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Globalization: Payoffs, Multinational Corporations and Public Policy Makers- A New Paradigm. #26
Dr. Thomas G. Costello and Dr. Ayse Olcay Costello

Moneyless Economy. #17
Dr. Subhendu Das

Reverse Triangular Mergers: Regulator's Response, Work Done By Other Independent Auditors and Potential Illegal Acts by Audit Clients. #243
Dr. Michael Uliński and Dr. Roy J. Girasa

Internet Banking for Midwest Community Banks: Consumer Adoption Determinants. #195
Dr. Nasim Z. Hosein

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Product Tactics in a Complex and Turbulent Environment Viewed Through a Complexity Lens

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the proposition that the choice of different product tactics is influenced by the nature of the firm's external environment. It illustrates the type of product activities suggested for a complex and turbulent environment, when viewing the environment through a chaos and complexity theory lens. A qualitative, case method, using depth interviews, investigated the product activities in two companies to identify the product activities adopted in a more successful, versus a less successful, firm in a complex/turbulent environment. The results showed that the more successful company uses some destabilizing product activities but also partially uses stabilizing product activities. These findings are of benefit to marketers as they emphasize a new way to consider future product activities in their firms. Since businesses and markets are complex adaptive systems, using complexity theory to understand how to cope in complex, turbulent environments is necessary, but has not been widely researched, with even less emphasis on individual components of the marketing mix.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing product complexity, rate of change in most markets, increasing speed of technological development and obsolescence, and unstable and rapidly changing customer needs is making product management a risky business. Since product life cycles (PLC) are getting shorter, and obtaining information for forecasting in these circumstances is nearly impossible, new product development is even more risky and requires a new approach. It needs to be quick and continuous. Since launching new products is becoming more uncertain and difficult, it must not be done at the expense of product improvement or enhancements. In many markets such old product development is more profitable and less risky, as trial is immediate and repeat purchases are more likely when based on an existing product or brand

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Turbulence

In business environments, change occurs in two major dimensions; complexity and turbulence. As complexity increases, the ability to understand, plan and predict becomes more difficult. The increasing complexity leads to more change and making sense of, and predicting it, becomes more difficult (Black and Farias, 2000).

Turbulence involves rapid, unexpected change in the environmental sub-dimensions and is caused by changes in, and interaction between, environmental factors. This turbulence results in less orderly competition, quicker development cycles and more difficulty in predicting customer, product and service requirements (Chakravarthy, 1997). The net result is an environment where the future is essentially unknowable (Wilkinson and Young, 2005). Many authors see such complex, turbulent environments as complex adaptive systems (CASs) (Holbrook, 2003; Meade *et al.*, 2006), including such constructs as eco-systems (Ritter *et al.*, 2004; Gundlach, 2006), self-organization and emergence (Wilkinson, 2006), sensitive dependence on initial conditions (Tedesco Analytics, 2001) and non-linearity (Black and Farias, 2000; Tedesco Analytics, 2001). In such environments actions taken to reduce uncertainty can lead to non-linearity and unpredictability, causing the marketplace to be in a continuous state of disequilibrium (Black and Farias, 2000). Since environments appear to be CASs, a complexity or chaos perspective should be used to understand their dynamics and behavior and to guide strategy development (Tedesco Analytics, 2001; Mason, 2007).

Complexity Theory

The underlying idea of complexity "is that all things tend to self organise into systems" when simple rules are applied (Kelly and Allison, 1999: 5). These systems can produce unexpected patterns or behaviours (Goldberg and Markoczy, 1998) because of non-linear feedback networks (Stacey, 1996), the interconnection and interdependence of complex systems (Bar-Yam, 2000), and because the system's parts interact and adapt to each other (Meade and Rabelo, 2004). Complex behaviour is orderly, yet full of surprise; apparently uncontrollable, yet

not totally chaotic. The rules that generate this behaviour are not enforced by a 'manager', and cannot be predicted from any single part of the system.

Several complexity concepts have relevance to business. The central concept is *self-organization*, the process of order emerging from simple rules in a system, which is not controlled by a 'manager' (Holbrook, 2003), and which results in creative and innovative responses emerging (Dolan *et al.*, 2003). This *emergence*, the second important concept, happens when the system changes, leading to disorder and preventing the system from ossifying. Emergence happens at the edge-of-chaos, enabling new actions to emerge. New product development behaviour emerges from the operational level (McCarthy *et al.* (2006).

