

THE IMPACT OF GENDER ON STRATEGIC TYPOLOGY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN CANADA

Candace Blayney, Royal Roads University
Karen Blotnicky, Mount Saint Vincent University

ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of gender on managerial styles, especially the strategic typology employed by hotel managers in Canada during economic stressful times. Miles and Snow's strategic typology framework of defender, prospector, analyzer and reactor was employed and explored by gender. Also, performance was examined by strategic typology to determine any relationships. Findings in this study were women hotel managers used the defender strategy and men used the analyzer strategy. There were no statistically significant findings on which strategy was best for performance. Implications of this study and further research are discussed.

JEL: J1; J16; M1; M12

KEYWORDS: gender, management, strategy, hotels, Canada

INTRODUCTION

The environment may account for a certain degree of poor performance; however, quality of performance is primarily due to the strategy employed by the general manager. "Research has shown that industry conditions account for approximately 19 % of a firm's performance, while developing a sound competitive strategy is responsible for 32% of performance results" (McGahan & Porter, 1997, p.16). The past years of economic uncertainty for the hospitality industry in Canada presented a unique opportunity to capture strategies used to maintain operational viability.

As of 2004, consultants for the Hotel Association of Canada reported that the Canadian hotel industry consisted of 6,434 properties and 363,628 rooms. The resulting revenues generated were in excess of CDN \$11 billion, employment included over 238,000 people with total salaries and wages estimated at \$4.6 billion. Revenues generated for the government were approximately \$4.03 billion (HAC, 2004, The Hotel Industry Fact Sheet).

The skills required of a hotel general manager are demanding due to the unique characteristics of the industry. This is because, typically, hotels operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and 365 days per year; occupancy levels fluctuate significantly by season; there are high labor costs; and unique management skills are required to motivate a highly diverse staff. Compared to managers in other industries, these job characteristics may exert increased daily management pressures on hotel managers (Rutherford, 2002).

The environment in the hotel industry during 2000 to 2006 was turbulent due to terrorism, public health concerns such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE or Mad Cow), forest fires, wide spread power outages, and severe weather and snowstorms (Hotel Association of Canada Annual Report, 2004). The resulting revenue loss created a challenging environment which has continued with the financial slide that started in 2008.

This quantitative research was designed to identify the strategies used by general managers during the adverse economic conditions that prevailed in the Canadian lodging industry from 2001 to 2006 and if there were any differences according to gender. This exploration will uncover any lessons that can be

learned from managers who experienced this turbulent environment. This article discusses the current research on strategic typology and gender management styles and then presents the research hypotheses. This is followed by the results and a discussion of the findings and future research areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategy

The study of strategy is dependent on the idea that strategy should be aligned with the external environment for the best performance. One of the original researchers linking strategy, structure, and process to organizational adaptation resulted in the textbook *Organizational Strategy, Structure, and Process* (Miles & Snow, 1978). A strategy typology was defined to assist organizations in making changes to adapt to the environment. The strategy typology contains four types of strategic management categories: *prospectors, defenders, analyzers, and reactors*. Prospectors perceive the environment as dynamic and uncertain, and use innovation to manage the environmental change. Their success is based on finding and exploiting new products and market opportunities. They constantly seek new opportunities and will look at many diverse markets and tend to be aggressive. The opposite of prospectors are defenders who perceive the environment as stable and certain. Defenders seek stability and control and create a highly specialized and formalized organizational structure. Therefore, defenders have little capacity to adjust rapidly to new opportunities. Instead, they attempt to locate and defend a secure niche in the market place which is seen as stable and thus appear to be non aggressive. Analyzers are a unique blend of the prospector and the defender, minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities. They stress both stability and flexibility and try to capitalize on both by maintaining their traditional products but also, introducing new ones. Analyzers may follow the lead of the prospectors, thereby avoiding their own marketing research expenses. The fourth typology, *reactors*, lack consistency in their choice of strategy and therefore tends to perform poorly (Miles & Snow, 1978).

