

Strategic Thinking in the boardroom

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Introduction

This handbook has been compiled to provide senior management with a quick but in depth summary of the critical decision making process of Strategic Thinking.

My objective is to provide you with some thought provoking concepts that I have personally used and which can be turned into profitable business practise.

I hope that you will discover some practical ideas which you will find quick and easy to convert into good strategic actions for your business.

As a full time, dedicated, professional facilitator I will be delighted to discuss in greater detail our Strategic Thinking Process and its logistics

Roger Handley

Chapter 1

What is Strategic Thinking?

I find the word “strategy” and its numerous derivatives can have many meanings in the context of business. So I begin this overview with the definitions that I use when facilitating workshops and will use during the balance of this handbook.

Input to Strategic Thinking derives from management’s consideration into future market conditions. Strategic Thinking becomes the decision making process to enable top management teams arrive at best choices when:

- Allocating resources
- Discriminating between opportunities
- Developing skills and capabilities
- Setting targets for future results

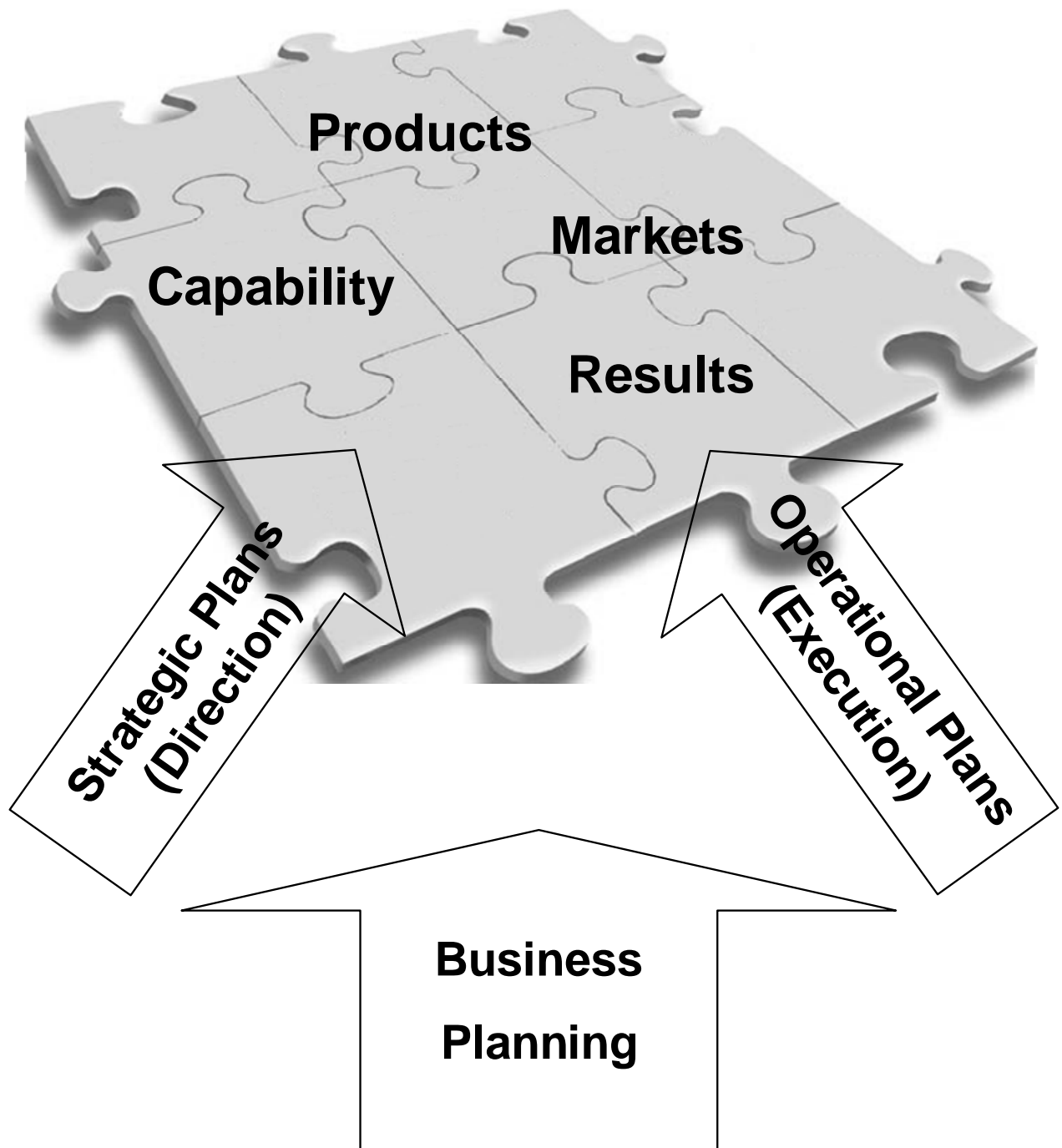
The objectives of a Strategic Thinking workshop would be:

To define strategy by creating a profile of the business that can be used as a framework for high quality and consistent future decision making. This is called the “Strategic Profile” and its content should include:

- A business concept that is unique and difficult for competitors to copy
- The customer proposition, vision and goals
- A strategic filter that will assist when allocating resources and choosing between opportunities
- The Corporate Excellence specified in terms of the skills and capabilities needed to implement strategy
- The Critical Issues that need to be managed to successfully implement future strategy

Creating a Strategic Profile for the future appearance and composition of the business in terms of its products, markets, competency and objectives is the starting point for business planning. Strategy in this context is describing what you want the business to become at some point in the future so that you can use this as the target for business planning and implementation.

Developing a Strategic Profile



Chapter 2

What are the characteristics of good Strategy?

Strategic Thinking is a performance tool designed to assist management to deliver exceptional results.

A key task of management is to allocate resources in a manner that will optimise return. Successful and innovative management will be continuously seeking to allocate resources around the organisation in order to find the best return. They will be prepared to dispose of parts of the organisation or wind down and even eventually stop doing certain activities in preference to doing new activities that will yield improved return.

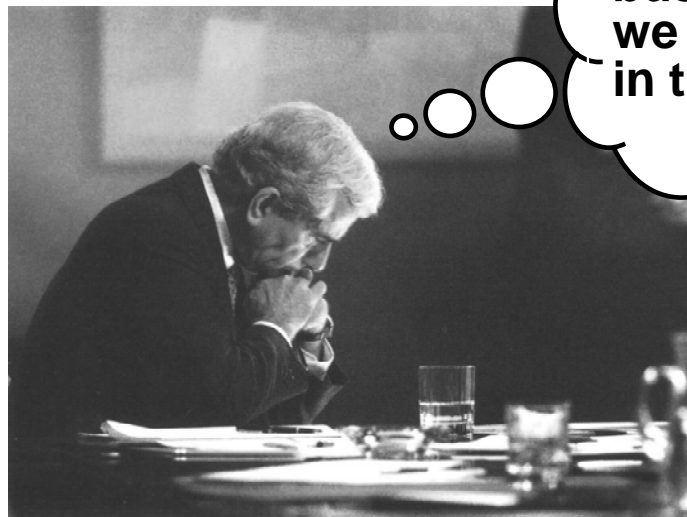
A winning strategy can be objectively analysed by examining it for the following attributes:

- Does it give clear focus and direction and optimise resources?
- Is it distinctive, different and have a clear customer proposition?
- Does it have the commitment of all management?
- Will it achieve its objectives and produce results that will improve value and delight the shareholders?
- Does it leverage the organisation's skills and capabilities across a broad spectrum of the organisation?
- Have clear objectives been cascaded down to each strategic function of the business?
- Does the organisation have an intuitive understanding of the competition?
- Have measurable initiatives been introduced to create a culture of continuous improvement and learning?
- Does the executive understand the issues that are critical to manage in order to enable strategy to succeed?

Strategic Thinking is a top down process to determine focus and direction. The key questions are "what sort of business are we today and what sort of business do we want to be in the future"? This means that management must be very clear about what to emphasise in their choices of products and markets and equally sure about what should receive less emphasis in these areas.

Top Management
Strategic Thinking Process
Defining Vision & Goals

**What sort of business
are we today?**



***The Thought Process
to determine Vision***

Chapter 3

What should be management's approach to Strategic Thinking?

There are a number of characteristics that can be checked to test management's approach to strategy and their methods of running the business.

A winning strategy needs to be:

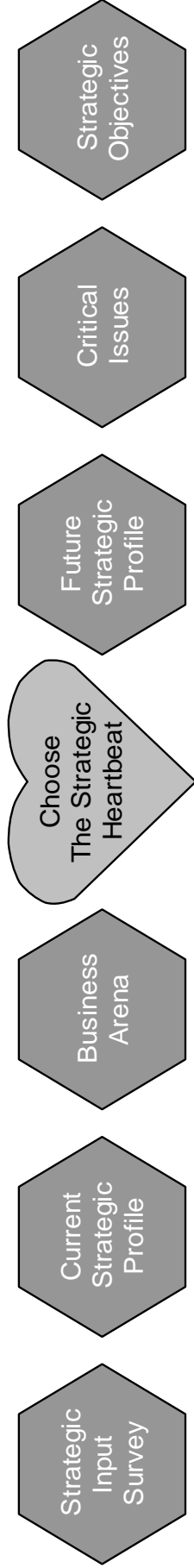
- Dynamic and embracing change. A static or protectionist attitude will lead to a fatal lack of competitiveness and eventual stagnancy that will kill the business.
- Flexible both internally and externally. Inflexibility is seen to be an arrogance that assumes the business processes to be more important than the customer.
- Innovative. A cautious approach "if it's not broken then don't fix it" leads to a lack of creativity affecting the development of competitive products and distinctive initiatives.
- A stretch. Being too risk averse and not raising the crossbar to achieve better than expected results. Swim in the comfort zone and the competition will soon outperform the business.
- Resource conscious. Leverage resources across the widest array of activities otherwise the business will die from low productivity and loss of competitive edge.
- Continuous improvement. Initiatives must be in place to ensure sustainable results are achieved and the skill base maintained. Cost cutting activities only bring short term gain.
- Well communicated and culture changing. Leaders must tell others where they are being led and what needs to be done to get them there. Poorly communicated strategy fails.
- Adequately and realistically financed.

Defining and implementing strategy needs to have full participation, understanding and buy in from the entire management team. Strategic Thinking is a logical and systematic approach to achieving these goals. Using conventional and accepted business practise, the variables facing the business can be quickly debated using a structured methodology and clear objectives can be set that will chart the future direction of the business.

Strategic Thinking Process: Phases 1, 2 and 3

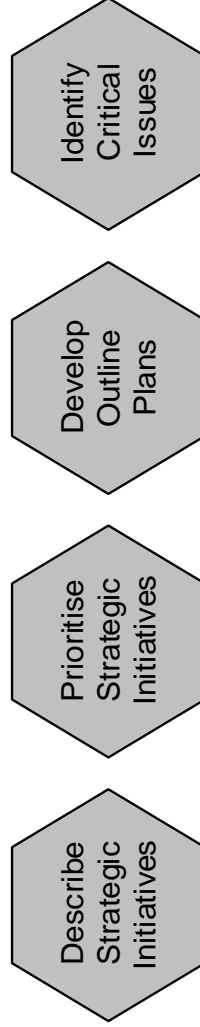
Phase 1 “Vision”: What do we want to be?