The third concept is *feedback*. Negative feedback damps changes, pushing the system to equilibrium (Stacey, 1995). Positive feedback amplifies small changes, pushing the system towards chaos (Doherty and Delener, 2001). Together, positive and negative feedback balance the system at the 'edge-of-chaos', the best position for a turbulent environment (Doherty and Delener, 2001).

The fourth concept is *sensitive dependence on initial conditions* (Briggs and Peat, 1999). In a stable system, small changes have small effects, but in a complex/turbulent system small changes can grow exponentially, making long-term prediction impossible (Doherty and Delener, 2001; Holbrook, 2003). Small nudges, at the correct time, can thus lead to major changes (Wheatley, 1996). Patterns and clues indicate which changes to 'nudge' (Morrison and Quella, 1999), and when to nudge them (Gladwell, 2000). These patterns are known as *attractors*, the fifth concept. The edge-of-chaos attractor, known as a 'strange attractor', reflects the area where maximum creativity and innovation happens (Lewin, 1992). A unique feature of the strange attractor is that it stays within certain boundaries (Holbrook, 2003). How the system will develop cannot be predicted, but it will not go outside its attractor (Doherty and Delener, 2001). Thus, the strange attractor allows change while maintaining some order.

Traditional Marketing Approaches

Marketing success in a turbulent environment requires an approach that is different to that recommended by traditional strategic marketing theory. For example, the PLC approach can be misleading if other environmental factors are not considered concurrently, and the marketing warfare approach focuses only on the competitive environment. Thus, such strategic approaches are unlikely to enable companies to develop and maintain defensible, competitive positions over the long term. Furthermore, they are not consistent with the current strategic approaches of collaboration and networking (Mason, 2004). Other authors who believe that sequential strategic marketing planning is too slow and unresponsive for a fast changing marketplace support this criticism of the traditional approach to marketing strategy. Nor can traditional marketing planning keep up with customers' requirements or aggressive competitors (Nilson, 1995; Heilbrunn, 1995). In addition, traditional market research and traditional marketing mix models are too simplistic to understand complex marketing situations as such models assume linear relationships between mix variables and outcomes (Tedesco, 1998). They produce strategies that follow rather than anticipate market changes (Singer, 2006). Since the simplistic approaches recommended by traditional theories can be dangerous, marketers should consider non-traditional marketing methodologies (Wollin and Perry, 2004).

Complexity Marketing Approaches

In complex and turbulent environments, speed in recognising opportunities and developing new products, and reducing time to market is essential (Seybold, 2000). For marketing to be effective it must be proactive, creating events, and not merely relying on market research, as competitors can too easily copy the reactive following of customer requests. In other words, marketing innovation is essential. Richardson (1996) supports this view by maintaining that traditional marketing is inadequate for the future complex modern economy.

As the environment, product and customers become more complex, the firm must focus its scarce resources on those activities that will give the best result (Nilson, 1995). There are two approaches to using marketing tactics effectively in chaotic environments: stabilising or destabilising approaches (Nilson, 1995; McGlone and Ramsey, 1998). Stabilising activities encourage the system to stay within boundaries, while destabilising activities cause unanticipated consequences that break the system boundaries. This is typical of a 'chaos system'. A system operating at the edge of chaos is preferred because stabilising and destabilising activities can be used to balance the system between uncontrollability and stagnation. Thomas (in D'Aveni, 1999: 129) found that destabilising tactics used in turbulent markets lead to greater success than when stabilising tactics are used in such markets. To avoid lock-in to old or obsolete technologies or products, and hindering new product development, Mohr (2001: 45)

suggests 'creative destruction', which involves continuous innovation to make the firm's own products obsolete and to replace them with the firm's own new developments.

