



Strategy Courses

Overview

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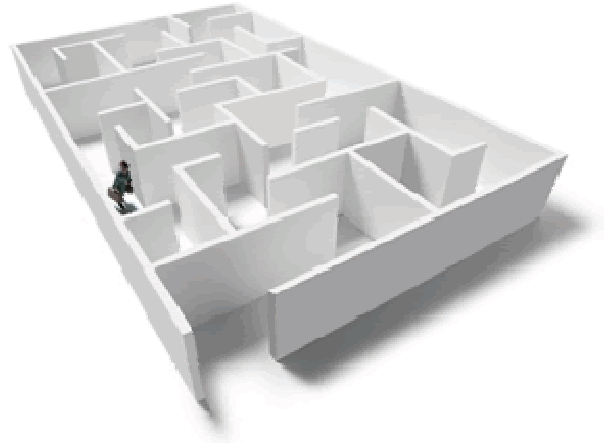
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Strategy Courses

1. Introduction

Strategy development is concerned with how we should invest in resources (human, systems, capital etc) to attain sustainable competitive advantage. It is not concerned with how we compete next year except insofar as our actions contribute to a longer-term objective. Rather, we need to be looking ahead, 5, 10 or even 15 years – but always with a view to guiding what we do today.



There are a number of key themes running through our courses.

- **Preparedness - from gorillas to competitive advantage**

Arie de Geus, author of *The Living Company*, said:

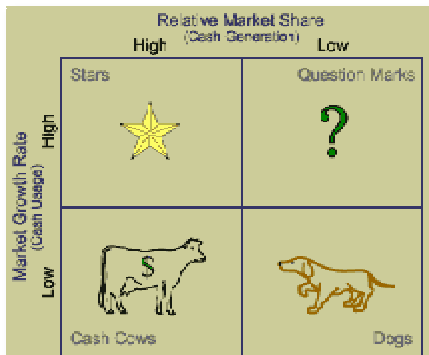


"The only way to sustain competitive advantage is to ensure that your organisation is learning faster than the competition."

If this is so, then a fundamental question for all organisations is: How do we learn faster?

You may be familiar with the Chabris and Simon experiment involving a group playing basketball and a woman dressed in a gorilla suit. Around 90% of a group failed to spot the gorilla pass between the players, stop, look at the camera and beat her chest. Amongst other things, the experiment illustrates the power of our Reticular Activating System (RAS). This cluster of cells is our filter on the world - it enables us to focus and concentrate on what we see as important (most people in the experiment correctly counted the number of passes) whilst filtering out other things. You may already see the link to sustaining competitive advantage:

If managers do not tune their RAS in the correct way, they will miss the indicators, clues and signs that aware managers will recognise as the beginnings of major threats



and opportunities. Of course, awareness is only part of perception. We may see it, but do we understand it? Managers need to interpret what they see and decide what it means. As Deming said:

"If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing."

This is the value of management models; they do not give the answer but they help us to ask the right kind of questions. Our courses are designed to help managers find the questions that will help to create new perspectives and a greater understanding of the competitive environment.

- **Identifying cause-and-effect**

A critical activity on our courses is the construction of a cause-and-effect model of the



business to challenge managers to identify the real performance drivers in the business – and to consider how they can be managed effectively. This is particularly effective in helping managers to see inter-relationships and opportunities for synergies across departments.

- **Intangibles**

Many of these performance drivers will be based on intangible assets – relationships, knowledge, skills, culture and brand. They rarely appear in the financial statements, except perhaps as costs, but investment in these assets and how they will be leveraged should be at the heart of any strategy development. Furthermore, managers

should understand how they and their teams impact the brand on a daily basis; brand values are determined by how phones are answered, clean vans and staff dress as much as by advertising. And this illustrates how intangibles are inextricably linked to

"In today's information age, the accounting focus only on tangible assets makes little sense now that intangible assets are the overwhelming source of value creation."

Peter Doyle

each other – customer relationships mirror relationships within the organisation as brand values reflect culture

- **Creativity – and intuition**

We encourage managers to think the unthinkable because the unthinkable happens – who would have thought twenty years ago that the biggest bookseller in the world wouldn't own a shop!



