

SSM 114: Strategy Building & Sustaining Competitive Advantage

Introduction

Why do some companies appear to have little difficulty in growing and changing whilst other companies decline and even collapse? Why do companies fail in markets that are showing considerable growth? Why is it that in many businesses 80% of the total available profits are earned by just the top 3 or 4 companies?

The answer is simple and straightforward – but it is not easy. Companies that grow and change are companies that know how to build robust strategies that secure and sustain competitive advantage. The concepts of strategy and competitive advantage are at the very heart of business success. This has always been the case. The big challenge in the 21st century is that almost all businesses are becoming more complex, more competitive and more international.

This course focuses on these two central and vital concepts – strategy and competitive advantage. The seminar is relevant to managers in every part of the organisation because increasingly managers need to understand how their part of the business contributes to these two important issues – building a robust strategy and sustaining competitive advantage.

Objectives

The central objectives of this seminar are as follows:

- To ensure that participants understand the concepts of strategy and strategic management
- To understand the main frameworks within which robust strategies can be created
- To understand the linkage between strategy building and implementation
- To understand the meaning of the concept of competitive advantage
- To ensure that strategy is changed and developed to create a sustained level of high performance
- To enable participants to understand how their specialist parts of the organisation contribute to strategy building and achieving sustainable competitive advantage

Who Should Attend?

This course is designed for experienced professionals from any industry and any specialization who wish to learn how to take a 'bigger picture' view of business issues – as they relate to strategy and the strategic planning process. Typically you will have some experience of operational planning but present and future job challenges imply that you need to step up to a new level of competence in this area, or simply in strategic thinking generally. The following are some examples of delegates who would benefit from attending this course:

- Experienced Operations Managers
- Financial Managers
- Human Resource Managers
- Public Sector Officials responsible for Industrial and Economic Development
- Experienced Bankers and Investment Analysts
- Business Planners

Organisational Impact

- Much better decision-taking and time and resource allocation – leading to better organizational and individual performance
- Introduction of strategic thinking into new levels of the organization
- Top management having more confidence in the ability and judgment of its operating managers
- Operational managers will have a better appreciation of the need and content of organizational change
- Managers will understand how and why change is necessary to achieve sustainable competitive advantage
- Managers will implement strategic programmes and projects more effectively

Personal Impact

- Increasing career flexibility (vertically and horizontally)
- Accelerated thinking speed and problem resolution for all difficult dilemmas
- Improved understanding of the impact of operational specialization on corporate strategy
- Improved team working capabilities in analyzing and solving strategic problems
- Improved skills in ensuring most effective impact of individual specializations
- Greater motivation and proactivity

Course Outline

Business Strategy, Strategic Management and Strategic Choice

- Generic Competitive Strategies
- Structural Analysis of Industries and Companies
- "Competitive Positioning" versus "Blue Ocean" approaches
- How value migrates over Time
- Customer Selection and the Principle of Differentiated Customer Engagement
- The Integrated Supply-Demand Chain as the Basis of 21st Century Strategic Thinking
- Choice and Complexity – The Fundamental Problem in Strategic Thinking and Planning
- Mini-Case on Strategic Choice

How to Build a Robust Strategy

- The Interface of External and Internal Analysis: Trade-Offs and Balance
- The Concept of Shareholder Value and its Relationship to Strategic Planning
- Financial and Non-Financial Aspects of Strategy, Objectives and Mechanisms
- Advanced Application of the "Balanced Scorecard" Principles
- Diagnosing Strategic Problems and Opportunities
- Strategic Choice – Offensive versus Defensive Strategic Programmes
- How to Build and Use the "5-page Strategy Framework"
- Mini-Case on Strategic Choice

The Concept of Competitive Advantage and the Ways of Securing Competitive Advantage

- Review of the tools used so far
- Competitive Advantage through Cost Leadership
- Competitive Advantage through Product/Service Differentiation
- Competitive Advantage through Differentiation of the Business Model
- Combining Cost Leadership with Differentiation: Singapore Airlines Mini-Case
- Balancing Cost Leadership and Differentiation in Delivering Value to Customers
- Introduction and Briefing for the main Case Study
- First-phase group work on the main Case Study

Strategic Risk and Global Strategic Management

- Identifying and Assessing Risk and Uncertainty
- Tools and Techniques in Managing Risk and Uncertainty
- The Essence of Globalization and Global Business Strategy
- Globalization – Managing the Strategic shift from between National/International/Global phases
- Globalization – Managing Organizational Change and the Human Resource dimension
- How to Build and Manage a Strategic Planning team
- Managing the Interface of Strategy and Global Operations
- Second-phase work on the main Case Study

Building tomorrow's organization out of today's organization

- Final-phase work on the main Case Study
- Group Presentations of the main Case Study
- Strategic Renewal: The Life-Cycle Principle Applied to Business Strategy
- The Importance of Vision and Values in Driving Strategic Development and Organizational Change
- The Senior Executive as Strategic Leader and Communicator
- The Senior Executive as Coach and Mentor – Getting Strategic Thinking into all Levels of Management