From a chaos and complexity perspective, stabilising is reducing change by encouraging negative feedback, or damping, which brings the system back towards its equilibrium point, or to within its attractor boundaries (Nilson, 1995; Hibbert and Wilkinson, 1994). In a marketing sense, Nilson (1995: 47) says that destabilising means the disrupting of a 'stable' environment, increasing the rate of change, setting off events to change the market or unsettling the established market. Destabilisation can be seen as encouraging positive feedback ('the nudge' effect), which moves the system away from the *status quo*. Thus, destabilisation can be either small, seemingly insignificant actions that influence the environment, or large dramatic actions that cause dramatic shifts in the environment. However, it must be remembered that, although the outcome is uncertain, such risk-taking leads to greater marketing competencies and innovation in turbulent environments, especially when related to product development (Garcia, 2004). Further, Droge *et al.* (2009) showed that innovativeness is linked to new product success in turbulent markets. Nilson (1995) ranks product tactics in terms of stabilising or destabilising as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Marketing tactics as stabilising or destabilising

	<i>Most destabilising</i>
	Totally new products
	Product innovation (new product development)
	Product enhancement (old product development)
	<i>Most stabilising</i>

Product Tactics According to Chaos/Complexity Theory

In traditional marketing, the product component of the marketing mix is essentially fixed over the short term. In a turbulent market, though, the product component is continuously variable (Morris, 1996). Authors such as Shaw and Wong (1996) and Mohr (2001) feel that traditional tools like PLCs and positioning matrices are too static for a turbulent market and can lead to stagnation and death of the product.

Chaos, although difficult to identify, is probably present in product development (Phillips and Kim, 1996; Hibbert and Wilkinson, 1994). Jager (2007) stresses the inadequacy of linear models to assess strategies in volatile markets. Kopel (1996), using a non-linear model, showed that chaotic behaviour is possible in R and D. It therefore makes sense to view new product development as a chaos process and to understand the product from a complexity or chaos perspective. Nilson (1995) maintains that introducing a totally new product introduces chaos into a market, i.e. destabilising an existing market. To be successful, the company must be prepared to act innovatively in the short term to take advantage of unanticipated and unpredictable opportunities. This means short lead times, fast feedback and flexible processes (Nilson, 1995). Such innovation happens when the system reaches the edge of chaos (Chiva-Gomez, 2004). Product development systems must allow late changes to better meet customers needs (Thomke and Reinertsen, 1998) and encourage trials and experiments to produce new lines and improvements (Morris, 1996).

Regarding the range in a turbulent market, new lines, additions to lines and product extensions are required (Morris, 1996). Millier (1999) stresses that encouraging chaos and destabilisation during new product development enables the product to develop as the customer uses it, with the 'perfect' product emerging from the inter-relationships between product and customer. Mass customisation enables the specific local needs of customers to be met through enlarged ranges without losing economies of scale (Nilson, 1995). Successful and radical innovation requires that customers must be co-developers of the product (Hamel, 2000). Such customer commitment can improve new product success (Eng and Quaia, 2009) and Gordon *et al.* (2010) found that close customer contact throughout a project was critical to new product success. While range increase is important, range reduction, or culling of products, is equally important, because slow sellers drain resources (Nilson, 1995). Hamel (2000) stressed that unsuccessful products should be killed off quickly in order to keep ahead of competitors, and disrupting the environment for the competitors (Grulke and Silber, 2000).

Regardless of the type of product development, speed of execution is critical to respond rapidly to technical and market changes in complex/turbulent markets. The speed of new product development must be faster than the changes in the environment (Samli, 1993). In a turbulent environment, change should happen so quickly that, by the time an imitator has copied the new product, it has been made obsolete by its originator. Thus, innovation, with short PLCs is essential in a turbulent environment (Morris, 1996). Speeding up the product development cycle encourages learning, reduces costly design changes and helps reputation as a market leader (Hamel, 2000).

Mish and Scammon (2005) have suggested that many branding activities exhibit non-linear dynamics. Despite this, and although many product activities are destabilising, brand is an important stabiliser. In facing rapid change and turbulence, a strong brand name is important in short PLCs because, as the time available to communicate with customers decreases, the brand is able to rapidly communicate its values (Nilson, 1995). Thus, branding is a stabilising activity, necessary to maintain relationships with the firm's customers. Range enhancement, or old product development, is another stabilising activity and is also important (Nilson, 1995).

Traditional product management methods are thus inadequate for complex and turbulent markets and may be dangerous for the survival of the product. Different techniques, approaches and attitudes to product management are required in today's turbulent environment. Since product development is probably subject to chaos principles innovation, quick development, careful range management, and customer involvement are key success factors. According to Biemans (in Ford, 1997), the increasing complexity, dynamism and turbulence of products and markets makes new product development an expensive and high-risk activity.

