

JOURNAL OF SMALL BUSINESS
STRATEGY

From the Editor

In general, the *Journal of Small Business Strategy* does not do theme issues. We prefer to have a variety of topics treated in each issue. However, this issue, rather coincidentally, addressed two major themes. The first deals with small business environments and strategies; the second treats gender and racial issues.

Beginning the strategy/environment group, Froelich looks at what communities should do to attract today's workforce. Using a multi-state sample, Froelich found what some researchers suggested fifty years ago – that it is the job that attracts and keeps workers, rather than the ambiance of communities. These findings are somewhat provocative, however, as many communities strive to build a community environment that attracts knowledge workers.

Continuing the outward focus, Walters and colleagues studied environmental scanning emphases compared with strategic logic. Wright et al looked at product innovation strategies in different environments. And O'Regan and colleagues looked at how leadership styles, strategic orientation, and performance are related.

The second group of articles treated gender and racial issues. The first of these, by Sondfield and Lussier studied family-owned businesses and looked at hypothesized differences between predominantly male-owned versus female-owned firms. But they found few differences. Lee and Denslow made no attempt to differentiate between male- and female-owned businesses but rather looked at women-owned firms to consider the problems they encounter in different stages of their life-cycle. Their conclusions were that problems encountered do, indeed, change as a business passes through different growth stages. In fact, their findings for women-owned firms are very much what we would expect from firms in general regardless of gender. These two articles together suggest that problems of small to medium-sized businesses are really a function of the business, itself, and its life-cycle stage, rather than being a function of gender.

The remaining article did find differences between male/female and minority/Caucasian business owners in the use of computer technology. Given the results found in the above articles, the Coleman article is a perfect set-up for a longitudinal study since the government-collected data is gathered only every five years. Hence, it will be interesting to see if these differences are still as significant when the new data set comes out or whether even the use of computer technology will go the way of other small business problems and vary for reasons other than gender/racial reasons.

We think you will enjoy the seven articles in this issue. And we encourage you to send us your own research that relates to small businesses and their efforts to develop successful strategies.

Fred L. Fry
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