

## Evaluating the extend of marketing plan in Nigerian business organization

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**Abstract** - This study assessed the extent to which Nigerian firms planed their marketing programmes and also the extent of formalization of marking planning. It was found that some forms of planning were in operation among many firms. However, only one-third of the firms of studied adopted a comprehensive, formalized, approach, and this was found to be a function of size of operation – large firms tended to do so. We further found that nearly half of the firms prepared forecasts and budgets in lieu of marketing plans, and this was attributed to the intellectual rigour involved in marketing planning. It has been recommended, among other measures that, experienced professionals be always appointed to head the marketing function in business organizations. The population for this study consisted of firms in Lagos employing 50 or more persons engaged in manufacturing or distributive trade. Only such firms listed in the 1986 edition of the Lagos state industrial Directory were included. For the purpose of this study, we classified the firms into categories, A, B, C, as small categories, D and E as medium, and categories F, G, H and I, as large. This implies that we focused attention on categories D to I while ignoring categories A to C. Our concentration on medium-large firms is borne out of our conviction that their size of operations may necessitate the need for elaborate planning.

**Keywords:** Nigerian firms, marketing programmes, experienced professionals, head the marketing function

### 1. Introduction

The prime function of any business enterprise is to convert resources found in nature into want-satisfying goods and/or services desired by customers. Perhaps, it is on this premise that Drucker (1966) described business as a resource converter whose purpose is to create a customer. However, an organization will not survive and prosper if it only creates a customer on one-off basis. Earning such loyalty from customers in the face of competition and rapid environmental changes implies that the organization satisfies customer's needs more effectively than its rivals. Satisfying customers more than competition is not a chance occurrence. Rather, the organization has to ascertain what would satisfy its customers and then determine the best way to deliver the desired satisfactions while satisfying other company goals. The process of determining how best to attain preconceived goals is planning. Planning is thus a rational approach to accomplishing an objective. As Koontz and O'Donnell (1972) observed.

Planning is decided in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and who is to do it. Planning bridges the gap from where we are to where we want to be. It makes it possible to for things to occur which would not otherwise happen.

If planning is important for the enterprise to achieve its goals, it is no less so for the functional units or departments within it. Each functional arm of business (marketing, production, finance, and

personnel) has sub-goals, that sum up to the total enterprise goal. To achieve these goals, planning is imperative. Within the marketing function, planning, whether long or short-range, is the process of creating a marketing plan which is a written statement that specifies a systematic and integrated programme by which an organization can match its resources with its opportunities (Blois & Octon, n.d.). Planning is basic to the marketing concept which requires that it be based on research and designed to achieve goals of customer satisfaction and profitability. Kotler (1980s) suggests that formal planning elicits disciplined thinking and reduces management by crisis and expediency to a minimum.

No organization will thrive simply through reacting to each new development as it occurs. Taking ad hoc initiatives will only result in inconsistent actions and uncontrolled expenditures, leaving the organization vulnerable to more forward planning competitors (p.24).

Most importantly, marketing planning furnishes the basis for control (Hartley, 1979). Obviously, there would be nothing to control if there was no plan given the importance of marketing planning to business success, it is the purpose of this study to assess the extent to which Nigerian firms avail themselves of its use.

Specifically, this study has sought to provide answers to the following questions: (1) To what extent do Nigerian firms plan their marketing programs? (2) To what extent is the marketing planning process formalized? (3) Is there any relationship between company size and the extent of marketing planning formalization? (4) What are the major obstacles to successful marketing planning in Nigeria? The only hypothesis in the study sought to test whether there was a significant relationship between them.

### **1.2 Company size and the extent of formal marketing planning**

The purpose of this study was to probe the extent to which Nigerian firms adopt marketing planning, using a sample of firms operating in Port Harcourt metropolis as a case study. It is hoped that the outcome of this study will indicate to what extent Nigerian firms avail themselves of the benefits of marketing planning. If they are found to have been doing well in terms of attainment of corporate and other objectives without planning, it would become obvious that they could even do better with the aid of planning. Indeed, no marketing operation is ever so good that it cannot be improved. Even the best can be better (Schuchman, 1959).

If, on the other hand, a planning culture is found to exist in Nigerian firms, then it needs to be sustained. In the same vein, if the study reveals that the firms have been planning but without much to show for it in terms of attainment of goals, then they could be persuaded to take a hard look at their planning apparatus. To be sure planning is not a panacea for business failure, but it reduces its incidence.

