmeier, 2003. Acquisition, assessment and use of business information by small and medium-sized businesses: a demand perspective. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 15(3) 229 – 252.
- Granovetter, M. 1985. Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3) 481–510.
- Hartman, E.A., Tower, C.B. & T.C. Sebor, 1994. Information Sources and their relationship to organizational innovation in small businesses, *Journal of Small Business Management*, 32(1) 36-47.
- Huberman, A.M., & M.B. Miles, (1994) Data management and analysis methods, In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 428-444.
- Javalgi, R.G., White, D.S. & O. Lee. 2000. Firm Characteristics Influencing Export Propensity: An Empirical Investigation by Industry Type. *Journal of Business Research*, 47(3) 217 – 228.
- Jaworski, B.J., Macinnis, D.J. & A.K. Kohli, 2002. Generating Competitive Intelligence in Organizations, *Journal of Market Focused Management*. 5, 279-307.
- Kunii, I.M. & M. Ihlwan, 2003. Where broadband is really booming: Japan and South Korea are making high speed networks pay off, *Business Week*. Issue 3831, 88h.
- Malecki, E.J. & R.M. Poehling, 1999. Extroverts and Introverts: small manufacturers and their information sources, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*. 11, 247 – 268.
- Mallett, T. & M. Kisekka, 2000. Internet Use Among Small and Medium-sized Firms: CFIB Mid Year Survey Results. Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Available www.cfib.ca. Sourced: May 20, 2004.
- Nasierowski, W. 2005 Researching SME: Dilemmas of Studies on Innovations and International Comparisons. Paper presented to the 2005 Atlantic Schools of Business Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Nkongolo-Bakenda, J.M. 2003. Environmental Scanning in Globally Oriented Small Businesses: Practices Suggested by Managers, *Journal of Comparative International Management*. 6(1) 23-56.
- Preston, R.A., Roland, A. and S.F. Wise, 1991. *Men in Arms: A History of Warfare and Its Interrelationships with Western Society*, 5th Ed. Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Sawyer, R.D. 1994. *Sun Tsu: The Art of Warfare*. Westview Press.
- Smeltzer, L.R., Fann, G.L. & V.N. Nikolaisen, 1988. Environmental Scanning Practices in Small Business, *Journal of Small Business Management*. 26(3) 55 – 62.
- Thomas, J.B, Clark, S.M., & D.A. Gioia, 1993. Strategic Sensemaking and Organizational Performance: Linkages among Scanning, Interpretation, Action and Outcomes, *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(2) 239 – 271.
- Wakelin, K. 1998. Innovation and export behaviour at the firm level, *Research Policy*. 26(8) 829 – 841.