Research has linked strategy typology to performance. Aragon-Sanchez & Sanchez-Marin (2005) found small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing industry and in the construction industry that used prospector orientation performed better than defenders. Also, this research found the prospector strategy type outperformed the analyzers. Desarbo, De Benedetto, Song & Sinha (2005) suggest that prospectors perform better in dynamic environments as they tend to search and compete for opportunities and use innovation to bring new products to the market quickly. Defenders tend to find a niche and maintain it rather than search for new opportunities. If environmental changes do not affect this niche, their performance would remain stable; however, defenders are not equipped with high research and development resources and processes to react if the need arises.

In an environment such as the Canadian hotel industry faced in 2006 the decrease in revenues would have put the hotels into a crises mode. The Upper Echelon (UE) theory proposes that there is a very strong relationship between executives and the performance of their organization (Carpenter, Geletkanycz & Sanders, 2004). The executive in the hotel industry is the general manager who directs the team and “holds the key executive position in the hotel industry” (Ladkin, 1999, p. 167). This research postulates that the particular strategy chosen by the general manager would have an impact on the hotel’s performance.

Performance in the hotel industry is measured by common financial metrics including occupancy which is a percentage calculated by dividing the number of rooms sold by the number of rooms available; average daily rate (ADR), calculated by dividing the revenue by the number of rooms sold, and revenue per available room (RevPAR), calculated by dividing the total revenue by the number of rooms available for sales. Revenue per available room, RevPAR is “often considered the most critical measure of operating performance and by definition encompasses an element of rate and rooms supply” (Enz, Canina & Walsh, 2001, p 27).

Gender

Men and women in managerial positions use different techniques and demonstrate different competencies as research indicates (Burgess, 2000; Powell, 1993; Schaap, Stedham and Yamamura, 2008; and Soehanovic et al, 2000). In Canada there is an absence of significant representation of women in management and the hospitality industry is one with a long established history of male dominance (Maxwell, 1997). According to Wood and Viehland (2000) this “pink-collar ghetto still exists” (p. 51) and especially in hotels over 500 rooms where only 2.6 percent of the hotel managers in the United States were identified as women (p. 51).

Women in management in Canada represent 36.4% as of 2006. Only 26.4% of senior management occupations are female and only 14.4% hold a position as a Financial Post Corporate Officer. The percentage of Financial Post 500 board seats held by women is a mere 11.2% (Catalyst, 2008). This low representation exists when the overall labor force is 46.9% female. In the accommodation industry in Canada, the employed labor force is even greater at 60.5% female, with 52% of accommodation managers being female (Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC), 2004). Gender statistics of hotel general managers in the hotel industry in Canada, specifically, were not found.

The topic of diversity and its benefits to organizations has been well researched. Catalyst is a leading research organization working to advance women in business and has examined the connection between gender diversity and the financial performance of the organization. Catalyst examined 353 Fortune 500 companies, and found that there is a connection and “The group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance” (Catalyst, 2008, p. 2). This performance was significant with Return of Equity at 35.1 percent higher and Total Return to Shareholders at 34.0 percent higher (p. 2).

There are more than just financial benefits in creating a more gender diverse workforce. The first of these is women’s increasing managerial presence. They hold 35.3% of total managerial positions but hold only 30.5% of the senior management occupations (Catalyst, 2008). They also have an advantage in education as they earned 61.8% of bachelor’s degrees, 51.8% of master’s degrees and 44.0% of doctorate degrees (Statistics Canada, 2008). The second benefit is related to the increasing labor shortage that is forecasted for the hospitality industry in Canada “...models indicate that net immigration must reach a total of 2.0 million between 2003 and 2013 – or about 200,000 per year on average – if there are to be enough people between the ages of 15 and 64 in 2013 to permit Canada to fulfill its employment potential” (CTHRC, 2004, p. 39). Women represent 46.9% of the total labor force so hiring women will create a diverse workforce and allow employers to tap into a large talent pool. This diverse workforce leads to a third benefit that directly impacts hotels. New product developments and overall product improvements that would relate to the growing female business traveler would create a competitive advantage. In 2000 the Canadian Travel Survey reported that women took over 5.8 million domestic business trips in Canada and they are more likely to extend their trip while traveling on business (Smith, Carmichael, 2006, p. 65). Product and service extensions could substantially increase the length of stay per business traveler and directly affect the financial performance of a hotel. Also, specialized packages and value added activities could be created for this growing female market.