The concept of planning has received extensive treatment in the literature. This is by no means surprising. Virtually every human activity-ranging from complex issues like the execution of a major war, a government nationwide enlightenment campaign, the introduction of a new product, to the less complex and more mundane issues of our day-to-day lives requires some planning. Two broad types of planning may be identified and the classification is based on the time horizon covered by a plan-long-range planning and short-range planning (Koont & O' Donnell, 1976; Kotler, 1980a). Short range planning, usually covering one year or less, is done at the operational level by lower and middle-echelon executives, and is used to establish special goals and plans for the organization and its specific units (Stanton, 1975). On the other hand, long-range (strategic or corporate) planning is generally formulated by top management to establish basic objectives and strategy to guide future company efforts (Rosenberg, 1977).

Its horizon spans two to five years or more and it provides the framework within which short-term planning is done. In fact, successive short-range plans are the detailed versions of the long-range plan. Marketing planning consists of a sequence of activities which begins with a diagnosis. At this point, management makes a thorough analysis of the company's existing situation: its markets, its competition, the product, the distribution channels, and the promotional programmes. With this background, management sets its goals which must be realistic, specific, and mutually consistent. Next, the planning executive examines alternative strategies and selects the ones which, when

implemented by an effective marketing mix will offer the best potential for achieving the goals. As Stanton (1975, p. 622). Points out, formal marketing planning is one of the most effective tools for risk reduction.

The dynamic nature of our economy, the growing fierceness of competition, and the shrinking profit margins are forcing management to focus more attention on marketing planning. Careful, formal planning is essential for maximizing the chances of success.

Although the author was describing the American business environment, the current business scene in Nigeria largely fits into the one described by him. Thus, to survive the volatile business environment now experienced in Nigeria, business organizations must adopt careful marketing planning if they would not find themselves reacting hastily to one unexpected situation after another.

Kotler (1980a, 1980b) opines that strategic planning is predicated on two concepts: market evolutionary development marked by changing customer's needs, technologies, competitors, channels, and laws. The firm should, therefore, be looking out of a 'strategic window' watching these changes and assessing the requirements for continued success in each market (Abel, 1978). The fit between the success requirements of a market and the firm's competence is ephemeral; so, to maintain the steady state', the balancing act has to be a continuous process (Ansoff, 1965).

It is evident, however, that much work has done on the broad subject of corporate planning in the UK and USA. For example, Thune and House (1970), as reported in Baker (1983) compared the performance of eighteen matched pairs of medium-large firms in American food, steel, drug, machinery, petroleum and chemical industries; pairs consisted of a firm that used strategic planning and one that did not. Using such performance criteria as earning per share, return on investment, and sales, it found that the firms that adopted strategic planning outperformed. One of the studies most relevant to the current one was conducted by Stack (1974). In the study which turned out to be an indictment of American firms, he found that only about 10 percent of them, including most large most large ones, had written plans.

In a more recent study in the UK, Greenley (1982) found that only 56 percent of 80 respondent companies prepared a marketing plan, with only 14 percent drawing up a plan, which is considered to be both comprehensive and adequate. All companies in the study set sales objectives, but other areas of marketing objectives were neglected by many firms. Further, the selling function received greater emphasis in the marketing strategy; control of the plan was almost restricted to product sales and profit, while many firms did not attempt to control expenditure on the individual marketing functions in view that these studies were conducted outside Nigeria, we cannot conclude that the results would necessarily apply to our business scene, since there may be differences in business environment and culture. Judging from the sparse literature available, it appears very little empirical work has been done in the area of marketing planning in Nigeria.

The only notable example of such study was that completed by Fubara (1986) In which he investigated to what extent marketing planning had been employed or can be employed in public enterprises in the developing countries, using selected samples of public enterprises (PEs) operating in Nigeria as a case study. Based on responses obtained from 50 public enterprises, Fubara found that from 70 per cent of the PEs said they had formal planning which of course included marketing planning. However, further investigation to determine the periodicities of the plans and plan reviews, revealed that the 35 public enterprises which claimed to have formal planning g actually, too. Further research showed that what was actually available were annual plans which were reviewed annually, too. Further research showed that what was actually available were annual budgets.