PROPOSITIONS

Summarizing the findings of the literature review, and viewing them through the complexity lens, enabled a model to be developed of what product activity could be expected of a successful company in a complex/turbulent market (Mason and Staude, 2009). This model is presented in Table 2. Based on this Model, two propositions were developed to explore the use of product tactics in a complex/turbulent environment:

- P1. It is proposed that more successful companies in a complex and turbulent environment will use destabilising product tactic, such as new product development and real innovation.
- P2. It is proposed that less successful companies in a complex and turbulent environment will use stabilising product tactics, such as old product development.

METHOD

The lack of complexity research in the product field (Smith, 2002) dictated the need for an exploratory study. Arguments for using metaphors for theory formulation, seeing new connections and for generalizing across contexts also highlight the need for a qualitative approach (Smith, 2002). Little research in the chaos and complexity fields has been done using real data. Therefore, research that uses real data, as this study does, is an important contribution to knowledge about marketing from a complexity theory viewpoint.

The case method was chosen for the study. To improve rigor, a research protocol was developed (Yin, 2003). Maximal variation sampling was used to select the companies, through a two-stage process:

- First the most complex/turbulent industry was identified via a questionnaire completed by six experts (stock brokerage industry analysts and management consultants). The Information Technology (IT) industry was identified as the most complex/turbulent.
- Within the IT industry, a more, and a less, successful company was selected, based on a Delphi process, using IT experts (consultants, journalists and buyers). A two-iteration, ranking process resulted in ITA and ITB being nominated as the more and less successful IT companies.

Data was collected via semi-structured focused depth interviews (Yin, 2003). Interviews were conducted with twelve CEOs, directors, managers, and marketing and sales staff in the two companies. All twelve met Morse's criteria for being good informants (Flick, 1998). To obtain co-operation, anonymity was promised. Interviews were based on an interview guide and were audiotape recorded. In addition, various company documents were analyzed.

A combination of techniques was used to analyze the material. Thematic coding, using NVIVO software, was used to deconstruct and reconstruct the transcripts to categorize findings according to the perspective being studied (more/less successful). The resulting 'pattern codes' constituted themes, causes explanations and relationships that are discussed in the findings section of this paper. This material was summarized into tables to compare the two companies against each other, against the model and against the propositions.

Method-appropriate criteria and multiple data collection methods validated the procedures, increasing rigor and trustworthiness (Flick, 1998). Construct validity was increased by using multiple data sources, internal validity was increased by comparison and pattern matching across the cases, external validity was increased by using cross-case analysis, and reliability was increased by using a data collection protocol (Yin, 2003).

FINDINGS

Based on the empirical study, a summary was created and mapped against the Model mentioned previously. This is presented in Table 2. It shows that ITA's product tactics match the Model very closely, as expected. A perfect match would have been shown by ten 'yeses' in the fourth column, which summarises ITA's comparisons. They achieved six 'yeses', three 'partials' and only one 'no', giving a summed score of 75.0%.

It was expected that ITB would not match the Model very closely. A perfect mismatch would be shown by ten 'no's' in the last column, which summarises ITB's comparisons. This indicates that ITB's product tactics partially match the Model, with a summed score of 45% with five 'no's', one 'partial' and four 'yeses'.

Table 2: Comparison of companies versus complex/turbulent model

Tactic	Model	Firm ITA	Match	Firm ITB	Match
NPD planning	Short-term and short programming of launch steps. Involve customers.	Plan carefully over short time period	Yes	Plan carefully over longer time period	No
Range change	Increasing ranges due to continuous new products, destabilising markets	Increasing, bigger than competitors, esp. software.	Yes	Increasing range, esp in software packages.	Yes
Culling of products	Slow sellers/losing products culled to cut drain on resources.	Only if have new to replace old product	Partial	Tend to keep all products and not cull	No
Product innovation	Use to destabilise. Many trials and experiments give stream of new products – focus on latent customer needs to create future. Obsolete own products to avoid rigidity.	Develops ahead of market, with early market entry, drives innovation in its market.	Yes	Less innovative, new developments driven by customers. Follow the market, customers, and competitors.	No
OPD or product enhancement	Innovatively improve current products to offset uncertainty and cost of launching new products	Must constantly upgrade, but not really important.	Partial	Continuous enhancements a main tactic.	Yes
Product customisation	Individual, local needs met via larger range of custom products. Personalised, unique, many options. All aspects customised.	Customise to needs of customer. Involve customer deeply in process.	Yes	Customise to customers' needs, with customers deeply involved in process.	Yes
Speed of product development	Very fast. Bring to market before competitors, before needs change. Short PLC means short lead time, fast feedback. Launch and establish quickly. Respond quickly	Everything done quickly, faster than competitors	Yes	Slower, following market – controlled development	No
Product design /flexibility	Flexible to handle environmental shifts and late design changes. Able to set design specs late in process	Flexible via continual improving/ developing. Customer pays for changes.	Partial	Some flexibility, but discouraged – customer must pay for changes	Partial
Branding	Strong branding to quickly convey image and to maintain long-term communication stability in rapidly changing, destabilised market.	Not very strong – only for corporate image.	No	Not very strong – only for corporate image.	No
Importance of product	Critical. Destabilising. Other tactics determined by product.	Important	Yes	Important	Yes