Differences on the characteristics of women managers as compared to male managers have been researched and indicate that differences do exist. Females were rated higher on interpersonal behaviors than were males at the middle and executive levels (Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003) and women were found to be more oriented toward supporting and maintaining relationships than men (Hisrich and Brush, 1994). Rosnener (1995) found women also tend to be strong in idea generation and innovation and discovered three differences in women’s managerial styles compared to men. One, women encourage participation and share decision-making with others; two, women share information and power; and three,

the combined participation and sharing enhances self-worth in others and creates an interactive management style. Soehanovic, Zougaj, Krizoman and Bojanic-Glavica (2000) researched characteristics of women managers in hotels and found in order to be successful they demonstrated knowledge in these areas: (1) organizational knowledge 97.14%, (2) manner with people 91.43%, (3) management knowledge (77.14%), (4) knowledge of the economy (71.43%) ,(5) financial knowledge (54.29%).

The career paths of women are also different from men. Women tend to progress through careers with less moves and number of positions. In the hotel industry in Canada, it was found that women manage the majority of the smaller and lower star rated properties (Blayney & Blotnicky, 2010). In New Zealand and Australia, research on women in the hotel industry found barriers to promotion that included “long hours” culture, the old boy’s network, hiring practices and geographical mobility (Mooney & Ryan, 2008).

Which strategic typology will women chose most often? Will their focus on process and participation lead them to use the defender strategy as compared to the prospector strategy which entails searching for innovation and improvements? Does their career path, which is different from men, restrict their choices due to lack of experience with the more aggressive roles? Johansen (2007) found that women are more likely than men to use the defender or reactor strategy and men tend to use the prospector strategy. Further, Johansen (2007) found that women managers had more success with the prospector strategy when compared to male managers. This may be due to the fact that women are more interactive and use valuable input and advice rather than make decision on their own. Other studies have also found that men tend to be more concerned with positions of dominance and formal power and women like to use a more interactive style and are open to more feedback from colleagues and associates to find innovative ideas.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

With the continued increase of women management positions and the increased focus on diversity, this timely research examined the strategy typology employed by women managers compared to men during economic stressful times in the hotel industry in Canada. Based on the literature review addressing strategic typologies and gender differences in management styles, the following hypotheses were created:

H1: There will be statistically significant differences for the strategic typology as measured by the Miles and Snow strategy typology by gender.

H2: There will be statistically significant differences for Revenue per available room (RevPAR) based on the Miles and Snow strategy typology used.

H3: There will be statistically significant differences for Occupancy (Occ) based on the Miles and Snow strategy typology used.

H4: There will be statistically significant differences for Average Daily Rate (ADR) based on the Miles and Snow strategy typology used.

A survey was directed to accommodation general managers of Canadian hotel properties with 30 rooms or more using a distribution list compiled from the Hotel Association of Canada membership directory, provincial hotel associations, membership lists and corporate hotel groups. The survey included basic demographics and the previously validated Miles and Snow 11-item strategic typology scale developed by Conant, Mokwa, & Varadarajan (1990). The survey was posted on a web page and emails were distributed to the general managers containing a hyperlink to the survey. See Appendix for typology instrument.

The hotel industry in Canada consists of 6,581 lodging establishments (Hotel Association of Canada, 2004) of which 3,464 operate on a year round basis and contain at least 30 rooms. This criterion is used by KPMG LLP, the consulting company that collects statistics on the Canadian hotel industry for the Hotel Association of Canada. This same criterion was used for this research.

Data were analyzed using t-tests and analysis of variance to test the hypotheses. There were slight deviations from normality in the data, however, the assumption of homoscedasticity was not violated. Repeated attempts to transform the data to make it normally distributed across variables were unsuccessful. Given that analysis of variance is robust to slight differences in normality and variable transformations were not successful in creating normally distributed data, the decision was made to keep the variables in their original form.

RESULTS

The hotel associations and corporate hotel groups that agreed to participate and circulate the survey to their managers involved a total of 952 general managers. The responses totaled 184 completed surveys of which 183 were usable and gave a response rate of 19.2%.

