

Foreword

I have worked for many years with small businesses. Whilst such businesses are hugely heterogeneous with diverse focus and purpose dictated by their unique market circumstances, they do have some common characteristics regardless of market position.

All small businesses are characterised by the fact they are small and as such have severe limitations in what they can do, particularly in the domain of business development and marketing. All small businesses have limitations of resources, not least cash, limitations of expertise, particularly in any specialised area and limitations in their market impact, because of these limitations and, because they are a small pebble in the big pond of most markets.

Over the past decade there have been many who have argued that the world wide web can enable small business to do global business. The emergence of E-Commerce has been seen by some to be a panacea for small business growth and success. Few have fully recognised how the small business limitations eluded to here impact upon small business E-commerce.

This text of readings, in my opinion, is the first to address the notion of small business adoption of E-Commerce in a realistic, interesting and usable way. Congratulations are due to the editors in compiling a comprehensive range of topics covering a truly global span of topics that are of interest to any scholar of small business and also to small business owner managers. Chapters not only present meaningful insights into E-Commerce in the small business context but also acknowledge the difficulties small businesses have in simply developing their business.

I commend this text to students, researchers and scholars of small business and to small business owner managers interested in setting their own problems and challenges in the context of similar circumstances of other small businesses.

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David Carson is President of the Academy of Marketing UK, the foremost representative body of marketing academics in the UK and Ireland. He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and Honorary President of CIM Ireland. He has wide experience in middle and senior management training in service industries including organisations such as Walt Disney World and Cadogan Holidays. Also, he has worked with hundreds of SMEs in Ireland and elsewhere and has published widely in SME and Entrepreneurial Marketing and research methodologies.