

whom have been involved in the B2B IIM implementation and all of whom are located in the headquarters in London.

The second case study is Electricco. Founded in 1939, Electricco is one of the world's leading distributors of electronic, electrical, and industrial products with cutting-edge e-procurement capabilities. Employing more than 1000 people in 20 countries around the world, Electricco offers more than 100,000 leading-brand products to design, maintenance, production, and purchasing professionals in organizations of all sizes and within myriad industries. Products are available ex-stock, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. We conducted an interview with the marketing manager responsible for the Internet marketing project.

The third case study is Textileco, which is the only U.K.-based manufacturer of specialty polyester fibers. Textileco has more than 35 years' experience producing polymer fiber and meeting the requirements of the fiber users. More than 60% of Textileco production of polyester fiber is exported worldwide. Many internationally based companies now depend on Textileco for the supply of specialized or colored fiber for smaller batch quantities or for emergency supplies with extremely short lead times. We interviewed the managing director responsible for the Internet marketing project.

The remainder of this article presents the details of the case-study findings and reports on critical success factors from the perspective of each company. The different critical factors for the successful implementation of B2B IIM are grouped according to each of the following categories: (1) marketing strategy factors, (2) internal factors, (3) market factors, and (4) Web site factors.

Our finding that top management commitment and support has a critical role in B2B IIM success is reinforced in the work of Avlonitis and Karayanni (2000), Chaffey and colleagues (2000), Chan and Swatman (2000), McCole (2004), and Scullin, Fjermestad, and Romano (2004). Top management's support has been characterized as an important factor for the successful implementation of any business innovation (e.g., the use of the Internet for B2B IIM). Indeed, all three companies considered top management commitment and support the most important factors that positively influenced B2B IIM implementation. The managers provide resources and support the acceptance of using the Internet for international marketing purposes. The executive board of Petrolco and the Chemicals executive committee all bought into the idea of the Internet at an early stage and have provided sufficient support and resources that would help implement this strategy. In the case of Electricco, top management gave the B2B IIM project a high priority and drove

CASE-STUDY ANALYSIS

Marketing Strategy Factors

the initiative forward by providing everyday encouragement and the necessary financial support. Similarly, the managing director led the project in Textileco. Top managers played a key role in Internet implementation. However, the ways to get top management involved and the nature of the participation varied from company to company (see Table 1).

Our findings support previous research that shows that using the Internet in marketing should be based on clearly defined, strategic goals (Chaffey et al. 2000; Honeycutt, Flaherty, and Benassi 1998; Javalgi, Martin, and Todd 2004; Mattila, Karjalouto, and Pento 2003; Naude and Holland 1996). However, although all three companies agreed with this, their strategic goals of Internet usage for marketing purposes varied, depending on the size and position of the company. Whereas Petrolco's goals were to design and deploy the Internet to strengthen its current business and to improve services offered to its customers, Electricco's goal was to grow Internet sales to 10% of its overall sales, and Textileco's goal was to find customers who use its specialty products. The managing director at Textileco noted,

We know the people who use 500 tons a week. They're no problem. It's finding the small ones that ... will pay a better price, because they buy less, so we make a better margin.

Similarly, the findings of this study reinforce the increasingly accepted view that companies' Internet-enabled capabilities should be employed in ways that complement and support their traditional channels (Avlonitis and Karayanni 2000; Chan and Swatman 2000; Cronin 1996a, b; Duggan and Deveney 2000; Gurau, Ranchhod, and Hackney 2001; Honeycutt, Flaherty, and Benassi 1998; Lynn et al. 2002; Porter 2001; Quelch and Klien 1996). All the three cases illustrate different interpretations of this factor. Using the same marketing agency to create the handbook, the physical brochure,

Table 1.
Reasons and Nature of Top
Management Support of B2B
IIM

Company	Reasons That Led Top Management to Support B2B IIM	Nature of Participation
Petrolco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case • Clear vision • Industry requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings • Reporting
Electricco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear vision • Business future needs • Integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings • Reporting • Monitoring and reviewing
Textileco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear vision • Speed • Business future needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings • Monitoring and reviewing

and the Web site and offering customers many ways to place orders, track invoices, and pay (e.g., online, mail, telephone, personal contacts) were methods that Petrolco used to integrate its Internet marketing with its marketing strategy. Conversely, Electricco used the Internet as part of its total offering for customers to achieve that integration.