The difference between Fubara's (1986) study and the current one is that while his study was centered on public enterprise, ours is based on private enterprises. As Sachse has observed, the business purpose of a given public enterprises is expressed normally in terms of public welfare public and social interest, or in similar abstractions (Okwandu, n.d). The objectives of private enterprises are mainly economic. This serves as our point of departure, since the main focus of this study is to assess the extent of marketing planning in Nigeria firms using selected of private firms in Port Harcourt metropolis.

## 2. Method

The population for this study consisted of firms in Lagos employing 50 or more persons engaged in manufacturing or distributive trade. Only such firms listed in the 1986 edition of the Lagos state industrial Directory were included. For the purpose of this study, we classified the firms into categories, A, B, C, as small categories, D and E as medium, and categories F, G, H and I, as large. This implies that we focused attention on categories D to I while ignoring categories A to C. Our concentration on medium-large firms is borne out of our conviction that their size of operations may necessitate the need for elaborate planning. Based on our population definition a total of 102 qualified for inclusion in the study. After due consideration of what was thought reasonably possible to achieve, given our time and resource constraints we judgmentally decided that a sample made up of 75 per cent of our population, if properly selected, would be representative enough to enable us draw meaningful and valid inferences about the total population.

For the same reason, we limited the survey to Lagos as we believe that the conclusions arrived at in this study will not likely change much if the geographic spread of the companies is enlarged. Most companies operating in Nigeria either have their headquarters or branches in Lagos though 75 per cent of 102 is 76.5, we decided to use 75 which we considered more convenient to work with. Having determined the number of firms that fell into each category, we proceeded to find what percentage of the population was made up by each category. We then applied this percentage to 75 to determine how many of each category should be included in the sample. Using the random sampling technique, we selected 43 firms from the manufacturing firms group and 32 from the distributive trade group, thus bringing the total participating firms to 75 (Olken & Rotem, 1995).

### 2.1 Research Instrument

The questionnaire method was adopted for this study. This was supplemented by personal interviews (Lerner et al., 2001). The questionnaire was pretested with seven marketing executives with companies operating in Port Harcourt. They made some useful suggestions which improved the quality of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section one centred on the profile of respondents while section two dealt on the nature of plans drawn up in respondent firms, and the extent of formal marketing planning in practice in these firms. Section three dwelt on marketing objectives and strategy, while section four was on marketing control. Responses were received from 33 out of projected 75 firms, representing a response rate of 44 percent.

The data obtained were organized, processed and presented, using simple percentages, frequency and classification tables (Reynolds, 1977). The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) technique was used, where necessary, to test the association between two variables. The contingency coefficient (C) was further used to determine the degree of such associations. No *a priori* hypotheses were proposed as the grounded theory approach was used (Goodman, 1970). In the next part of this paper, we present an empirical evidence bearing on the assessment of marketing planning in Nigeria firms, using some selected firms in Port Harcourt metropolis as a case study, it was also intended to assess extent of formalization of the process and identify the major obstacles to successful marketing planning in Nigeria.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Results: Background of Respondents

Section one of the questionnaires was centered on respondents' profile. Table shows the distribution of respondents by type of business. The manufacturing sector accounts for 63.6 percent (or 12 firms) were from the distributive, table sector. Tables 2 and 3 show the distribution of respondents by size as measured by number employees and size of annual sales turnover, respectively. The employment size code adopted here is from the 1986 Rivers State Industrial Directory. By this categorization, firms with employment size A to C have less than 50 employees. Similarly, firms in categories D and E have 50 to 99, and 100 to 199 employees, respectively.

Firms in category F employ 200 to 499, while categories G and H. employ 500 to 999 and 1000 to 1999, respectively. Finally, firms in category 'I' employ 2000 and above. For the purpose of this study, firms in category A to C are regarded as small and were excluded from this study. Firms in

categories D and E are regarded as medium size while those in categories F to I are classified as large. Table 2 indicates that 60.6 percent of respondents are medium-sized while 39.4 percent are large firms. However, Table 3, which shows the distribution of respondents by sales turnover size, tilts the scale in favour of the large firms. Thus, 15.1 percent of the firms we classified as medium by virtue of employment size turned out to be large, thereby confirming our initial fears that employment size alone was not a reliable index for measuring company size.