To Define Corporate or Business Unit Strategy

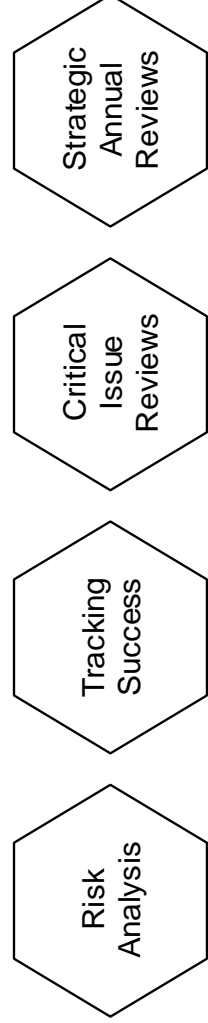


Phase 2 “Implementation”: How we intend to achieve this!

Strategic Focus Areas



Phase 3: “Learning” *Risk Analysis, Results and Reviews*



Chapter 4

What influences strategic decision making?

Business strategy in the context of Strategic Thinking is the process of determining the big picture. What do we want to look like at some point in the future concerning our products and markets? It should be mentioned at this point that any reference that I make to “products” in this handbook equally applies to chargeable services. I regard invoiced products and services as synonymous with each other.

One task during Strategic Thinking is to define future scope for products and markets. To do this we need to assess and answer the question: “what influences strategy?” There are four key areas of the business which focus future strategic decision making.

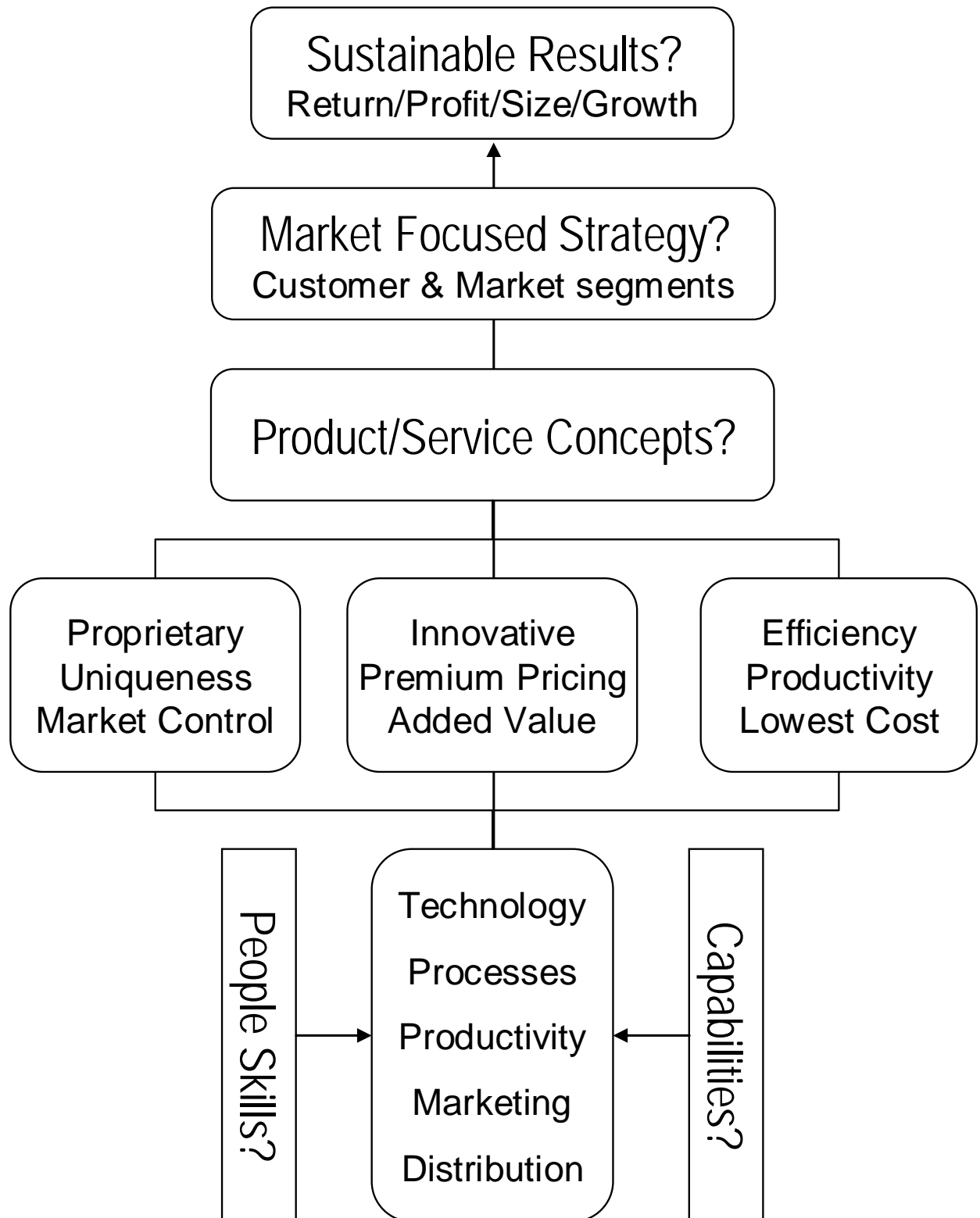
- Firstly, the requirement to achieve sustainable results over a strategic time frame.
- Secondly, these results will be achieved with a strategy that is focused on satisfying customer needs.
- Thirdly, there will be a range of products offered that derive from concepts such as:
 - Proprietary or uniqueness to exercise market control
 - Being innovative and adding value to sustain premium pricing
 - Production or distribution performance to achieve lowest cost
- Finally, there will be some key skills and capabilities that the organisation will possess or will need to acquire that are responsible for creating and maintaining a competitive edge.

Strategic Thinking takes a holistic view of strategy that expressed in its simplest terms is like constructing a jig-saw puzzle. By fitting together all the individual pieces it will provide a profile of your strategy represented by a vision for the future of the organisation and the steps needed to get you there.

However, just like a jig-saw puzzle, if the pieces are not correctly identified and fitted together then the picture will not emerge as you expect it to. Therefore, Strategic Thinking must challenge the participants to create a strategic profile of the future composition of the business that is clear, unambiguous and easy to communicate.

DECISIONS THAT INFLUENCE STRATEGY

To Improve the Quality and Consistency
of Strategic Decision Making



Chapter 5

What drives future strategy?

The concept of business drivers is not new. However, the differentiator with Strategic Thinking is how these business drivers are interpreted and used in the formulation and execution of strategy. There are nine key areas of influence that are responsible for driving strategic decision making in any organisation. See next graphic.

These nine drivers will all influence decision making in any type of business but one driver in particular is more influential than any of the other eight. It is this driver, “the driving force”, that is ultimately responsible for helping management to determine what they choose to place emphasis on when they are allocating resources and choosing opportunities.

It is this driving force that becomes the Strategic Heartbeat of the business and forms the foundation for its future strategic decision making.

Understanding what drives a business is fundamental to defining strategy whether it is the strategy of your business or the strategy of your competitor’s business. Having a working knowledge of these primary drivers is one of the key concepts of Strategic Thinking. When reviewing these drivers there are certain observations that need to be considered.

- They can all be seen in any type of organisation.
- There is a hierarchy of importance between them when it comes to assessing their individual strategic influence.
- Even in the same industry segment the relevant importance of these drivers varies from one business to the next.
- One of the drivers has significantly more influence than any of the other eight when it comes to discriminating between opportunities and allocating resources.
- The driver with most influence is the one that sets the strategic direction of the business when choosing which products or services to offer and which markets to pursue.
- That in organisations that have been successful over long periods of time the driver with the most influence, the driving force, remains constant and becomes its Strategic Heartbeat.

We must be good at all these initiatives but what is our Strategic Heartbeat ?



- **What is your current Strategic Heartbeat?**
- **Which should be your future Strategic Heartbeat?**
- **What are the implications of changing?**

Chapter 6

The importance of strategic fit.

It is interesting to observe a management team at work when it is assessing various future opportunities. What you will normally see is the different opportunities being passed through a number of decision making filters the objective being to examine the kind of “fit” that each individual opportunity would have with certain important drivers within the organisation. The final filter would be a search for a fit between the opportunity and one particular key driver or critical element of the business.

Some would look for a fit with their products. When Microsoft chooses to add an application programme to its Office Suite it must be compatible with other Office applications and exploit the operating standards within Windows.

Some would look for a fit with their customers or market segments. When Saga assesses a new product idea it must be something that will be attractive to the over 50's.

Some would look for a fit with their technology or technical know-how by examining the harmony with their knowledge base. They will be the kind of business that focuses on researching and developing new applications for that know-how in order to process those applications into new products or services.

Others would search for a fit with their selling and marketing methods or their distribution process to see if they could take advantage of their present way of trading.

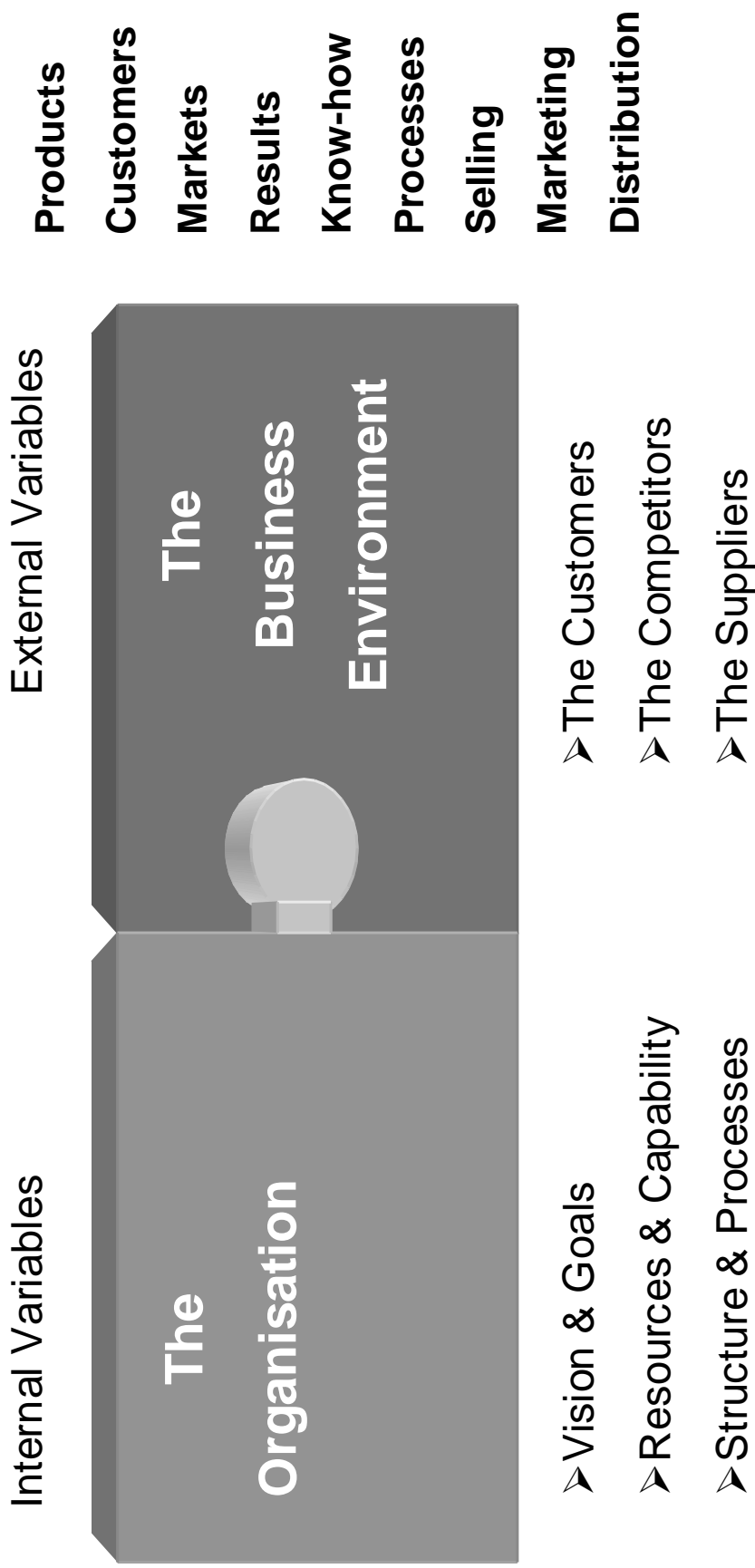
The closer the match to this fit the more chance of pursuing the opportunity, conversely the more remote the fit the more likely that it will be abandoned.