Although our findings support those of Chan and Swatman (2000), Damanpour (2001), Duggan and Deveney (2000), Phan and Strata (2002), Poon and Jevons (1997) and Scullin, Fjermestad, and Romano (2004) that trading partner relationships are crucial issues that companies face in achieving their objective of getting closer to their customers, our findings also show that these relationships have a second-degree importance. For B2B IIM to succeed, large networked communities that comprise business partners, suppliers, internal personnel, and customers should be established. However, whereas Electricco, for example, considered collaboration with suppliers and distributors a crucial factor for B2B IIM success, Petrolco paid less attention to this collaboration. This might be due to the position of each company in its value chain.

Studies by Herbig and Hale (1997), Hofacker (2001), and White (1997) confirm our finding that defining the audience or customer is a primary task because it determines how and when internal and external actors should be involved. The target-customer type determines many aspects of the Internet marketing initiative, from site design to online marketing techniques. The more specific the target audience, the more companies will be able to provide the appropriate information on their Web sites. This result has been supported by the qualitative approach. All three companies agreed that the potential audience helps them customize their Web sites. Consequently, delivering personalized information online enables these companies to support multiple levels of customers in a way that best meets their individual needs. To this end, Petrolco does a lot of work and analysis to understand potential customers.

Technological infrastructure, internal culture, relationships between the marketing and the IS/MIS departments, the role of the sales force, in-depth understanding of foreign marketing environment, access to resources, and training programs are all important internal tools for companies that want to establish an effective B2B IIM practice. Technological infrastructure includes computer literacy, Internet-related software, and availability and standardization of equipment (for access and services) that are required to reach the stage of information integration. Internal culture plays a major role in enabling or disabling implementation efforts. The relationship between the marketing and the IS/MIS departments

Internal Factors

helps the implementation of the Web-based system. The sales force should be highly qualified and trained to be able to take advantage of the Internet capabilities. Finally, training programs affect the understanding of the system and the technologies, which in turn leads to greater acceptance of B2B IIM implementation. However, internal factors are of a second or third level of importance. This may be because companies that use the Internet for their marketing purposes are supposed to be prepared internally before using it.

Similar findings can be drawn from several studies (see, e.g., Eid and Trueman 2004; Naude and Holland 1996; Phan and Strata 2002; Samiee 1998) that view technological infrastructure as a critical factor contributing to the success of B2B IIM efforts. Our three case studies demonstrate the importance placed on this factor. Electricco and Petrolco agreed that technological infrastructure is a crucial element for B2B IIM. However, whereas Petrolco has built the infrastructure of Internet marketing on existing information technology, Textileco outsourced the entire Internet infrastructure.

Organizational culture influences the organization's ability to adapt to the change required for the effective use of the Internet, whereas the existing culture might contain beliefs and values that are often no longer appropriate or useful in this new business environment. Therefore, companies must understand and confirm new values and communication styles that the Internet makes possible (Chan and Swatman 2000; Duggan and Deveney 2000; Krishnamurthy and Singh 2005; White 1997). All three cases agreed that having a supportive internal culture is a crucial element in Internet marketing implementation. For example, by developing a teamwork culture and the participative style of management, Electricco has created a level of environmental stability that is solid enough to support the Internet use for marketing activities.

Similarly, the relationships between the marketing and the IS/MIS departments cannot be overemphasized. Technological change due to the Web is forcing a paradigm shift within the IS/MIS department because the Internet has opened up a new stage of cooperation between the marketing and the IS/MIS departments (Lynn et al. 2002). The externalization wrought by Internet computing has driven information technology and marketing together. Furthermore, the marketing department must build strong relationships with the company's main line of business and the IS/MIS department (Lynn et al. 2002). This finding is also supported by our interviews. Petrolco and Electricco agreed that B2B IIM could not succeed without good cooperation between the marketing and the IS/MIS departments. For example, the e-