Table 1 Distribution Of Population And Respondents By Type Of Business

Type of Business	POP. No	Size %	Sample Size	No. %	Responses No.	%
Manufacturing	58	56.9	43	57.3	21	63.6
Distribution	44	43.1	32	42.7	12	36.4
Total	102	100.0	75	100.0	33	100.0

Table 2 Distribution Respondents By Size. (Number Of Employees)

Employee Size	Size Code	Number	Percentage
Under 50	A - C	-	-
50 - 99	D	11	33.3)
100 - 199	E	9	27.3)
200 - 499	F	5	15.2)
500 - 999	G	7	21.2)
1000 - 1999	H	1	3.0
Over 2000	I	-	-
Total		33	100.00

Source: Survey Data

Table 3 Distribution Of Respondents By Size (Sales Turnover)

Sales turn over range (Nm)	Number	Number
Under 1.0	6	18.2)
1.0 - 5.0	5	15.2)
5.1 - 10.0	4	12.1
10.1 - 20.0	13	39.4)
Over - 20.0	5	15.2)
Total	33	100.00

Difference from 100 due to rounding errors

Source: Survey Data

Table 4 below shows the distribution of respondents by job title of the marketing or sales chief expectative wherever each applies.

Table 4 Job Title Of Marketing/Sales Chief Executive In Respondent Companies

Job Title	Number	Percentage
Sales Manager	12	36.4
Marketing Manager	8	24.2
Operations Manager	2	6.1
Commercial Manager	3	9.1
General Gum-Sales Manger	3	9.1
Business Manager	5	15.2
Total	33	100.1

Source: Survey Data

The table indicates that 36.4 percent of respondent firms have persons designated as sales manager heading their marketing or sales function. In all such situation, the position of marketing manager did not exist. Marketing Manager was the next most frequently used job title (24.2) percent). It is followed by Business Manager which notched up 15.2 percent. Other titles in use included General-Cum-Sale Manager (9.1 percent, and Operations Manager (6.1 percent)



### 3.2 Planning Practices of Respondent Firms

Respondents were asked whether their firms usually drew plans for their operations. Table 5 indicates that all firms involved in the study plan their business operations, but only 30 firms (90.9 percent) do so always, while three (9.1 percent) plan occasionally.

Table 5 Whether Firms Draw Up Operational Plans

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	30	90.9
No	-	-
Sometime	3	9.0

Source: Survey Data 2018

Respondents were further asked whether or not they prepare corporate or marketing plan. The results which are summarized in table 6 show that 69.7 percent prepare corporate plan while 30.7 percent do not.

Table 6 Business Plan

Plan Prepared	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Business or corporate plan	69.7	30.3	100.00
Marketing Plan	51.5	48.5	100.00

Source: Survey Data 2018

Also, 51.5 percent of respondents prepare marketing plans while 48.5 percent do not. What is obvious from the table is that while all the respondent firms prepare plans, a good number of them prepare one type of plan and not the other, while the rest prepare both probably due to reasons not unconnected with their individual operating circumstances.

Respondents were further asked whether they prepare long-range marketing plan only, annually marketing plan only, or both. The results as summarized in table 7 show that while 6.1 percent prepare long-range plan only 30.3 percent prepare annual marketing plan only and 63.6 percent prepare both long-range and annual marketing plans.

Table 7 Type Of Marketing Plan Prepared By Correspondent Companies

Type of Plan	Number	Percentage
Long-range Marketing	2	6.1
Annual marketing plan only	10	30.3
Both long-range and annual marketing plan	21	63.6

Source: Survey Data 2018

On whether these plans are usually written down, the responses summarized in table 8 were elicited, the table shows that all the firms write down their marketing plans, with 78.8 percent doing so all the time and 21.2 percent only occasionally. This implies that for 21.2 percent of respondents, the marketing plan and objectives are at times left in the heads of the marketing chief executive and his key personnel.

Table 8 Respondent As To Whether Plans Are Usually Written Down

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	26	78.8
No	-	-
Sometime	7	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Survey Data

### 3.3 Extent of Formal Marketing Planning In Nigerian Firms

The results as summarize in table 9 indicate that while all the firms engage in some form of marketing planning, 45.5 percent do more than forecasting expected sales selecting a target sales figure, and preparing a budget for its attainment. On the other hand, 21.2 per cent or respondents prepare annual marketing plans only, while 33.3 per cent develop detailed annual marketing plans and careful long-term plans that are updated some of those who claimed to be doing both long and short range planning merely engage in forecasting and budgeting.