It is interesting to note that when examining certain organisations the eventual *final* choice of fit always focused on one and only one of its key drivers and additionally it was always the same final filter for those organisations.

Although strategies of some organisations seem to be similar, you will find that from the inside they will see themselves quite differently. They will make alternative choices about future opportunities. This is because they assess these opportunities using different criteria because a different driving force is influencing their decision making.

Strategy is about achieving the “Best Fit” between the internal & external variables

How well does this opportunity fit our....?



Chapter 7

Determining the Strategic Heartbeat of your organisation

To determine the driving force that will become the Strategic Heartbeat of the organisation requires an analysis of the nine strategic drivers. The final choice that management make will depend upon the different variables in the business operating environment that will have an affect on the organisation's strategic options and decisions for the future.

The strategic options will be defined by interpreting customer and market research and examining the business in such areas as:

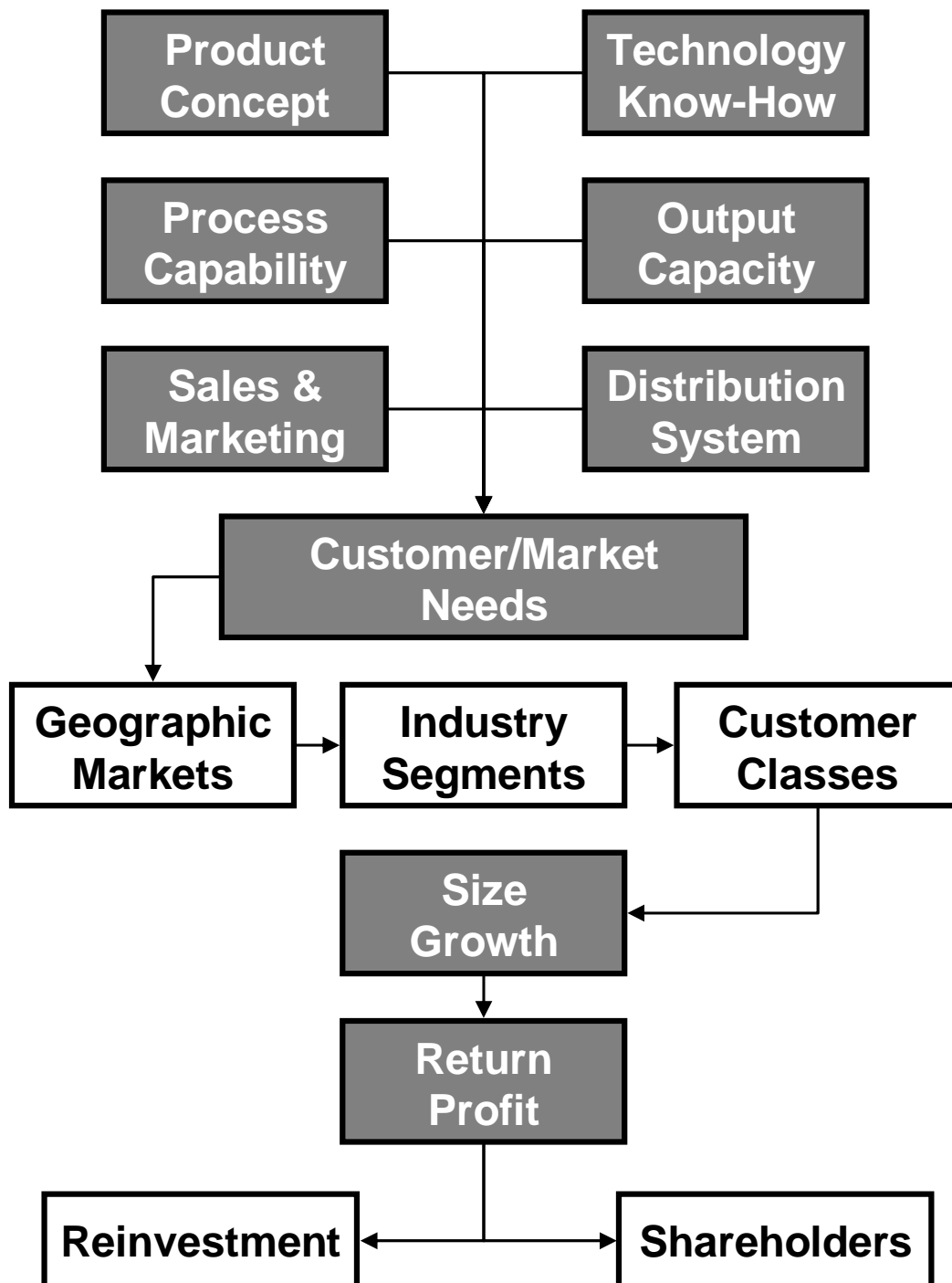
- Current products and markets
- Current skills and capabilities
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Strategy being pursued by the competition
- Product and market opportunities for the future
- Areas of vulnerability
- External threats
- Availability of future resources

Strategy is influenced by nine business drivers:

- 1: Product Concept: To offer products that share a similar concept and target them to a wide range of different customer segments.
- 2: Market Needs: To serve the needs of a clearly defined generic market type (or target customer class) with many different product concepts.
- 3: Technology/Know-how: To exploit applications from a highly resourced technology, professional or commercial know-how from which to optimise new product or service developments.
- 4: Process Capability: To exploit production or implementation services from a highly resourced often proprietary process skill.
- 5: Output Capacity: To fulfil capacity from investments made in process, production or fulfilment facilities.
- 6 & 7: Sales, Marketing & Distribution: Exploiting a special method, system or channel of reaching a customer class or market.
- 8 & 9: Size/Growth and Return/Profit: To only pursue acquisitions or opportunities the results from which will consistently return at above the level required to sustain the profit or growth rates.

A detailed description of each of these nine driving forces is provided further on in this handbook.

9 Drivers influence the look of any business



One Driver is the Driving Force and determines direction in terms of Product and Market choices

Chapter 8

The concept of Corporate Excellence

The concept of a single driving force initially causes some Strategic Thinking Process participants to challenge this wisdom. They will ask “how can one single driver possibly influence the strategy of our business over the long term?” The short answer is that it doesn’t.

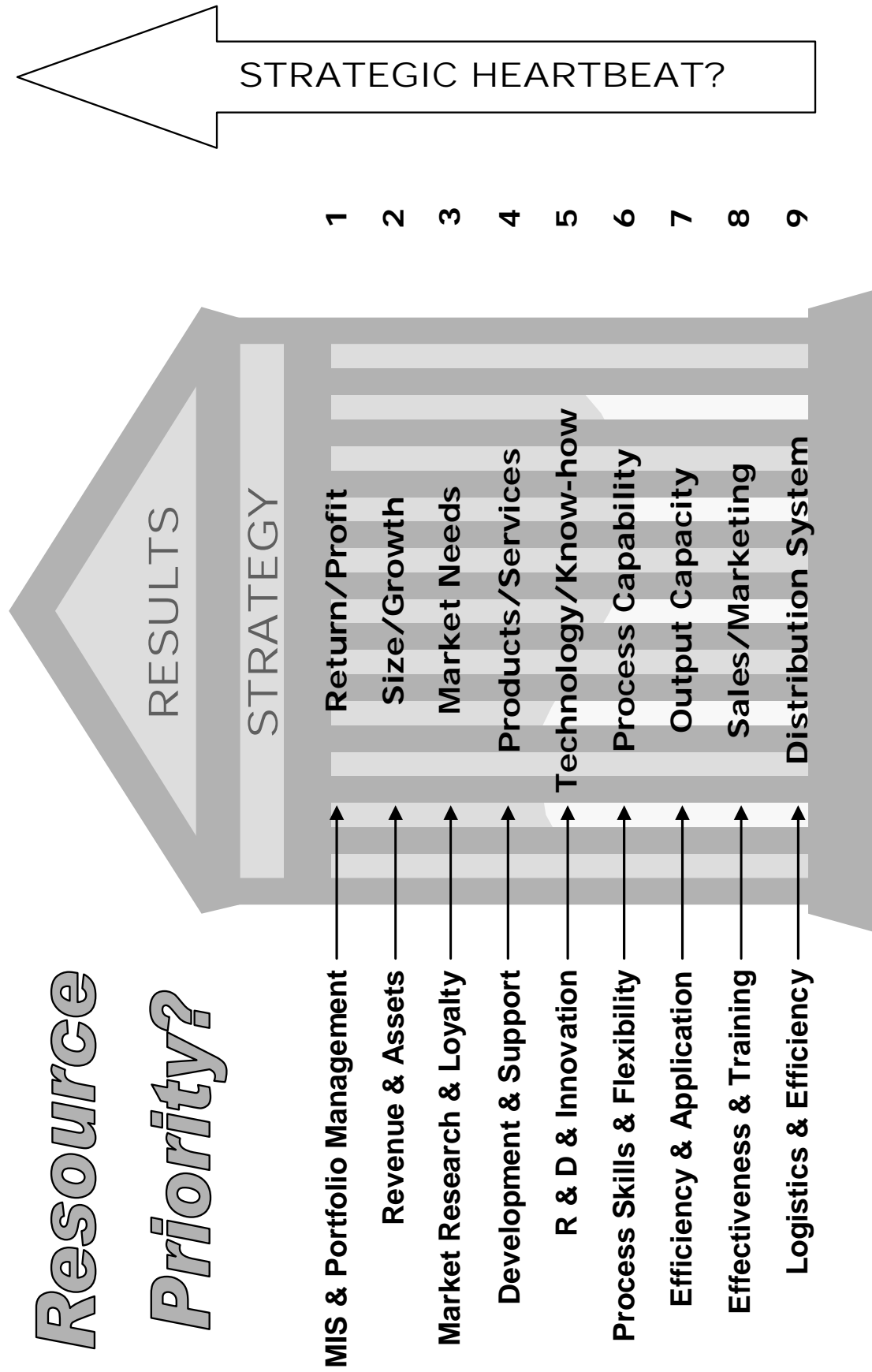
In reality the driving force influences future scope for products and markets in order to keep strategy focused and resources optimised. The other drivers support the strategic processes in the business. These are critical functions that must be enabled to implement initiatives needed to successfully execute strategy.

During Strategic Thinking we identify strategic processes and then define the Corporate Excellence required to pursue these processes. The concept of Corporate Excellence is another very good reason for determining the Strategic Heartbeat. It directs management to focus resources and development into particular skills and capabilities required to successfully execute strategy in their chosen modus operandi. The Strategic Heartbeat being the modus operandi which follows the pursuit of their selected driving force.

There are many demands on resources and management must prioritise these resources by focusing on the skills and capabilities that will support the strategy and enhance their competitive edge.

Thus, resources must be allocated to develop competencies needed to develop Corporate Excellence. Logically, each driving force needs very specific but different capabilities to make it work (see following graphic). To create Corporate Excellence and stay strategically focused, we have to decide which competencies to develop and which functions and activities in the business can manage with less emphasis.