- **Shareholder value**

Ultimately strategies must deliver value to shareholders. But how do we measure returns? Managers must be able to evaluate strategic investments – in branding, new distribution centres, IT infrastructure – in terms of shareholder value. Our approach to shareholder value provides managers with the tools to evaluate such investment decisions and helps to integrate intangibles and concepts such as customer equity.

- **Making it happen – “part of everyone’s everyday job”**



Strategies must be converted into actions or they are worthless. So managers must consider culture, leadership style, communications (in all directions), change management, creating scorecards for individuals and departments, processes, training, rewards and incentives ...

- **Continuous process**

Returning to our first theme – “preparedness” – strategic thinking should not be confined to yearly reviews, it must be an approach to business, an attitude of mind.

This is a highly practical course that relates competitive strategy to the day-to-day tasks carried out by managers. Our aim is to provide managers with a greater strategic awareness and a framework for turning strategy into actions. The course itself will be heavily weighted towards participant involvement and addressing real-world issues using creative and analytical tools. Throughout the course examples from a variety of industries will be used to illustrate successful – and unsuccessful – strategies. As a result, learning will be more effective and participants will have a solid foundation for immediate, positive changes in the way that they work.

2. Who will benefit

The course can be oriented towards most levels of manager – to assist senior and middle managers in strategy development through to providing junior managers with strategic perspective so that they have a greater understanding of the competitive environment and the importance of their role in communicating upwards and to their teams.

3. Learning outcomes

- to create strategic perspective so that managers are aware of changes in the commercial environment and how they may impact the organisation
- to give managers greater strategic awareness so that they understand how their actions contribute to the company gaining sustainable competitive advantage
- to help managers to explore the current and future commercial environment and recognise the challenges and issues that face the company
- to assist managers in developing new approaches that are consistent with corporate strategy and address the new challenges
- to identify the key performance drivers and gain an appreciation of the importance of intangible assets – brand, relationships, skills, knowledge etc
- to develop frameworks for measuring and managing key performance drivers and intangibles
- to place all the above in the context of managing for growth

4. Course Outline

Introduction – what do we mean by strategy – analysis *and* intuition – a complex process to produce simple guidelines

Strategic Analysis / Audit – Where are we now?

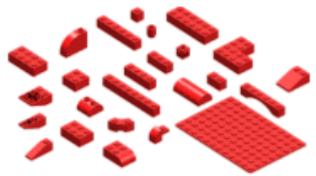
- strategic foresight (vision)
- macro-environment – trends – opportunities and threats – scenario analysis – creating “future memory” and preparedness
- Porter - industry analysis – barriers to exit and entry, substitutes, potential entrants, competitors
- value chain – understanding where is value added
- resource appraisal – in particular, core competencies – usually based on a unique combination of skills, assets, knowledge, culture and experience, core competencies are the gateways to sustainable competitive advantage
- market analysis and the art-science of segmentation – identifying attractive markets
- creating “causal maps” to identify performance drivers

Strategic Choice

- the iterative nature of strategy planning
- who – which markets – positioning
- what – what services and products
- using matrices to gain insight – GE / Ansoff etc
- how firms gain sustainable competitive advantage
 - cost
 - differentiation – product / service / image / expertise etc
 - focus
- core competencies
- strategic staircase – from here to there – to reach our ten-year strategic objective, where do we have to be in 5, 3, 1 year ... next month ... tomorrow.
- shareholder value / customer equity
- identifying performance drivers – the importance of intangibles