Table 9 Distribution Of Respondents By Extent Of Formal Marketing Planning

Extent of Marketing Planning	Number	Percentage
Little or No formal Planning sales forecast and budget only Annual marketing plan	15	45.5
Comprehensive marketing plan	7	21.2
	11	33.3

Source: Survey Data 2018

### 3.4 Relationship Between Company Size and Extent of Marketing Planning Formation

In order to check if there is any relationship between extent of marketing planning and company size, we decided to cross-tabulate extent of formal marketing planning and company size as measured y sales volume. The results are shown in Table 10a.

Table 10a Extent Of Formal Marketing Planning And Company Size

Extent of marketing planning	Size (Sales (Turnover))		
	Under N10.0m medium	N10.m & above Large	Total
Little or No formal planning sales forecast and budget only Annual marketing plan comprehensive marketing plan	0	0	0
	9	5	14
	4	4	8
	2	9	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>

Source: Survey Data 2018

Since we are dealing with qualitative data (extent of marketing planning and company size), the test of relationship or dependency between the two variables requires the use of the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) technique (Freud and Williams, 1979). However, since some of the cells in the table will have expected frequencies of less than 5, the resulting chi-square value is likely to be exaggerated (Lapin, 1978). As suggested by merging some rows to arrive at a 2 x 2 contingency table shown as Table 10b.

Table 10b Extent Of Formal Marketing Plan And Company Size (Based On Two Major Responses)

Extent of marketing Planning	Size (Sales (Turnover))		
	Medium	Large	Total
Incomplete formal planning	13 (10)	9 (12)	<b>22</b>
Complete formal planning	2 (5)	9 (6)	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>

Source: Adapted from Table 10a

We proceeded to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between company size and extent of marketing planning formalization. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) calculation shows that the result is significant at 0.05 significant level ( $\chi^2=4.95$ ,  $df=1$ ;  $\chi^2_{0.05}=3.84$ ) and that there is a relationship between size and extent of formal marketing planning. On the basis of the value of the

contingency coefficient (C) of 0.36 obtained, we might be equally inclined to infer that there is a significant, though not particularly strong, relationship or correlation between extent of formal marketing planning and company size, with the larger firms doing more formal marketing planning than the smaller ones. However, Spiegel (1972) has suggested that if the number of rows and columns of a contingency table equal to k, the maximum value of C is given by

$$\sqrt{(k-1)/k}$$

In our present case with a 2 x 2 table, the maximum value of C is

$$\sqrt{\frac{2-1}{2}} \text{ or } 0.707.$$

It is on the basis of this fact that one might risk drawing the conclusion that is a fairly good correlation between extent of formal marketing planning and company size, since 0.36 is at least half of 0.707 (in fact it is 50.9 per cent of 0.707).

### 3.5 Obstacle to Successful Marketing Planning In Nigerian Firms

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate the major obstacles to successful marketing plan in their firms. The results are shown in table 11. The present state of the economy was mentioned by 79 percent of respondent as the most daunting obstacles. Allied to this factor is frequent changes in government policy which was mentioned by 48 percent of respondents. The next most frequently mentioned obstacle is supply and production bottle-necks. These bottlenecks probably have to do with the state of the economy with the attendant problems of obtaining foreign exchange for the purchase of raw materials and spare parts. Shortage of skilled personnel to carry out marketing planning, and competitive activity, are also mentioned by 36 percent and 27 percent of respondents, respectively, as problems militating against successful marketing planning.

Table 11 Percentage Distribution Of Respondents By Declared Obstacles To Marketing Planning

Obstacle	% of Firms
Frequency changes in government policy	48
State of economy	75
Shortage of skilled personnel	36
Inadequacy of funds	6
Non-availability of data for planning	21
Accountants-dominated management	6
Competitive activity	27
Supply/production bottlenecks	64
Poor inter-functional coordination	6
Infrastructural bottlenecks	6
Bureaucratic bottlenecks	12
Reward based on current goal attainment	15

Source: Survey Data 2018

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions appear to be valid in this time.

### 4.1 Extent of Marketing Programmes Planning In Nigerian Firms

All the firms involved in the study engage in some form of marketing planning, but only a few conform to the theoretical framework documented in many texts. Perhaps, this gap between theory and practice is due to some contextual issues involved in marketing planning which the books fail to highlight. For example, while the literature is awash with why marketing planning is important, it is often silent on when, how often, by whom and how it should be done. Similarly, the literature is often not quite explicit on whether marketing planning should be different in a small versus a large company, in a diversified versus an undiversified company, and in a domestic versus an international company. Neither is the role of the Chief Executive and planning staff well specified.