In the following chapters I will describe each of the nine drivers that can have the potential to be a driving force for a business. As I describe the characteristics of each driver I will also link the skills and capabilities (Corporate Excellence) needed to enable the driving force to become the Strategic Heartbeat of an organisation.



Chapter 9

Which Driving Force is your Strategic Heartbeat?

Driving Force 1: Product or Service Concept

Driving Force: As a product driven strategy your future business is linked to the development of products which all stem from a single concept. As a result current products conceptually resemble past products and will be functionally similar. Future product developments will share the original concept or may be extensions or adaptations derived from existing ones.

Examples may be manufacturers of cars, computers or houses and services such as life insurance, package holidays and banking.

Corporate Excellence: Continuous product development is critical as you must have the best product in your class as you have chosen this route as your method of differentiation. You will be skilful in forecasting future customer trends and needs. You will be innovative in designing, producing and marketing your products and will want to support those products by offering excellent service to your customers both pre and post-sales.

Strategic Implications: Growth in this mode will come from exploiting the development of the concept. Therefore, management must be assured that there will always be sufficient market growth opportunities to enable them to return the required performance during each strategic time frame.

Management must also be able to see a sustainable programme of product enhancements and new product development coming from their activities. They must be aware of technological change and infuse it into their product developments and be conscious of other emerging technologies that might neutralise their know-how resulting in the product concept being outdated.

Successful product driven strategies usually look to exploit as many market and customer segments as possible by fragmenting the segments using different variations of their product to appeal to as wide a customer base as they profitably can. Detune to lower the price and add features to increase the value. Each one targeted at a different customer or market segment.

Product driven strategies are very focused and do not deviate from the concept even if there is a customer request to supply complementary products. The only exceptions are other products that would be seen as necessary in the process of promoting or supporting the sale and exploiting the core product line.

Examples of this would be a motor manufacturer who will naturally distribute spares and service items in order to support the product or a holiday package company that would supply long term car parking for its clients.

Business Structure: With all good strategy, the organisational structure needs to reflect the strategic intent of the business. We tend to see successful strategies developing a business structure that will promote their strategic objectives. As the Primary Driver will differ from one business to the next then naturally the objectives will be different and accordingly the business structure to execute the strategy will also differ.

With product driven strategies it is usual to see the business structured around the product families. A product driven motor manufacturer would normally set up business units to reflect product lines such as non commercial vehicles, light commercial, large heavy commercial, military, etc and sub sets of these product lines.

Driving Force 2: Market Needs

A business that is driven by satisfying the needs of a customer class or generic market type

Driving Force: Unlike product driven organisations, some have wide ranging product portfolios that have little consistency with look and functionality. They are often made or provided using different technology or materials. These organisations pursue a strategy that is not product driven but instead is market needs driven. In this mode you identify clearly describable customer classes or segments and then pursue them with a wide range of products that fulfil a related but generic market need.

Market examples might be health needs, food service, office supplies, and customer class examples such as the over 50's and readers of special interest magazines.

Corporate Excellence: You develop the skills required to enable you to have a thorough knowledge of your customers and reinforce your strategy by developing customer and end user loyalty. You excel at research in order to understand your market's needs better than any competitor and you use this knowledge to anticipate changes and trends, which will enable you to respond with a perpetual stream of new and innovative products.

Strategic Implications: Unlike the first example, growth from a market needs strategy will come from a broad range of products based on different concepts. However, these products will be targeted to satisfy the needs of a clearly focused class of customers or market segments. The common characteristics that these products share will be that they are all needed by the targeted customers and all stem from a generic market description.

So the question for management when considering growth is based on the sustainability of the generic market need that they are targeting. For example, the growth in organisations like Saga who target the older population is fuelled by the evidence that people are living longer and will

have special needs. However, if the trend for some reason became reversed then the growth potential will naturally decline. Another significant factor would be the amount of disposable finance that the aging population will have, given the future prospects for our pensions.

Business Structure: The loyalty of customers is vital to the success of this strategy and so careful consideration of how to deal with the customers is another management concern. Successful market driven strategies tend to structure their business around each customer segment thus focusing on the support and development of their customer classes.

This structure is yet another clear difference between the product driven strategies that will structure around their product lines compared with the market driven strategies that will structure around their customers and target markets. When allocating resources these differences further underline the importance of identifying the organisation's Strategic Heartbeat. Different Strategic Heartbeats will have different implications and need different business structures that require a different resourcing approach. The graphic opposite illustrates the implications when it comes to choosing which products and which markets to emphasise.

Capability Driven Strategies

Unlike product concept or market needs driven companies, some make strategic decisions as to which products to offer and which markets to pursue based on exploiting their know-how and capabilities. There are five different capabilities that will influence these choices:

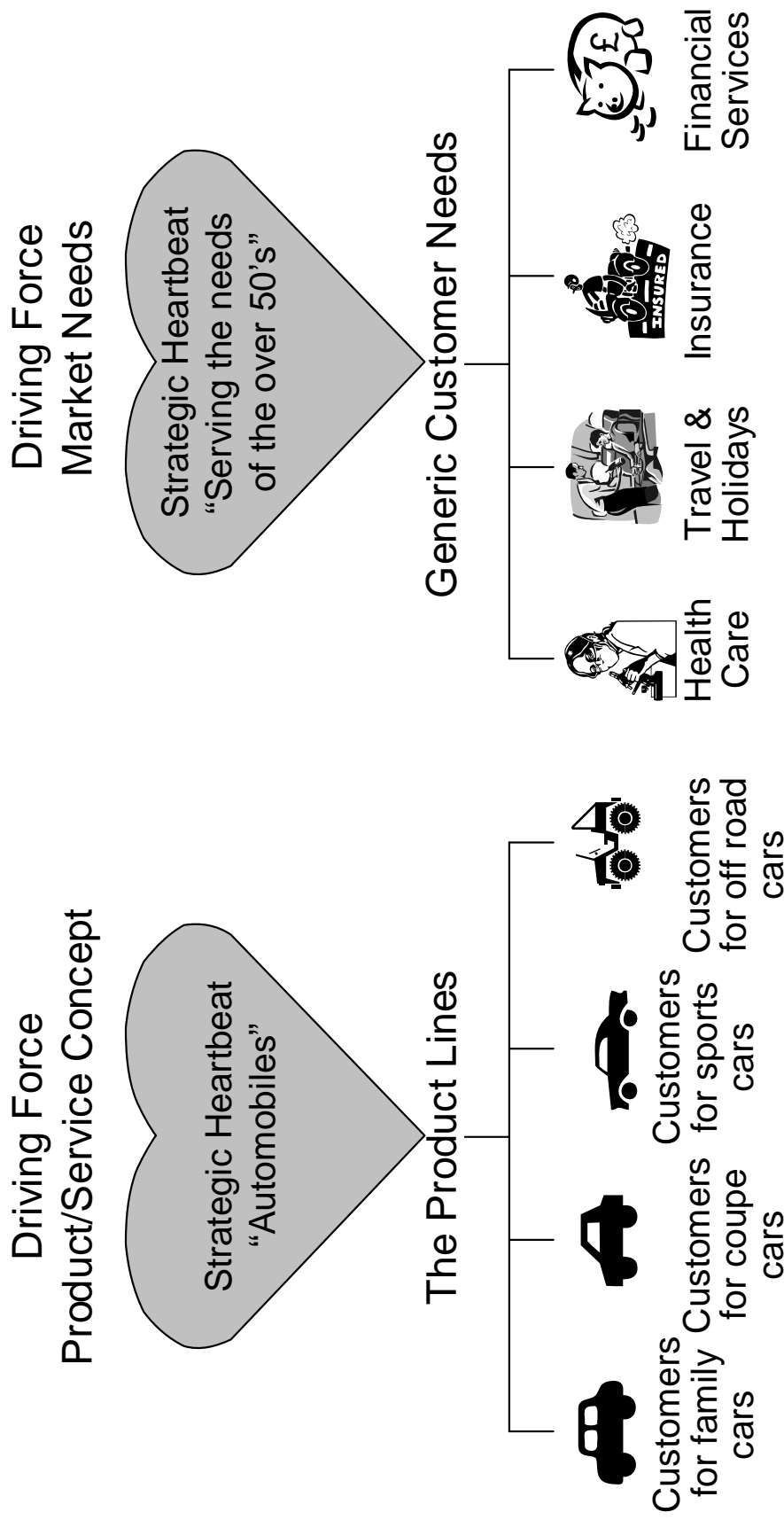
- 1st Capability: Technology /Know-how
- 2nd Capability: Process Capability
- 3rd Capability: Output Capacity
- 4th Capability: Sales / Marketing method
- 5th Capability: Distribution system

Driving Force 3: Technology / Know-how

1st Capability Driving Force: As a Technology Driven organisation you generate solutions that need problems to solve. Always at the root of a technology driven company is knowledge that needs exploiting. You will invest heavily into research to enhance your know-how and may acquire new but complimentary knowledge even if you can see no immediate product application. You may have very broad product portfolios that will serve the needs of equally broad market segments, but you will note that each product will have grown from the foundation technology.

Pharmaceuticals, polymers, chemicals and electronics are possible examples of technology organisations.

Compare the Implications between these two Driving Forces



The Products share the same concept... but the classes of Customers is different, wide ranging and targeted according to their needs

The Products stem from different concepts... but are all focused on satisfying the needs of one class of Customers sharing a generic need

(Driving Force 3: Technology / Know-how...continued from previous page)

Corporate Excellence: You emphasise pure research and applications research in order to exploit new marketable concepts and products. You usually spend more than competitors in your area of expertise, on pure research to keep at the cutting edge of knowledge in this field and on applied research to develop the practical use and marketability of this knowledge. You will seek to achieve maximum margins and returns on your products and aim to control the pace of developments in your markets. Marketing and selling are key competencies in technology driven organisations.

Strategic Implications: The main consideration for management is to understand the longevity of the technology they are investing in. If there is a chance that the technology will be superseded and they will be unable to exploit this or the next generation of the technology, then the implications for growth by pursuing this strategy will be bleak.

- Is there a chance that two technologies could be converging such as happened with computers and telecommunications?
- Is the technology covered by a patent that will soon expire? What is likely to happen when this occurs?
- Are there any different new or emerging technologies that could make the existing technology redundant?
- Are there sufficient people skills available to the business to continue to exploit the technology?

Changes of this kind will dramatically affect the current and future product applications and change the face of competition.

Business Structure: As with the previous examples, the business structure is critical to exploit the strategy. In the case of a technology business you will normally see them organising themselves around the different major application areas of their technology.

Once the major application areas have been organised, then each one can pursue a range of products that have been developed from their particular application. Products will be designed to meet existing needs or create new needs targeted towards a wide range of markets and customers, but all the products will have stemmed from the application of their technology.

Subsidiary companies that have been organised in this way could well find themselves with a Product Concept driving force and a mandate to exploit similar product concepts that all stem from the technology being invested in by the corporation.

Driving Force 4: Process Capability

2nd Capability Driving Force: As a Process Capability driven organisation you develop products that exploit your proprietary business processes.

As a manufacturer you build special capabilities into your production process that will enable you to provide a service or to make products with features that are difficult for competitors to copy. You have flexible processes, which you can profitably use to exploit short run requirements. You often pursue niche markets and markets where you can differentiate, add value and generate premium pricing.

Highly specialised manufacturing and speciality printers might be examples.

If you are a service industry you will have similar characteristics. Your capability resides in skills carried in the heads of highly trained people. Your production process stems from teams of people in an office rather than production lines in a factory. Your investment is in people, either highly qualified such as engineers, lawyers, and accountants or highly trained such as telephone sales and support.

Examples may include; people intensive speciality service industries such as Civil Engineers, Solicitors, Accountants and other professional services, also Call Centres could be examples.