The sample consisted of 102 male general managers (61.5%) and 66 female general manager (38.5%). One respondent did not disclose their gender. Most were graduates of a two-year college program (39.7%), or university undergraduate degree (37.2%). Sixteen percent had completed a high school diploma, while 3.8% had postgraduate university degrees. Three percent had other forms of post secondary training. The average age was 43.9 years and they had been in management positions for an average of 16 years of in the position of general manager for an average of 6.9 years.

Most general managers were responsible for smaller properties which made up over half of the sample. Properties ranged from 30 to upwards of 475 rooms. Most properties were located in downtown areas, followed by suburban locations. Most employed between 11 and 300 staff members.

The responses were stratified according to the strategy typology. The association of gender with strategic typology was tested using t-tests. The association between the strategic typology and each of the performance measures (RevPAR, ADR, Occ) were measured using One-Way Analysis of Variance. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the defender and analyzer strategy typologies. Males had higher average analyzer typology ratings and females had higher defender typology ratings. However, the analysis also revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between typology strategies and any of the performance measures: RevPAR, Occ, or ADR. The results are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 was confirmed in this research as there were significant statistical differences found on strategic typology according to gender. Men were found to use the analyzer strategic typology and women used the defender approach. Analyzers share the traits of both the defender and the prospector and will defend a limited range of products within the niche market. Analyzers will also initiate new product or market development but this would take time as most organizations do not have the resources to do both. Analyzers will come later to the market with a product that is already proven by the prospectors. The defender strategy used by the female general managers could have been the reaction to a decrease in resources that came about from the restricted revenue streams caused by environmental elements. They could have been attempting to decrease risk in an extremely unpredictable marketplace and protect their current customer base. This would lead them to use more of a defender strategy.

Table 1: Differences in Strategic Typology Rating by Gender

Variable	Number		Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value (df)
Analyzer	Male	102	3.10	1.93	1.959 (165)**
	Female	66	2.92	2.11	
Prospector	Male	101	3.59	1.48	0.549 (166)
	Female	66	3.11	1.70	
Defender	Male	102	2.44	1.45	-2.314 (110.5)*
	Female	66	3.10	1.96	
Reactor	Male	102	1.87	1.45	-0.028 (143.9)
	Female	66	1.88	1.38	

*T-test was used for the analysis. This table shows the differences in the strategic typology rating according to gender. The first column shows the typology category; the second and third column show the number of men and women responding; the fourth column shows the average rating for each gender by typology; the fifth shows the standard deviation for each gender by typology; the sixth column shows the t value. *Significant at the .10-level ** Significant at the .05-level. Males had a higher average analyzer typology rating and females had a higher defender typology rating.*

Table 2: Differences in Performance Measures by Strategic Typology

Strategic Typology x RevPAR	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-Ratio (df)
Analyzer	52	\$75.05	\$23.65	0.716 (3/140)*
Prospector	44	83.06	33.05	
Defender	28	76.41	30.51	
Reactor	20	80.66	26.45	
Total	144	78.54	28.44	
Strategic Typology x ADR				
Analyzer	56	\$108.82	\$25.94	1.023 (3/149)*
Prospector	46	119.97	40.86	
Defender	28	110.36	37.36	
Reactor	23	112.59	26.87	
Total	153	113.02	33.36	
Strategic Typology x OCC				
Analyzer	60	67.2%	11.4%	0.679(3/156)*
Prospector	46	68.5	11.3	
Defender	30	68.3	10.8	
Reactor	24	71.2	13.2	
Total	160	68.4	11.5	

*Analysis of variance was used. The first column shows the strategic typology category; the second column shows the number of respondents per category; the third column shows the average revenue per available room. This table indicates the differences in performance by strategic typology and shows there are no statistically significant differences for occupancy (OCC), average daily rate (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPAR) based on the Miles and Snow typology. *Significance > .10. Not statistically significant.*