In a few cases, top management and planning staff usurp the role of line managers in marketing plan preparation, and there is a pervasive preoccupation, with profit as primary and



secondary objectives that borders on an obsession. Average use of marketing strategy was less than half and the thrust of the marketing mix is on personal selling because of the desire to maximize profits. It is clear from the outcome to the study that while virtually all the firms engage in some form of marketing planning, a large number of them (45.5 percent) do no more than forecasting expected sales, selecting a target sales figure and preparing a budget for its attainment. Only a quarter of the firms surveyed develop detailed annual marketing plans and careful long-term plans that are updated annually.

Overall use of marketing control methods was less than satisfactory with sales analysis being the most popular.

#### **4.2 Extent of Formalization of Marketing Planning Process**

While all the firms in the study plan their marketing programmes, about one-fifth do not always write down their plans, while another one-third do not have a yearly time-table for marketing planning. Only about one-third of firms in the study produce anything approximating an integrated, coordinated, and internally consistent plan for their marketing activities. Perhaps, because planning is intellectually demanding and difficult, about half of the firms prepare sales forecasts and budgets in lieu of marketing plans. Writing down figures in the form of budgets and forecasts is fairly easy; but very often they bear little relationship with the real opportunities and problems in the market place, and how they can be exploited to advantage.

As McDonald (1982) has argued, finding the right words to describe the logic of marketing objectives and strategies is infinitely more difficult than writing numbers on a piece of paper and leaving the strategies implicit. A marketing planning system that stops at forecasting and budgeting leaves managers with a parochial and short-term view of the business, which does not augur well for the future. The extent of formal marketing planning was found to be a function of size; the larger the size of the operation, the more formal marketing planning in practice. This finding is consistent with the results of similar studies in the UK by Cranfield School of Management (McDonald, 1984; Greenley, 1982). It is possible that large firms may have excelled in this direction as a result of larger resource base and consequently easier access to superior manpower. However, while conceding that formalized marketing planning sharpens the rationality of managers and adds greater realism to their goals, it is instructive to note as McDonald (1982) has argued, that successful marketing planning is a function of the process itself and how it is managed, rather than of the degree of formalization by means of written procedures.

#### **4.3 Major Obstacles To Successful Marketing Planning In Nigerian Firms**

Obstacles identified are classified into endogenous and exogenous problems. In the exogenous group are economy-wide issues, prominent among which are the present state of the economy and frequent changes in government policy which make long-term planning difficult. Others are non-availability of data for planning, supply/production bottlenecks, and infrastructural constraints.

Although these exogenous problems received greater mention by respondents, we consider the endogenous ones more germane to our study since the former affect all firms equally and can be taken as given. Most prominent among the endogenous factor is the shortage of skilled personnel to undertake marketing planning. It is an unassailable fact that a marketing plan can never be better than the skills of the person who prepares it. Also identified is the practice of basing rewards on current plan attainment, which gets the managers more preoccupied with the 'here and now' than with the corporate future. Bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor inter-functional co-ordination, and the domination of top management by accountants, also received mention and problems militating against successful marketing planning in some of the respondent firms.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the foregoing conclusion the following recommendations are presented as possible lines of actions: (1) To realize the much orchestrate benefits of marketing planning, and because annual plans are meaningful only in the context of long-term plans managers should break the fetters of current profit and loss account and think of what their business would be in the years ahead. To get managers adopt this 'strategies' view of their business, the currently practiced reward system based on current plan attainment should be reviewed.

(2) While top management has a vital role to play in the preparation of marketing plans, it is necessary that such a role be limited to supervision and motivation. Line managers (especially marketing) should be in the thick of the entire exercise if their total commitment to the resulting plan is to be elicited. In the same vein, the role of the planning staff or department should be that of coordinating and catalyzing the activities and inputs involved in the exercise.

As it would appear that a good number of marketing and sales managers we interviewed had at best a smattering acquaintance with the marketing discipline, it is recommended that experienced professionals be always appointed to head the marketing function in our firms. The present incumbent should have their knowledge updated through seminars, symposia, in-service courses, or private tuition. As the turbulence in the business environment escalates, so will the skills required to effectively manage the various facets of business need to be raised.

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