Corporate Excellence: Professional services firms will develop proprietary techniques, concepts and processes to fulfil their clients' requirements by making use of their army of fee earners and associates. Call centres will invest in training to optimise investments in staff. Manufacturing organisations will invest in special tooling and employ skilled operators in order to optimise productivity when producing complex products. They will often develop and then seek to exploit specific and proprietary production techniques and skills. Certain printers will address a niche market by specialising in the production of packaging in full colour, in special sizes, laminated, hygienically treated and hermetically sealed, etc.

All process capability driven organisations tend to focus on the skills that will differentiate them from their competitors. In production companies they will often see flexibility of manufacture as a key skill. The ability to change a production line from one product to another in very quick time is part of that flexibility. To differentiate themselves they will seek to build close working relationships with their customers. They will often offer product design services. Partnering with customers is another method used to build long term working relationships and "cradle to grave" services are offered to lock customers into their proposition.

Managing the logistics of their process is another key skill. A process capability driven strategy relies on the organisation having the best in class systems and methods. These organisations will focus their resources into

continuous improvement of the core processes in order to drive down the operating costs but at the same time improve their versatility and value to the customer. Investing in the most appropriate systems to make this happen and ensuring an unbroken availability of the process is essential.

The process capability will determine the nature of products or services that will be handled and the nature of the markets being addressed. Only products and markets that will optimise the special processes will be pursued.

Strategic Implications: To grow a business pursuing a process capability strategy, management need to assure themselves that there is sufficient application for their special skills and capabilities over the longer term. Accomplishing premium pricing is important to the success of this strategy and this is best achieved by developing propriety processes and techniques.

Processes that are difficult for competitors to copy are also valuable to this strategy and it is very important to make customers aware of the special nature and significance of these processes. To be able to create enough throughput volume to justify the process investments and to sustain premium pricing is another consideration for management.

Business Structure: Process Capability driven companies organise around the main applications of the process. The core process capability is at the centre of all the main application areas. The difference in capability between each of the main application areas is usually created by additional processes, techniques or know-how that are distinct to each special area in order to process the different products derived from these applications.

Driving Force 5: Output Capacity

3rd Capability Driving Force: As an Output Capacity Driven company you offer products that enable you to keep your facility operating at maximum capacity. To maintain capacity you focus on products that have wide customer demand with the potential to generate high volumes and repeatability. You need low selling prices so you pursue low production costs and high productivity. Your investment in assets must be exploited and so physical plant and machinery as in a paper mill or a place, building or resource that offers specific services like an airport, hotel or train operator must be kept fully occupied. In order to keep to capacity you will produce any product or service that you can sell to any customer, in any market, providing this activity will exploit capacity from your process.

Industries such as pulp and paper, steel mills, oil and gas have fallen into this classification. Other examples might be jobbing printers, business hotels and airlines.

Corporate Excellence: A manufacturer pursuing an output capacity driven strategy will concentrate on continuously honing its efficiency. It will also look

for ways of soaking up its capacity by producing products to substitute other products on the market. For example, paper cups to substitute plastic and polystyrene, card food containers rather than plastic or aluminium. Towelling made from paper as an alternative to cotton and polymers.

Output driven companies will exploit margins during a good economic cycle because they know that as soon as trading conditions change they will have to compete on cost. Constantly driving down cost and becoming the most efficient producer is vital to this strategy.

A service company will follow much the same concept substituting services by offering their own versions to their customers. During the good times they enjoy premium prices but when there is too much capacity they cut prices. To enable them to do this they must be the most efficient service providers. Process efficiency is a key requirement to make this happen, as keeping output up and costs down is the basis of their competitive edge. Airlines are a good example of this practice. Travel service providers are also keen to practice substitute marketing. Cross channel ferries compete with the channel tunnel and high speed trains compete with airlines.

Some organisations use natural resources to sustain their output capacity and so will be continuously looking for easy access to the natural resource required for its growth. Exploration for fossil fuels and minerals is a strategic skill required by organisations that are driven by these natural resources. Forestry is a strategic skill required by those exploiting timber. In addition, these organisations must be able to efficiently convert the natural resource into a raw material that can then be used by others in the value chain. Exploration and Conversion, two of the strategic capabilities required.

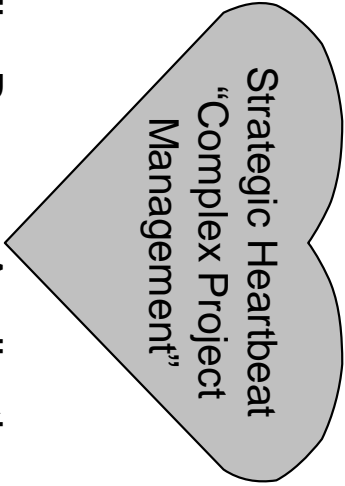
Strategic Implications: For growth, management must recognise that they need market demand that will result in a sustainable volume of products or services that enable the business to keep its facility operating at maximum capacity. To maintain capacity the focus needs to be on products that have wide customer demand with the potential to generate high volumes and high repeatability.

This business strategy needs low selling prices so it must pursue low production costs and high productivity. The investment in assets to do this must be continuously pursued.

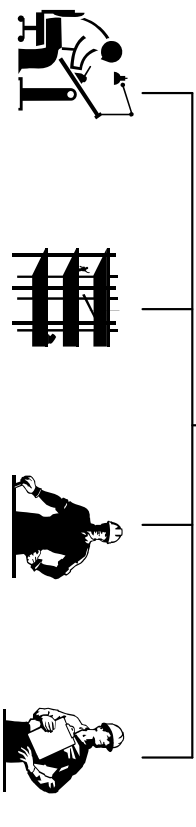
Business Structure: An output capacity driven business will structure itself in the best way to maximise the available output level. These businesses do not like to make very many changes to their process setup as this produces expensive down time and affects productivity. They are businesses that are looking to achieve low production cost through high utilisation, throughput and productivity.

Compare the Implications between these two Driving Forces

Driving Force
Process Capability

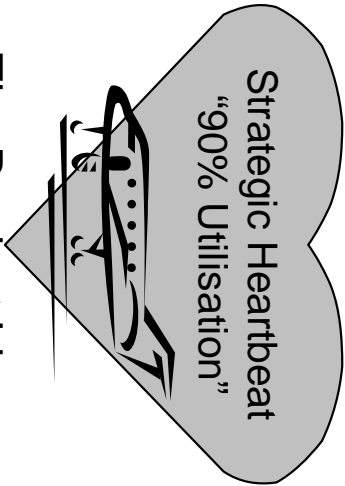


The Process Applications

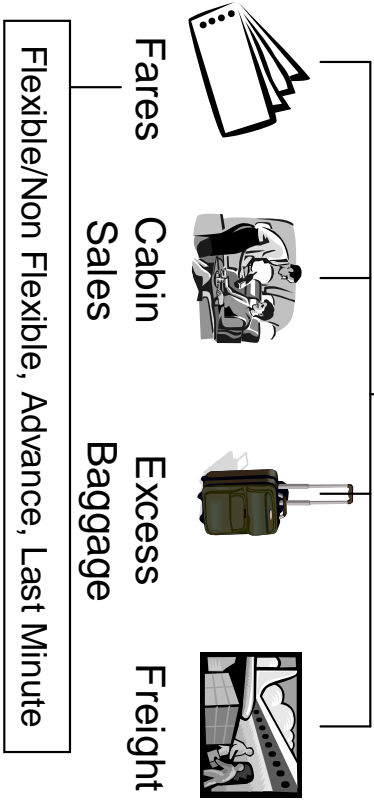


Process applications share similar capability.
Products/Services are derived from the applications.
Customers targeted are those that seek special skills
and place value/importance on this expertise

Driving Force
Output Capacity



The Product Lines



Product Lines are chosen to fill capacity.
Customers are interested in price not difference.
Any class of customer is welcome

Driving Force 6: Selling or Marketing method

4th Capability Driving Force: As a Selling or Marketing Driven organisation you pursue a strategy that has a highly differentiated or unique method of taking an order. You will only emphasise products that can be successfully sold by your special method, only operate in markets where the customers will accept and utilise your method of sale and only solicit customers that you can easily reach by this method.

Examples are: direct from catalogue via pick up points like Argos, direct telephone service organisations like Direct Line Insurance and First Direct banking, Digital TV shopping channels, party plans like Tupperware and Anne Summers and internet services like Amazon.

Corporate Excellence: A sales or marketing method driven strategy succeeds or fails on the productivity and success of the sales or marketing method. The method determines the choice of products that can be successfully sold and the markets that can be effectively addressed.

A direct B2B selling method achieves growth for the organisation by populating the sales territories with a steady stream of well trained and motivated personnel that have been supplied with the best possible sales promotional aids and mix of products for selling by this method.

Thus the best recruitment, training and support of sales people are strategic capabilities for sales method driven companies. The proficiency of the method is determined by individual levels of sales skill possessed by each of the sales people that have been sent out to close business. Thus it is the strategic skills of recruitment, sales training, sales promotion and marketing support that these organisations need to focus their resources into.

A marketing method driven strategy would apply the same rules but this time to the marketing process such as catalogues, websites, advertising, call centres, direct mailings, press/public relations, point of sale materials, order processing, etc.

Strategic Implications: Management must be sure that they have a genuine unique, proprietary or highly differentiated method of taking an order or providing a service. Growth will be determined and limited by emphasis on products that can be successfully sold by the special method.

The business will only operate in markets where customers will accept this method of sale and only solicit customers in those markets that can easily be reached by this method.

Business Structure: The business structure will focus on supporting, improving and exploiting the selling or marketing method.

Driving Force 7: Distribution System

5th Capability Driving Force: As a Distribution System Driven company you only develop products and service the markets that will exploit your distribution process. You make significant investments in systems, processes, equipment and facilities to achieve this objective. You will only seek opportunities to move from place to place product that will fit your logistical system. For example tangibles such as parcel distribution and merchandise from outlets (retail distribution) or intangibles like speech/data distribution by telephone companies using networks of wires or transmitters.

Corporate Excellence: A distribution system driven strategy relies on the organisation having the best in class distribution system. The old saying of providing “the right products, in the right place, at the right time, at the right price” best sums up distribution system efficiency. You would view managing the logistics of the process as a core competence. Organisations will focus their resources into continuous improvement of the distribution process in order to drive down the operating costs but at the same time improve efficiency and value to the customer.

Strategic Implications: The features of the distribution process will determine the nature of products or services that will be handled and the scope of the markets being addressed. Only products and markets that will optimise the particular distribution system will be targeted. Investing in the most appropriate systems to make this happen is essential (System Efficiency the way it works) and ensuring an unbroken availability of the delivery system is critical (System Organisation how it works).

With retail distribution major consideration is given to maximising customer footfall and so the choice of products being offered will reflect the needs of targeted customers in a given geographical area and retail market segment. Products would be linked to a merchandising process and seen at corporate level as being different customer services offered by departments such as Greengrocery, Fish, Butchery, Household, Off Licence, Home Delivery, etc.

Business Structure: The business would be structured around the different logistical methods employed by the system. For example, a logistical services organisation may have methods of delivery that employ air freight, sea cargo, rail shipping and road transportation. Each would be structured to provide maximum efficiency and reliability for the customer.

A retail organisation would structure around regions, commodity groupings within the outlets and distance from distribution depots. It could also structure around types or size of outlet.

A telecommunications company would structure around key services being offered using the distribution system, e.g. voice traffic domestic, voice traffic business, broadband, cellular mobile, etc.

