




BOOK REVIEW

Book

Essentials of Strategic Management
Gamble JE, Peteraf PA & Thompson AA
2014 New York, USA: McGraw Hill ISBN: 978-0078112898

Reviewer

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If the passion is to learn, apply, and teach strategic management, then the book—*Essentials of Strategic Management: The Quest for Competitive Advantage*—is the excellent reference. The book emphasizes the practical application of the real-world interventions toward better learning of strategic management. The utilization of strategic management positioning theory and resource-based theory is well explained. Its coverage of business ethics, core values, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability is also excellent. The quality case collection is characterized by student appeal, teachability, and suitability for the utilization of concepts and analytical interventions. This book has relevant reference to implement strategic management tools for industry attractiveness and competitive strengths, overall company strategy, uniqueness drivers, profit formula, matrix segmentation, comparative market positions, corporate direction, resource bundles, representative value chain, industry key success factors, factors in SWOT, functional scorecards, sustainability balanced scorecard, changing culture, and departmental calendars, among others.

Factors that affect changes in industries and competitive conditions are well explained in this book. Understanding the environment and industry is a conscious awareness and decision for existence for both entrepreneurs and organizations. Organic activities are not enough for an organization to endure. The book suggests strategic moves like integration, franchising, joint ventures and mergers and acquisitions to capture greater value during the period of strategy implementation. Further, it provides tips for organizations and firms to succeed. The book explains well through the stories of selected organizations as to how they shift strategies with agility to overcome limiting antecedents. The common types of industry key success factors are comprehensive enough to explain the problems and solutions for firms to endure. In some critical situations, the book includes a comprehensive checklist of success factors that managers can implement, though the factors could have been more effective if they were explained more in detail. Managers can also consider the innovative marketing strategies that include comparative advertising that can enhance credibility of products. The book classifies strategic options and generic strategies depending on the chosen market coverage and the type of competitive advantage, whether low cost or differentiation, of the products, services, total costs and firm. The authors frame well the formulation of effective strategies through resource bundles and evaluation of cost or uniqueness drivers. The in-depth analysis of value chain paves way to creative interventions for a firm to succeed. For entrepreneurs and for corporations, a recommended position is to start with differentiation strategy that creates value, higher profit, and uniqueness among the perceptions of chosen customers that are difficult for competitors to match. Indeed, differentiation strategy is a stable intervention, yet its development requires great minds and discipline.

The book also links different functional departments. Cascading the strategy at the level of functional departments is essential while keeping the clarity, morale and passion of the managers and employees. These actions need to be synchronized with teams to move together as one organization in gaining results. The book clarifies the boundaries for growth. A firm's success is not limited to a nation, but the world is the playing field for modern-day organizational or business activities. The book leads to sustainability of firms. Keeping a healthy and active culture among people in an organization, the achievements of long-term profitability while abiding the law, living responsibly and conserving the environment become realistic. Moreover, the tables and graphs enable the strategist and students to consider critical factors and visualize positions for quality strategic management decisions. The chapters are arranged thematically and relate to firm strategy, managerial process of crafting a strategy, strategy analytical tools, resource-based view of the firm, strategic approaches, strategy options, corporate-level and functional strategy, ethics and values and the compelling conceptual framework to firm's operating excellence, competitive advantage, and good performance. The book is comprehensive and has practical application through knowledge and tools that are generated by readers and users. The resource-based view of a firm and strategic management positioning theory made the salient variables in strategy-building and learning clear. The interesting cases and their stories serve as guidelines to strategic management of firms and managers in similar context. The book, however, listed comprehensive and actionable strategic options specific details about concepts and terminologies. It is important to set strategic blueprints so that stakeholders can understand the needs, their roles, and what they can contribute. This is an efficient way to dissect the missing pieces toward enduring organizational success. This book gives manager confidence to be involved in problem-solving consultations and collaborations with other organizations and industries.

With these drastic changes in the current age of COVID-19 pandemic, and African Swine Fever Outbreak that affect global landscapes of different enterprises and entrepreneurship, the next edition of the book may highlight stars, resilience, bankruptcy, turnaround, operating excellence and growth strategies. The drivers for change are quickly "mutating" and these external environments can be tough to be anticipated. A new edition of this book may help strategists to be equipped with proactive interventions and prompt reactivity to the emerging global concerns. Indeed, different business practitioners, researchers, firms and organizations are keenly interested in the management of disruptive innovations.

Reviewer



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