The finding in this research of women tending to use the defender strategy agrees with those of Johansen (2007). The focus on process and participation leads them to use the defender strategy. However, the same research also indicated men tend to use the prospector strategy whereas the findings of this research found them using the analyzer strategy. Johansen (2007) also found that if women use the prospector strategy, they are more successful. The reasons are that women tend to be more interactive in their management styles and this allows them to collect more ideas from their colleagues and associates where as men tend to act on their own ideas. The reason for men using the analyzer strategy in this research may be explained by the manager’s perception of the need to protect the current business base but at the same time, create some new products to find a competitive advantage in the tough marketplace. Current research on hotels in the United States was conducted from December 2009 to February 2010, a time of the Great Recession and found the number one strategy was discounting, followed by marketing initiatives, obscuring room rates and cutting costs. Rate obscuring tactics usually involved assembling value-added packages (Kimes, 2010). These tactics would fit under the strategic typology of analyzer as both new products and cost cutting show a blend of the defender and prospector strategic typologies.

Hypothesis 2, 3, and 4 were not confirmed in this research as no significant differences were found between the strategic typology and the performance as measured by revenue per available room, occupancy or average daily rate. This does not follow the theory in which “prospecting is likely to be

advantageous in a turbulent or unpredictable environment because this strategy involves external scanning for new opportunities and flexible structures and processes that facilitate responses to constantly changing circumstances” (Meier et al, 2010, p. 165). Also, Miles and Snow (1978) original theory posited that any of the three strategic typologies of defender, prospector or analyzer would perform well as they tend to be a more stable type than the reactor. The reactor’s frequent inconsistent ability to adapt to the environment would long term lead to lower performance compared to the other three strategies.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this paper was to explore if male or female general managers used different managerial strategies during stressful times in the hotel industry in Canada. Secondary goals were to explore whether different management strategies impacted hotel performance measures. A survey was conducted of 183 hotel managers across Canada. Results of *t*-tests revealed that male managers were more likely to use analyzer strategies than female managers and female managers were more likely to use defender strategies. There were no statistically significant differences in the use of prospector or reactor strategies by gender. Analysis of variance showed that there were no statistically significant impacts on performance measures by management strategy as measured by hotel occupancy, average daily rate and revenue per available room.

Limitations of this study include a self-rating process of strategic typology and the respondents were limited to the Canadian market. Also, hotels of only 30 rooms or greater were included. A broader sample may reveal significant links between performance measures and management strategies. Larger hotels in Canada are dominated by corporate chains and in these properties general managers may not have the freedom to choose their strategies and this may impact the lack of significant relationship between strategic typology and performance.

Further research is required to explore the concept of women who use the prospector strategy and if it does correlate to better performance. As women have barriers in their careers to reach executive positions, do they also have barriers that lead them to use the defender strategy instead of the prospector strategy which is more aggressive in nature? There is a need to understand the framework of interactions of environmental factors, gender and strategy and the impact on performance.

APPENDIX Strategic Typology Instrument

Directions: Please read the following eleven questions carefully. For each one, select the one answer that best describes your organization and circle the letter for that answer.

1. In comparison to our competitors, the product/services which we provide to our customers are best characterized as:
 - a. Products/services, which are more innovative, continually changing and broader in nature throughout the organization and marketplace.
 - b. Product/services, which are fairly stable in certain departments and markets while innovative in other departments and markets.
 - c. Products/services, which are well focused, relatively stable and consistently defined throughout the organization and marketplace.
 - d. Products/services, which are in a state of transition, and largely based on responding to opportunities or threats from the marketplace or environment.

2. In contrast to our competitors, our organization has an image in the marketplace as a company which:
 - a. Offers fewer, selective products/services, which are high in quality.
 - b. Adopts new ideas and innovations, but only after careful analysis.
 - c. Reacts to opportunities or threats in the marketplace to maintain or enhance our position.
 - d. Has a reputation for being innovative and creative.

3. The amount of time my company spends on monitoring changes and trends in the marketplace can best be described as:
 - a. Lengthy: We are continuously monitoring the marketplace.
 - b. Minimal: We really don’t spend much time monitoring the marketplace.
 - c. Average: We spend a reasonable amount of time monitoring the marketplace.