Results Driven Strategies

There are two types of results driven organisation:

- Driving Force 8: Size/Growth requirements
- Driving Force 9: Return/Profit requirements

It is generally acknowledged that to grow and make a profit is an implied result for any business. Without growth and profit a business will ultimately die. Growth and profit should be seen as a thermometer that tells top management how healthy the business is. This being the case most organisations will achieve their growth and profit requirements not by being results driven (as explained below) but by making choices as to which products to offer, which customers and markets to pursue and which capabilities to develop based on one of the driving forces already described.

However, there are some companies that pursue a strategy based on one of the following two driving forces:

Driving Force 8: Size/Growth

Driving Force: If you pursue a Size or Growth driven strategy you focus on top line performance the emphasis being on achieving short-term results and optimising economies of scale. Strategic decisions will emphasise product areas, customer/market segments, geographic markets and acquisitions that will focus only on the achievement of growth.

Driving Force 9: Return/Profit

Driving Force: If you pursue a Return and Profit driven strategy you focus on bottom line performance and make choices about being in certain businesses based solely on their ability to meet a return or profit target. You expect your portfolio of businesses to return the required results on time, every time. You generally leave the choices as to the scope for products and markets to your business units.

Corporate Excellence: A size/growth driven strategy (8) or a return/profit driven strategy (9) is one that focuses solely on areas of measurement and uses performance targets and potential market growth predictions as a guide to choose other companies to acquire providing they can meet the performance criteria.

These organisations need to be very skilled at managing their portfolio of businesses and so they need excellent communications systems that will give them timely financial information about their subsidiaries.

Strategic Implications: These are the typical drivers of conglomerate and holding companies. They usually give considerable autonomy to each of their subsidiaries but in return expect them to deliver the agreed profits as required. There are seldom any links between subsidiaries and not necessarily synergy in terms of their products or markets.

If focus is only on results as a strategy the danger is that you can stifle innovation because the emphasis is on achieving short-term results. For innovation to have a chance of flourishing, it must be given time to develop in order to exploit new product and market initiatives that will eventually deliver profitable growth. However, this rarely occurs in the short term.

Strategic growth by innovation can be achieved by choosing one of the other driving forces. Management would choose the one that will give them the best scope to develop products and markets that optimise the existing and future competency and that will distinguish strategy from the competition.

Corporate holding companies will make strategic choices differently to their business units. Conglomerate or holding companies will choose to acquire businesses that will have the potential to sustain a return of the desired results. They will usually be making acquisitions that have scope for future products and markets that will fit the overall group strategy.

These types of organisations will tend to make choices about which products and which markets to pursue based on very different criteria to that of product, market or capability driven organisations and will use performance only as a guide to make decisions by focusing solely on critical areas of measurement to achieve this goal.

Consequently, subsidiaries and business units operating under this structure will find themselves more restricted in the choices they can make regarding products and markets because they will always be seeking to return the results required by head office.

Management of holding companies and conglomerates sometimes have less interest in choices of products and markets believing that it is subsidiary companies that are closer to the competition and therefore it is their responsibility to make those decisions.

Business Structure: Traditionally conglomerates and holding companies have held quite diversified business portfolios and have themselves had no direct products or markets preferring to focus on either top line growth or bottom line profit.

Recently there has been a move by these organisations to focus on more homogeneous business groups in order to benefit from economies of scale and shared expertise. The reorganisation of Hanson is one such example.

What sort of business are you?

DETERMINE THE STRATEGIC HEARTBEAT OF YOUR ORGANISATION

Which of the following Business Concepts fits your strategy today?

Which of the following Business Concepts would be best for the future?

Driving Force	Business Concept
Product or Service Concept	We offer products or services that share the same concept, meet a specific need and sell them to a wide or targeted range of customers.
Customer/Market Needs	We offer many different product concepts to satisfy a broad generic need of a target market or specific customer class.
Technology Know-how	We produce products or services all of which exploit applications of a specific technology or intellectual know-how.
Process Capability	We exploit a proprietary or highly differentiated process capability that will produce products or services to fulfil special needs or niche markets.
Process Output Capacity	We achieve capacity from investments made in our production or service delivery assets. High efficiency and productivity are our goals.
Sales/Marketing	We exploit a special selling or marketing method to reach target customers and markets but only offer products or services that can be sold in this way.
Distribution	We exploit a proprietary system of distribution to reach a broad section of customers and markets choosing only products/services that fit our system.
Size/Growth	We choose to pursue products, customers and markets which primarily focus on revenue growth or critical mass requirements.
Return/Profit	We pursue growth by acquisitions or choose products, customers and markets that will reliably achieve or exceed a minimum profit return.

If you answered the above questions, do you think its time for a change?

Chapter 10

The importance of determining the Strategic Heartbeat

Strategic Thinking is mostly about allocating resources and understanding the issues facing the business. You want to make the best choices choosing between opportunities and allocating resources and so the importance of selecting a Strategic Heartbeat is critical to achieving exceptional results.

Each one of the nine driving force options just described will influence future decisions in a different way. This will lead the organisation down a different path because it will have a different focus and direction.

If you practise using multiple drivers as a strategy to stay focused you risk oscillating from one direction to another as you switch between different opportunities that are not consistent with the strategic criteria you are using with your decision making.

The implications of determining the driving force behind your strategy can be demonstrated by this example. 3M produce a wide range of products that they sell to a wide range of customer types. The driving force behind this strategy is the technology of Polymer Chemistry. They invest heavily in developing applications for this technology. From these applications they produce a wide range of products but each one is related in some way to the core technology of Polymer Chemistry.

Some products stem from the application of coatings and some from the application of adhesives. With this understanding we can now see the logic behind their choices of products and markets. (See top graphic opposite)

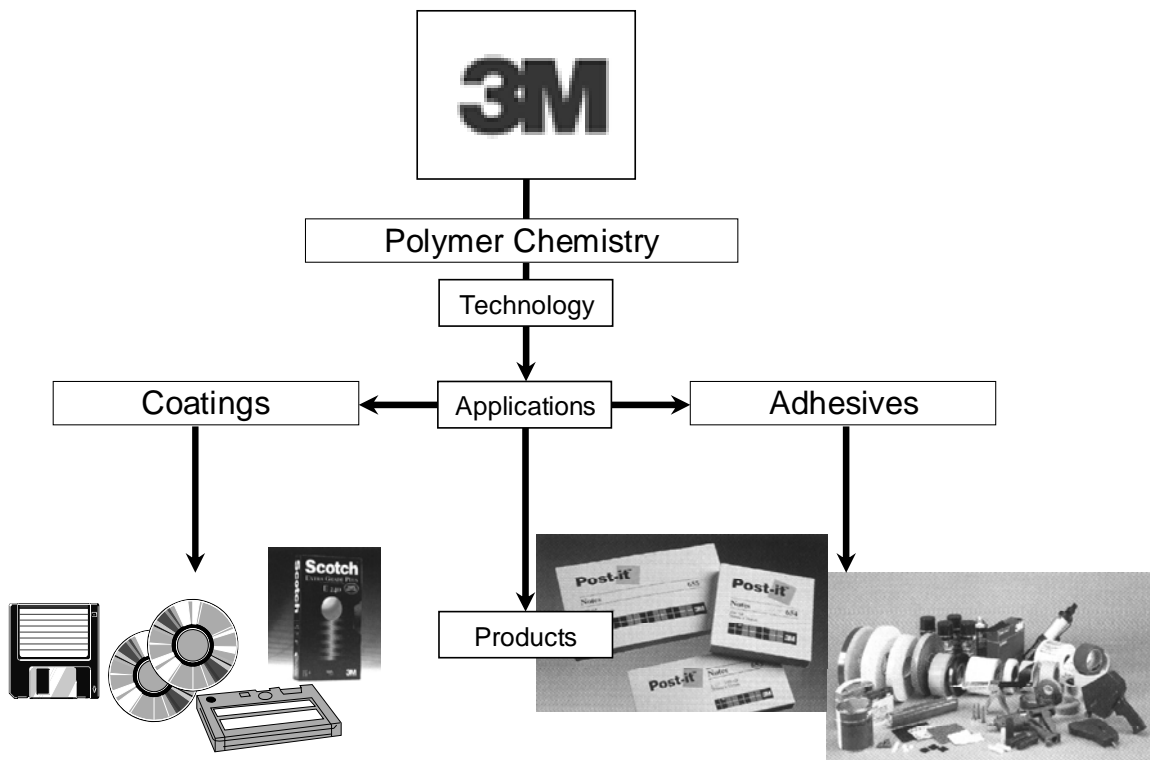
Now, if 3M's strategy was to pursue a product concept rather than a technology then their allocation of resources into research and product development and the choices they would make as to which products to pursue and which customers to serve would be quite different.

If the product concept was adhesives then we would see all of the current adhesive based products but none of the coatings based products. More resources would be channelled into adhesives but none into coatings. The resulting scope for products and markets would be quite different.

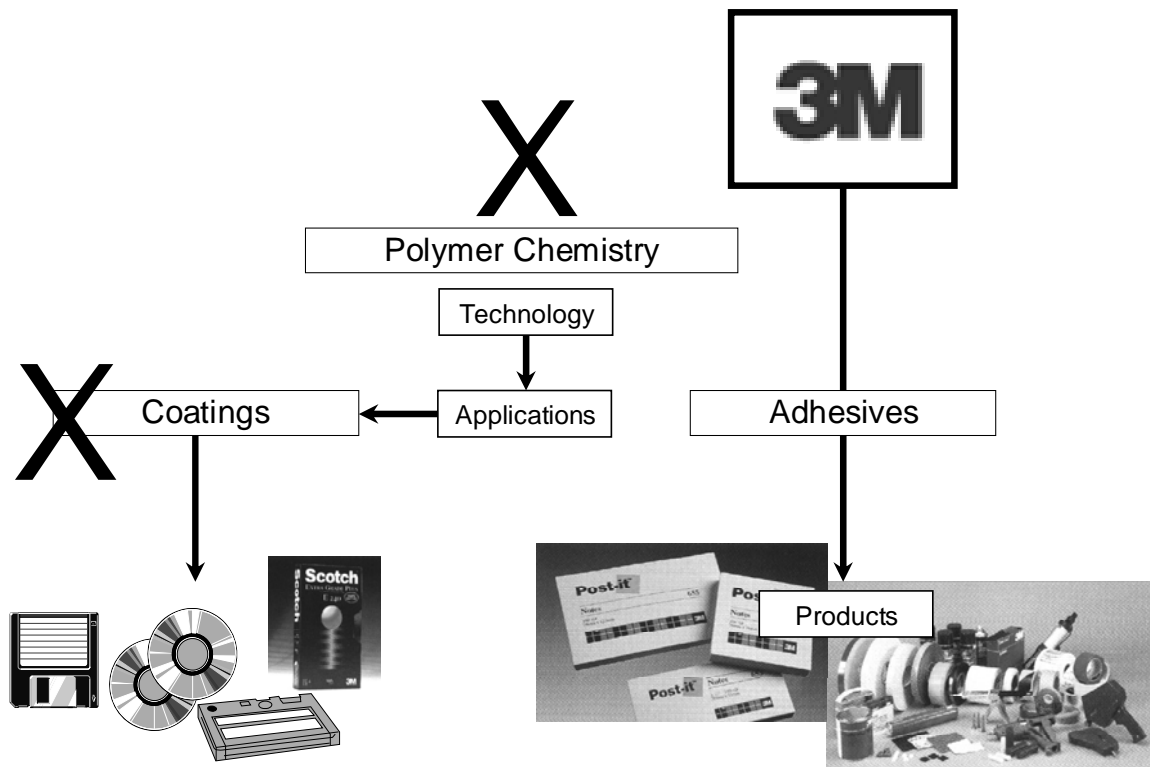
The focus and direction of the business would also be different in terms of its competency, future skills, recruitment and training requirements, operating structure, R&D programmes, Finance, Business Processes and all other decisions concerning the allocation of resources.