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Many of the product issues are similar for both companies, specifically the increasing range, culling of products, customising the product, limited flexibility in the product development process, and a less than enthusiastic approach to product enhancement.

Regarding the more successful company (ITA) it is to be expected that their range is increasing, and that product enhancement plays a lesser role than product innovation, but a more ruthless approach to reduction of old or obsolete products would have been expected. Customising the product was to be expected, especially considering the nature of software development, but more flexibility than they showed was expected. Maintaining of older products and lack of flexibility was expected of a less successful company in a turbulent and complex market. The nature of the industry may influence the emphasis on customisation, but the increasing range and lesser emphasis on product enhancement was unexpected. This may be because the industry in general perceives itself as at the cutting edge of technology and every company feels the pressure to be seen to be developing new products.

The factors that were different between the two companies, namely source of new ideas, planning terms, developing ahead of the market, and speed of development, differed in the direction anticipated. Overall, product tactics were used more or less as anticipated - anomalies tend to be because of industry-applied norms. Thus, generally ITA's product tactics are more destabilising, as expected of a more successful company in a turbulent market, while ITB's were more stabilising, as expected of a less successful company in a turbulent market.

Based on Table 1 and the above discussion, conclusions about the research propositions can be made.

P1. It is proposed that more successful companies in a complex and turbulent environment will use destabilising product tactic, such as new product development and real innovation.

Table 2 confirms that new product development's destabilising action is essential in complex/turbulent markets, as suggested by Nilson (1995). To confirm Proposition 1, ITA should predominantly use destabilising product tactics. The empirical findings in Table 2 indicate that ITA place emphasis on fast product innovation, short-term and quick product planning, an increasing product range and product customisation. Thus, Proposition 1 is supported.

P2. It is proposed that less successful companies in a complex and turbulent environment will use stabilising product tactics, such as old product development.

Table 2 shows that ITB plans carefully over longer time periods, rarely culls its products, is less innovative and is slower in terms of product development. It does however have an increasing range and provides customised products. Thus, Proposition 2 can be partially supported.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MARKETERS

Considerable emphasis should be placed on the product component of the marketing mix. Specifically, new product development should be innovative and fast. The development process should be planned over a short time period and the process should be flexible, allowing changes as close to delivery as possible. This speed and flexibility will enable the firm to make the environment volatile and unstable for competitors, but since the firm is planning for the change it will be able to take advantage of this volatility. Ideally, customers should be involved in the process to achieve maximum customisation to meet the customer's needs, ensuring customer loyalty despite the environmental volatility. The firm must continually increase its range to meet changing customer needs, but must also be prepared to cut products from the range to avoid unnecessary range duplication.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Since this was an exploratory study with a small sample, it is subject to the limitations of small sample studies. The findings are not necessarily representative of all companies in the sampled industry, nor are they necessarily representative of similar environments. The study has, however, provided better understanding of these relationships. There was never any intention to try to extrapolate these results to all companies or all markets. If extrapolation of the results to other industries is attempted it should be done with extreme caution. One of the strengths of the study, the use of maximal variation sampling, is also a weakness. This is because the choice of only one industry and two companies makes it difficult to draw conclusions about other industries and other companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this research study has cast some new light on product tactics by viewing them from a chaos and complexity perspective, there is still much to be learnt about the use of product tactics in turbulent environments. It is, further, believed that some of the problems identified in this paper can be resolved by further research using a chaos and complexity approach. Resolution of the anomalies and difficulties mentioned in the Limitations, and expansion of knowledge of product tactics, could be achieved through research in a wider range of companies and in different industries. A larger, quantitative study may better measure the effects of the product tactics discussed.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Dr. Marian C. Schultz
The University of West Florida