- d. Sporadic: We sometimes spend a great deal of time and at other times spend little time monitoring the marketplace.
4. In comparison to our competitors, the increases or losses in demand which we have experienced are due most probably to:
 - a. Our practice of concentrating on more fully developing those markets, which we currently serve.
 - b. Our practice of responding to the pressures of the marketplace by taking few risks.
 - c. Our practice of aggressively entering into new markets with new types of product/service offerings.
 - d. Our practice of assertively penetrating more deeply into markets we currently serve, while adopting new products/services only after a very careful review of their potential.
5. One of the most important goals in my company, in comparison to our competitors, is our dedication and commitment to:
 - a. Keep costs under control.
 - b. Analyze our costs and revenue carefully, to keep costs under control and to selectively generate new products/services or enter new markets.
 - c. Insure that the people, resources and equipment required to develop new products/services and new markets are available and accessible.
 - d. Make sure that we guard against critical threats by taking whatever action is necessary.
6. In contrast to our competitors, the competencies (skills) which our managerial employees possess can best be characterized as:
 - a. Analytical: Their skills enable them to both identify trends and then develop new products/services offerings or markets.
 - b. Specialized: Their skills are concentrated into one, or a few, specific areas.
 - c. Broad and entrepreneurial: Their skills are diverse, flexible and enable change to be created.
 - d. Fluid: Their skills are related to the near-term demands of the marketplace.
7. The one thing that protects our organization from our competitors is that we:
 - a. Are able to carefully analyze emerging trends and adopt only those, which have proven potential.
 - b. Are able to do a limited number of things exceptionally well.
 - c. Are able to respond to trends even though they may possess only moderate potential as they arise.
 - d. Are able to consistently develop new products/services and new markets.
8. More so than many of our competitors, our management staff tends to concentrate on:
 - a. Maintaining a secure financial position through cost and quality control measures.
 - b. Analyzing opportunities in the marketplace and selecting only those opportunities with proven potential while protecting a secure financial position.
 - c. Activities or business functions, which most need attention given the opportunities or problems we currently confront.
 - d. Developing new products/services and expanding into new markets or market segments.
9. In contrast to many of our competitors, our organization prepares for the future by:
 - a. Identifying the best possible solutions to those problems or challenges which require immediate attention.
 - b. Identifying trends and opportunities in the marketplace, which can result in the creation of product/service offerings which are new to the industry or which reach new markets.
 - c. Identifying those problems, which, if solved, will maintain and then improve our current product/service offerings and market position.
 - d. Identifying those trends in the industry, which our competitors have proven possess long-term potential while also solving problems related to our current product/service offerings and our current customers' needs.
10. In comparison to our competitors, the structure of our organization is:
 - a. Functional in nature (i.e., organized by department – marketing, accounting, personnel, etc.)
 - b. Product/service or market oriented (i.e., individual units/departments have marketing or accounting responsibilities)
 - c. Primarily functional (departmental) in nature; however, a product/service or market oriented structure does exist in newer or larger product/service offering areas.
 - d. Continually changing to enable us to meet opportunities and solve problems as they arise.
11. Unlike many other similar companies, the procedures our organization uses to evaluate our performance are best described as:
 - a. Decentralized and participatory encouraging many organizational members to be involved.
 - b. Heavily oriented toward those reporting requirements, which demand immediate attention.
 - c. Highly centralized and primarily the responsibility of senior management.
 - d. Centralized in more established product/service area and more participatory in newer product/service areas.

Each of the multiple choice answers were linked to one of the four typologies (Prospector, Defender, Analyzer, Reactor). The typology scores were equal to the sum of the responses for each. For a complete discussion of the instrument refer to Conant, Mokwa & Varadarajan (1990) "Strategic types, distinctive marketing competencies and organizational performance: A multiple measures-based study". *Strategic Management Journal*, vol. 11(5): p. 749-778.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Candace Blayney received her PhD in Business Administration with Specialization in Human Resource Management from Northcentral University, Arizona. Candace's research interests lie in the areas of the hotel industry and human resources and she has ten years experience with an international hotel company at the executive level. She is currently Associate Professor at the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia.

Dr. Karen Blotnicky is Associate Professor in the Department of Business and Tourism at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She specializes in marketing and is also President of TMC, The Marketing Clinic, a full service marketing research and consulting firm. She has worked in applied research for over 25 years. Her current research interests include the role of marketing orientation and its impact on success for both private enterprise and non-profit organizations.