(See lower graphic opposite)

A Technology Driven 3M



A Product Driven 3M



Strategic Thinking in the boardroom

Chapter 11

Developing the Future Strategic Profile

In Chapter 1 strategy was described as “creating a business profile that can be used as a framework for high quality and consistent future decision making”. The Strategic Profile describes the future look and composition of the business in terms of its products, markets, competency and objectives. This can then be used as the target for business planning by the operational functions and for the process of implementation.

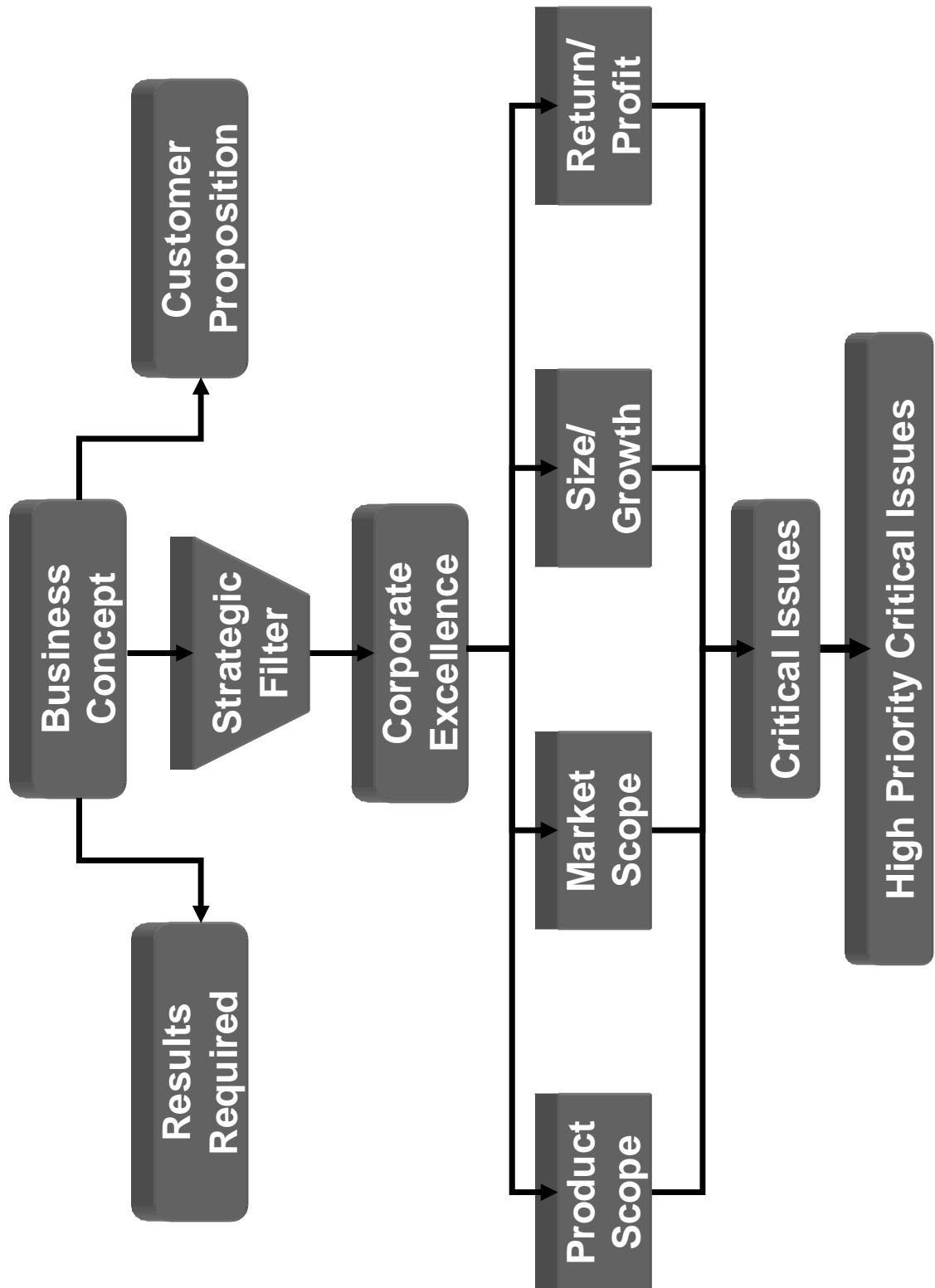
Without a clear picture of what you want the business to look like at some point in the future it makes it very difficult to plan and allocate resources in the most beneficial way. Planning would then be an opportunistic affair with the business meandering from one opportunity to the next by choosing the best opportunities on the day but not necessarily the most focused.

The graphic on the following page illustrates the construction of a Strategic Profile which should contain the following:

- The business concept should be clear and unambiguous in describing the customer proposition and the organisation's vision and goals. It should be unique and have aspects to it that competitors will find very difficult to copy.
- The business concept should also be articulated as a separate strategic filter that can be used to assist decision making when allocating resources and choosing between opportunities.
- Corporate Excellence will be described in terms of the skills and capabilities needed to implement strategy that must be excelled at to a higher degree than any competitor. This is what will create a competitive edge.
- The strategic scope for future products, customers, market segments and geographic markets.
- The strategic objectives, key performance indicators and guidelines for size/growth and return/profit.
- The high priority Critical Issues that must be managed to successfully implement future strategy.

The final version of a Strategic Profile must be easy to understand, retain and communicate to others. It must also bridge the link between defining and implementing strategy.

Future Strategic Profile Outputs



Chapter 12

The Implementation of Strategy

The bridge to link defining and implementing strategy is the Critical Issues. Critical Issues are all those actions that need to be taken to ensure success but if ignored will result in the failure to implement strategy.

The importance of these issues to strategy means that each one must be assigned a single, named person who will own the issue and be held accountable for its successful conclusion. That person will also be responsible for reporting progress back to the top management team at prescribed intervals.

To identify Critical Issues the top management team looks back through the Strategic Thinking process outputs to check:

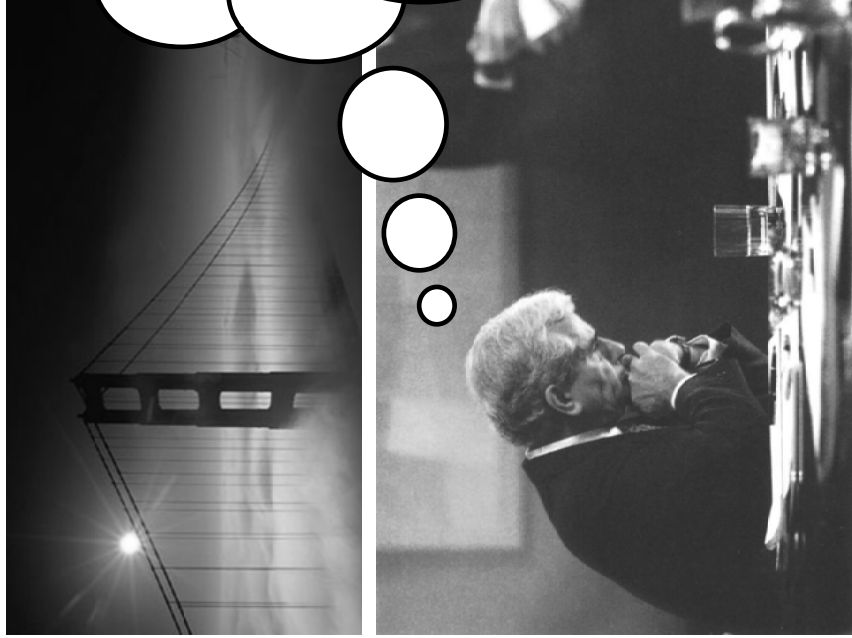
- The significant changes between existing strategy and future strategy: What is the size of the gap and what needs to be done to close the gap?
- What issues need handling to ensure that future strategy directly exploits strengths, maximises opportunities, avoids weaknesses and minimises vulnerability and threat?
- Is there a significant competitive edge that in some way will allow us to differentiate and be distinctive? What actions need to be taken to make this happen?
- What are some of the best outcomes and achievements that we can expect from this strategy and what could be some of the worst outcomes and results? In view of this, what issues must we tackle that will ensure the best results occur?

The successful implementation of strategy is a direct result of managing all those Critical Issues identified as necessary to change the future direction of the business. Critical Issues will examine what needs to be done in areas such as structure, processes, skills, capability, technology, human and financial resources, etc.

Critical Issues should not be confused with strategic or operational objectives. Objectives should identify a series of end results at clear points in time and will naturally link with Critical Issues. However, the Critical Issues are developed to identify what needs to be done to prepare the organisation to best achieve its objectives over time.

Strategy Implementation

**What sort of
business are we
today?**



**What sort of
business do
we want to be
in the future?**

Critical Issues are the Bridge into Implementation

Chapter 13

Strategic Thinking: the process phases

Logically there are three phases to accomplish.

Phase 1: “Vision”: What sort of business do we want to be?

A successful execution of strategy requires a clear and unambiguous statement of business direction that is well communicated to all those people appointed with operational responsibility. Additionally, all the issues and objectives that are critical to the implementation process should be identified and allocated with owners and resources.

Phase 2: “Implementation”: How we intend to achieve our Vision?

This phase concerns how we compete. The outputs from *Phase 1* are taken and aligned to the operational plans and activities. This is done by facilitating the linkage between the strategic objectives and the operational activity required to achieve the business plan. Wherever possible this process should be merged with the organisation’s current established business planning methodology.

Phase 3: “Learning”: Optimising the implementation investment and experience as a performance improvement tool.

Like any other business process, Strategic Thinking and the execution of strategy must be the focus of continuous development and improvement in order to win against the competition. Once implementation plans have been formulated and the execution process commences then it is important to learn from the resulting activity. Pre-defining areas of potential risk in dealing with the Critical Issues and other implementation plans will identify where contingent actions can be developed to manage high risk areas and prevent problems occurring. Plans can be modified to minimise the effects if they do occur. Moving the goal posts is the last resort when executing strategy.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 are mutually exclusive being modules that can be selected as stand alone work sessions according to current requirements.

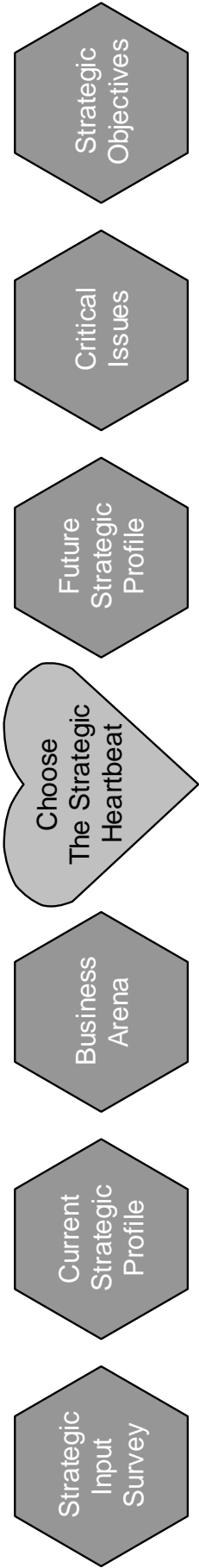
Phase 3 is a client discipline that must be practised to achieve supremacy but there are some stand alone work session modules and review sessions that can be utilised to help in this process segment.

It should be remembered that the published outputs are totally the work and conclusions from the participating management teams. This is how to achieve clarity, understanding and commitment to future strategy.