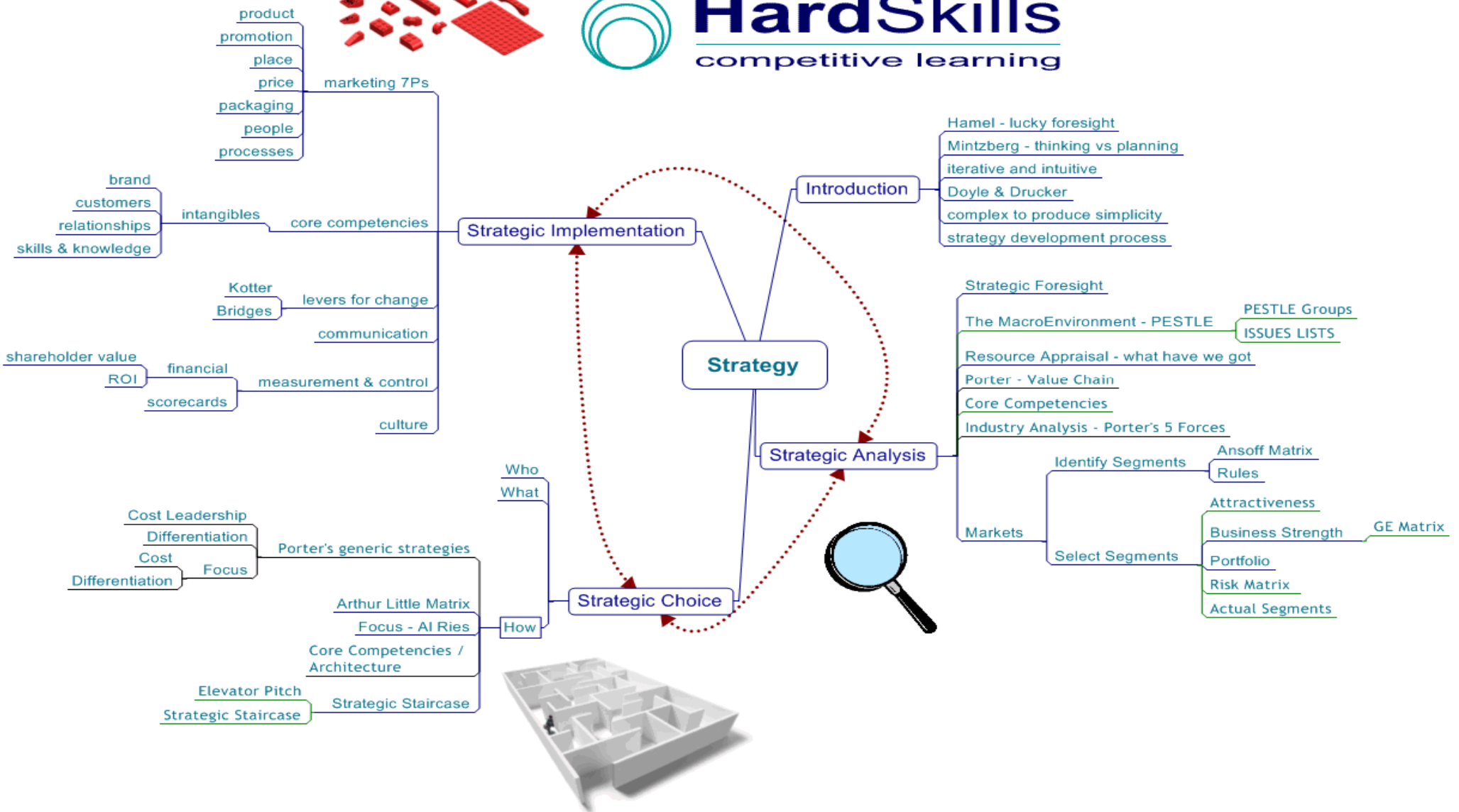
Strategic Implementation

- marketing – the 7Ps
- customers
- intangibles – investment and leverage – relationships, skills, knowledge, brand
- measurement and control – ROI, scorecards, qualitative
- strategy and culture
- communicating strategy
- leading change – Kotter, Bridges etc



HardSkills

competitive learning



5. Paul Taylor – Lead Facilitator

Qualifications & Memberships

- MA in law, Oxford University
- MBA, City University, London
- Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing
- Member of the Institute of Management Consultancy
- Accredited facilitator on Ericsson Leadership programme

Career

- 18 years' experience as a consultant and trainer
- Marketing Manager, FTSE 100 company

Experience

- accredited facilitator on the Ericsson global leadership programme, delivering in over 10 countries to 20 different nationalities over a five year period; development and delivery of two-day finance module for Ericsson managers and strategic marketing programme
- the design (including train-the-trainer workshops) and delivery of training programmes for ntl: Telewest / Virgin Media
- strategic management courses designed and delivered for Oxford University Press
- marketing communications and marketing effectiveness courses designed and delivered for Cisco
- four-day business management programme (customer focus, strategy, finance and business planning) designed and delivered for civil engineering firm May Gurney
- finance for non-finance managers and value-based marketing courses designed and delivered for Centrica
- consultancy and project management relating to the promotion of UK Online for Business and Best Practice initiatives for the dti
- lecturing on the Chartered Institute of Marketing postgraduate diploma