Developing Credit Scoring Models When Small Sample Sizes Are Available. #138
Vesarach Aumeboonsuke, National Institute of Development Administration, (NIDA), Thailand
Dr. Arthur L. Dryver, National Institute of Development Administration, (NIDA), Thailand

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2012
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Marian C. Schultz
The University of West Florida

Dr. Schultz holds Associate and Bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit Mercy, a Master's degree from Pepperdine University, and a Doctorate from the University of Southern California. She has taught various business courses for The University of Hawaii, Chaminade University and Hawaii Pacific University while living in Hawaii. While in San Antonio she taught in the Marketing and Management Department for The University of Texas at San Antonio, and later taught full time for St. Mary's University School of Business and Administration.

In addition to her teaching, Dr. Schultz is actively involved in consulting work for businesses such as Pace Foods of San Antonio (known for their taco & picante sauce), The Winning Edge, 149th Tactical Fighter Group of the Texas Air National Guard, First City Bank, and Health America and 46th Support Wing at Eglin AFB. Dr. Schultz has held membership in the Academy of Management, American Educational Research Association, American Society for Training and Development, Council on Employee Responsibilities & Rights, Association of Management, Economic and Business Historical Society, Association of Business Communication, and the Atlantic Economic Society. Her publications and research include such topics as Stress, Comparable Worth, Crisis Management, Diversity Training, Leadership, Humorology, Aviation Management, Crew Resource Management, Virtual Training, Online Instruction, Gender Diversity and Power.

Dr. Schultz has published in excess of 40 refereed articles and 45 proceedings, and has presented papers at more than 100 regional, national and international conferences. She is a tenured full professor of Management/MIS at The University of West Florida. She is married to Dr. Jim Schultz, a retired USAF Lieutenant Colonel, who is a tenured full professor & department chair at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. They have two sons, Jeremy (24) and Joshua (19). Jeremy is a graduate of Bellarmine University and is currently pursuing his Master's degree from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and Joshua is a junior at Spring College.

****LUNCH FOR PRESENTERS AT THE HOTEL ****

(For Presenters and paid non-presenters only)
(12:30 PM – 1:30 PM)

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2011

1:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Room: Canon

Management, Marketing, Business, Information Technology, Economics

Session Chairs: Dr. Nasim Z. Hosein, Dr. Wael Al-Rashed, Dr. Roger Mason, Dr. Gokce Tunc

Internet banking for Midwest Community Banks: Consumer Adoption Determinants. #195

Dr. Nasim Z. Hosein, Department Chair, Northwood University, Midland, Michigan

Product Tactics in a Complex and Turbulent Environment Viewed Through a Complexity Lens. #144

Dr. Roger Mason, Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa

Business Valuation Process Review. #166

Dr. Wael Al-Rashed, Professor, Kuwait University, Kuwait

Dr. Mohamad H. Atyeh, Kuwait University, Kuwait

Analysis of the Green Job: A Challenge for the European Union. #116

Dr. Maria Teresa Garcia-Alvarez, University of Coruna, Spain

Dr. Laura Varela-Candamio, University of Coruna, Spain

Attitude, Motivation and Decision Making and their Relationship to Trust in Family Businesses.

Dr. Josiane Fahed-Sreih, Lebanese American University, Lebanon.

Privacy in the Workplace: Balancing Privacy Rights of Employees With The Employer's Need To Know.

Dr. Bernadette Baum, National University, La Jolla, CA

Economic Growth and Employment in the Equilibrium Labor Market.

Chang kon Choi, Professor, Chonbuk National University, Chonju city, Chonbuk, Korea



The International Business, Finance & Economics Research Conference, Los Angeles

February 14, 2012

Roger Mason, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of Marketing & Retail
Research Co-ordinator:
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Durban University of Technology
P O Box 1334, Durban, 4000,
South Africa

Dear Dr. Mason:

Your paper titled "**Product Tactics in a Complex and Turbulent Environment Viewed Through a Complexity Lens**" submitted for consideration for The International Business & Economics Research Conference has been processed utilizing a two person referee blind process and upon their recommendation your paper has been accepted for presentation and publication. The International Business, Finance & Economics Research Conference will be held at Beverly Hilton, Los Angeles in June 2012.

Please see the attached forms for registration instructions. Thank you for making The International Business, Finance & Economics Research Conference, Los Angeles a vehicle for your research interests.

Sincerely,

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