Strategic Thinking Process: Phases 1, 2 and 3

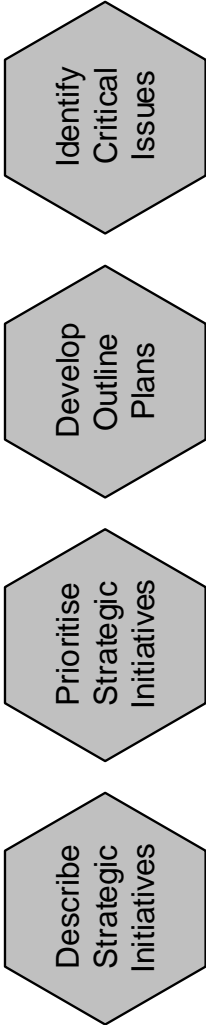
Phase 1 “Vision”: What do we want to be?

To Define Corporate or Business Unit Strategy

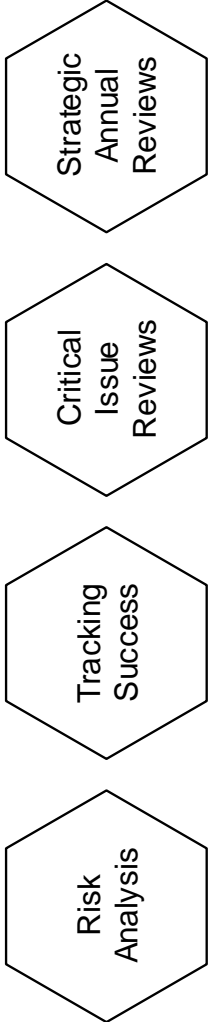


Phase 2 “Implementation”: How we intend to achieve this!

Strategic Focus Areas



Phase 3: “Learning” *Risk Analysis, Results and Reviews*



Chapter 14

Strategic Thinking: Phase 1 process steps

Phase 1:

- Initially either a two or three day work session according to the number of participants, timing logistics and client objectives.
- Setting of the Strategic Objectives is a further one day work session following about three weeks later.
- Annual reviews of Phase 1 are usually of one or two day duration.

The logistics of a work session are based on the steps briefly described as follows: (Please also refer to the Process Schematic on the previous page).

Strategic Input Survey (Work Session Preparation)

- Prior to the work session, project participants are briefed to ensure understanding and commitment to the process. They are also provided with an Input Survey to individually complete before the work session. These inputs are then consolidated into a single data document for use throughout the process.

Current Strategic Profile.

- At the start of the work session, participants discuss current strategy to ensure that they are all at the same level of understanding. Without this it is difficult to determine future strategy as this is the starting point on the road map to the future.

Examine the Business Arena.

- Using the input survey data, the management team systematically examine the most significant variables in the operating environment both internal and external to the business, including competition. In this way a view of the terrain that must be faced by the organisation can be mapped and used to formulate strategy.

Determining the Strategic Heartbeat: (Strategic Options)

- In this step we take the nine driving forces described earlier in this handbook and use them to debate the type of business that would be best to tackle the challenges identified in the business arena. The first task is to understand their relative importance to each other when placed in the context of the future business environment.

- The second task is to decide which one of the nine driving forces is fundamental to all major decision making and would become the Strategic Heartbeat of the organisation.

Develop the Future Strategic Profile. (See Chapter 11)

- The Strategic Heartbeat is now used to aid the construction of a business concept statement which clearly explains purpose and future intent of the business. It is concise, unambiguous and easy to understand and can be used to communicate strategy to all stakeholders both internally and externally.
- We produce a strategic filter to assist decision-making when choosing between opportunities and allocating resources.
- We articulate the Corporate Excellence by identifying those special skills and capabilities that collectively will differentiate the business so that resources can be allocated for the purpose of honing those skills into a sustainable competitive edge.
- We agree the scope for products and markets by defining examples and adding them to the Strategic Profile to accurately communicate future intent.
- We add strategic measurements and guidelines in terms of size/growth and return/profit for management to monitor the success of this strategy over time.

Define the Critical Issues. (See Chapter 12)

- Future strategy must be validated before finalisation and it is at this point the Critical Issues are identified. Each Critical Issue is prioritised and all high priority issues are taken and expanded into an action plan by identifying key plan steps and resources needed. An owner for each individual high priority Critical Issue is also appointed.

Determine the Strategic Objectives.

- With the Future Strategic Profile developed and Critical Issues identified, then the start of communicating and cascading strategy down through the organisation is to develop clear, challenging and measurable Strategic Objectives that can be aligned to the business plan. We identify existing product, customer and market positions that must be defended or that must be captured. We quantify the results required by product, customer and market position and agree the time-scales for the results to be achieved for each objective.

Chapter 15

Strategic Thinking: Phase 2 process steps

Phase 1 of our Strategic Thinking Process defines the vision for the future look of the business, the Critical Issues to be managed and the Strategic Objectives to be achieved. To facilitate the link from vision to execution it is firstly necessary to identify the following:

- Key Performance Indicators (to monitor the implementation)
- Operational Initiatives (aligning the Strategic Objectives with activities required from different business functions to execute strategy)
- Contingency Plans (to improve the chance of success)
- Individual Initiatives (aligning individual personnel objectives)

Phase 2 begins the extended process of communicating and cascading strategy down through the organisation. It is the process of translating strategy into operational terms by identifying specific initiatives within Strategic Focus Areas throughout the organisation.

To start with, the organisation must identify those Strategic Focus Areas that need special attention to help them with the development of implementation plans. This will separate the vision into operational activities to quickly channel activity into executing the strategy. Strategic Focus Areas will be those parts of the business that are critical to align to future strategy to ensure its success.

A Strategic Focus Area (SFA) is any part or process in the organisation that is essential to the quick and successful execution of strategy. Examples may be:

- Departments such as Sales, Marketing, Finance or HR
- Functions within a department such as Legal or Training
- Business Processes such as Customer Services or New Product Development
- Business Units, subsidiaries, joint ventures and alliances

With this part of the process there is usually a greater degree of customisation to ensure that the process achieves the organisation's objectives and also dovetails into the operating environment and structure of the business. When setting up Phase 2 it must be determined whether each SFA needs a driving team or whether it will be the single responsibility of a named individual. When deploying SFA driving teams a team leader is appointed. Where there is not the scope for a team then an owner of this SFA will be appointed.

SFA Operational Initiatives

The Future Strategic Profile is the output from Phase 1 which communicates to each SFA the focus and direction that top management have determined for the future. This Strategic Profile is used as a planning target by the SFA teams and process participants. They use this to determine the Strategy and Initiatives for their specific area of operational responsibility. In this way corporate strategy gets cascaded through the organisation in a format that is clearly understandable at each level and with the commitment of those participating.

- The first step is for each SFA to take the Strategic Objectives from Phase 1 and identify the separate initiatives that they will need to plan into their operational activities to achieve their distinct contribution towards strategy implementation. They will clearly describe each Operational Initiative by looking forward in time and deciding what the end result should be using measurable and quantifiable terminology wherever possible. They will also check the Critical Issues for any overlap and to help set priorities.
- The priority of each Operational Initiative will then be set. They will then be expanded into an outline plan by adding implementation actions, resources required and monitoring measures to implement each plan. In this way each SFA defines and commits to an implementation plan that, when completed, will have made a significant contribution to the overall execution of strategy.
- Whilst developing the actions in the Operational Initiatives plans, the SFAs will have identified areas of concern such as problems to solve, action items, plans to formulate and other important changes that must take place in order to execute strategy. They will take these concerns and develop their own specific critical issues which they must manage in order to complete their particular SFA objectives.

Strategic Thinking: Phase 3 process steps

SFA: Risk Analysis, Results and Reviews

Phase 3 begins the Learning Phase, the first step being Risk Analysis.

All the Critical Issues, Objectives and Initiatives are measured according to monitoring controls specified in their plans and the achievements recorded. For successful implementation each plan has a series of steps which are individually assessed as to their potential risk of implementation failure. Preventive actions are added plus contingent actions if prevention fails.

It is important for top management to keep the spotlight on strategic success and to communicate this success at every opportunity. Each project (issues, objectives and initiatives) must be monitored and tracked using a simple

format that will provide an “at a glance” review of performance to date for all those participating in this process.

Additionally there must be regular meetings and forums to get feedback from project owners as to:

- The current status of the project
- The progress to date
- The major activities that have occurred
- The problems encountered and resolved
- The requirement for resources
- The decisions to be made
- The next actions to take
- Confirmation that the dates will be met

To keep strategy focused and refresh the impetus it is good practise to review strategy annually. This is normally done in one or two days and consists of examining change in the internal variables, external variables and the competition. We examine the positive and negative impacts of change in our key business operating areas and use this to revisit the Critical Issues and Strategic Objectives identifying what needs to be done to positively deal with change. This approach regenerates the strategy and optimises the investments being made in its implementation.

Final versions of the Corporate Strategic Profile together with all the Strategic Focus Area profiles are consolidated into a single document. This can be used by management for a multitude of purposes including further communication of strategy, checking progress of implementation, controlling and coordinating resources and for future reviews.

Conclusion

Sheer necessity demands that most business activity focuses on dealing with short-term operational issues. However, few disagree that more time should be spent outthinking competition and making decisions as to how best to develop and exploit competitive advantage

When I talk to people during work sessions I often discover that the strategy for the business is not explicit but is determined implicitly by way of objectives given to them to fulfil their operational responsibilities. For these people strategy is discovered rather than communicated. A rather hit and miss affair.

I also see that strategy is not explicit or adequately communicated even amongst their top management. Strategy that is implicit and remains in the heads of a few key people is very difficult to implement. This will undoubtedly lead to disagreement and discontent as to how resources are allocated.

My objective in writing this handbook has been to provide you with some thought provoking concepts that I have personally used, and which if implemented will result in a common understanding and commitment to your strategy. As a full time, dedicated, professional facilitator I will be delighted to discuss in greater detail our Strategic Thinking Process and its logistics.

I sincerely hope that you have enjoyed browsing through this handbook and that you will be motivated to apply these concepts and that in so doing, it will enhance the growth, profitability and satisfaction of commanding your business.

Roger Handley
Founder and Owner
Strategy Workshops

About Strategy Workshops

At SWF we provide Critical Thinking Processes for top management teams one of which is our Strategic Thinking Process to help them articulate Vision and Goals for Strategy. We also facilitate all of our thinking processes by working with management teams to achieve their objectives.

We don't tell management how to run their organisation and we don't attempt to formulate strategy on their behalf. Our input is to provide a clear framework, meeting structure and methodology based on our proprietary Strategic Thinking Process using current accepted management practice.

By participating in this process management are able to quickly discuss the important issues facing the business and make the appropriate decisions to define and implement distinctive strategy.

We help our clients articulate a unique business concept that their competitors will find very difficult to copy, together with the Critical Issues that must be managed in order to quickly and successfully execute strategy.

Additionally, we provide and facilitate:

- Process tools to help with resolving critical issues, business planning, risk assessment, problem solving, decision making and contingency planning
- A process to identify the strategy of key competitors and to define tactics to out pace them
- An innovation process to assist with new product creation and development

About the Author

Roger Handley is the Founder and Owner of an active management consulting business which specialises in facilitating top management work sessions that have the objective of improving strategic competitiveness.

Roger's skill is facilitating rational thinking processes that allow top management teams to challenge and re-focus their corporate strategy and to define growth opportunities for new product, new service and new market initiatives.

His competence is drawn from over 35 years in business and working in management roles in organisations such as Debenhams, Rank Xerox, Apple Computer and Fujitsu.

Roger has worked as a management consultant since 1990.

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