

The Open University of Sri Lanka
Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management
Final Examination October 2021
OSP9336/MSP9336/MCP2255 – Strategic Management



Duration: Three (3) Hours and uploading Thirty (30) Minutes [ANSWERS SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND UPLOADED WITHIN THREE and HALF HOURS (3 Hrs. and 30 Mts.)]

Date: 16th October, 2021

Time: 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

Instructions:

- Answer All Questions.
- This question paper carries 2 questions.
- Answers should be focused and methodical.
- Write down your Student Registration Number on each page. All pages should be numbered, properly arranged, and submitted electronically.
- All written answer scripts should be safely kept with you to be submitted to the University when instructed.

Question One

- a) Write a brief introduction of the organization you are employed at present or on an organization which you are familiar with. State its mission with its key operations. (6 Marks)
- b) Describe one of the divisions of the above-mentioned organization with its major goals, objectives and key operations. (6 Marks)
- c) Describe its major resources, core competency/ies, and distinctive competencies. Use VRIO framework to establish your answer. (16 Marks)
- d) Describe what is a learning organization. Describe whether your organization is a learning organization? Explain how your organization can improve its competitiveness by becoming a learning organization, OR Explain how your organization improve its competitiveness as a learning organization. (14 Marks)
- e) As a Human Resource specialist what measure do you take to improve the learning culture within the organization? Describe. (6 Marks)

(Total 48 marks)

Question Two

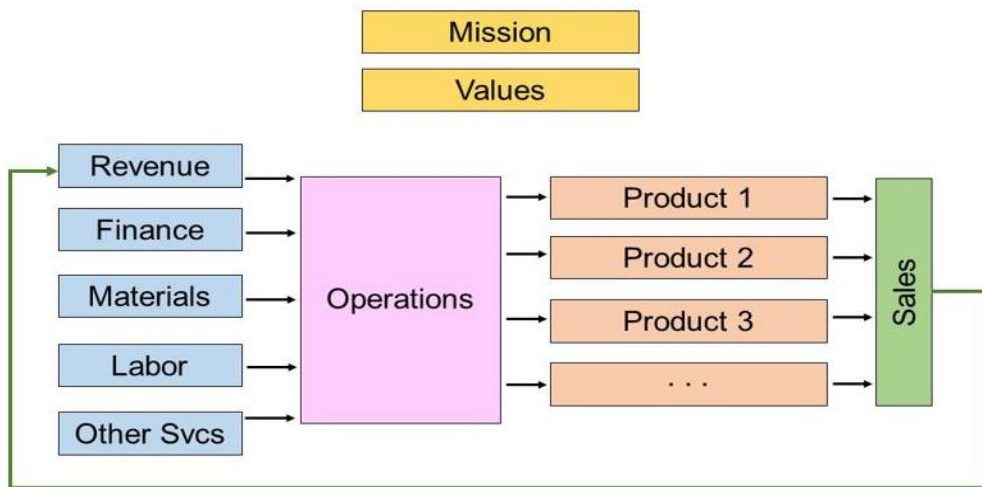
Read the following article on organizational future with Covid Pandemic. Answer the questions given at the end.

Business Strategic Planning During The Pandemic: What's Changed, What Hasn't?

Bill Conerly, Senior Contributor 'Leadership Strategy'

Strategic planning is never easy, and it has gotten hugely harder with the Covid-19 pandemic. Baseline forecasts of revenue and costs are tough, and who knows whether a second wave or a vaccine will change everything on short order? Yet decisions must be made. The strategic planning process's greatest value may be in identifying uncertainties and options even more than laying out a fixed path for the future.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it's best to begin by thinking about what has not changed.



Mission and values are most important, and probably have not changed. But resources, operations, ... [+] DR. BILL CONERLY

For most companies (and non-profits and government agencies), the mission has not changed. However, if your mission has been to pack thousands of people into a cruise ship, or to hold raves with hundreds of people dancing close together, or to design brick and mortar stores for commodity products, then a lengthy discussion of corporate mission is in order.

Most companies will not have to change their missions, but a brief discussion will be valuable. It reminds board members and executives of what the mission is, and the discussion secures buy-in for that mission.

In most organizations, fundamental values don't have to change because of the pandemic. Which is good news, because they are hard to change.

Working the business diagram from right to left, sales methods and channels should be reevaluated. Are changes needed due to on-line shopping? For business-to-business sales, will the personal sales call with dinner and a ball game work as well this year? Can today's salespeople be as effective in a social-distancing environment? Is a new approach to sales training needed?

Dan Hedeem advocates for starting with assumptions in the planning process. Tracking those assumptions over time can help to identify plans that won't work very well. For example, if a plan is based on the assumption of accelerating e-commerce, that assumption can be monitored. If it turns out that people really want to go back into stores, and e-commerce levels off, it's good to know that as soon as possible. The deviation of a key metric from the assumed path may be seen well before the plan's results can be judged. That will hasten adjustment of the plan to reality.

A company's desired product mix may have changed in the pandemic and recession. In the usual business cycle, value meals are advertised in the recession, with extra cheese promoted in the recovery. The pandemic recession is different, though, with social distancing a continuing concern. Which products are most appropriate for the current environment? Which products will thrive in the recovery? And what new products could the company develop to better meet customers' needs in the future?

Operations have changed on the fly. The strategic planning discussion is a good time to think about further changes, the return to a new normal, and building flexibility into systems. Some basic decisions should be re-thought now, such as the make-or-buy decision. The fragility of long, global supply chains argues for producing more in-house, both goods and services. But having multiple sources is advantageous when one's own shop could be shut down by the virus.

Is work-from-home just a short-term fix, or will it become a regular part of work? And for those who come into the office, do we dare have a crowded open office or should we go back to cubicles and private offices? What technology additions will enable our workforce to be more productive in the new environment?

Companies with factories and warehouses will want to consider their current social distancing protocols. Can health protection become part of higher productivity plans?

Resources brought into the company raise the question of flexibility in an uncertain future. The economy went ten years between recessions, giving many executives a sense of complacency about recession contingency plans. Now is a good time to consider capital structure and access to working capital. Should the company float more stock to be protected against adverse credit conditions, or leverage up to gain from cheap interest rates?

Staffing strategy has been a critical part of the business response to the pandemic. Should the company recruit people who want to work from home, want to commute to an office, or be flexible enough to work anyplace? Will employee retention become more important in the aftermath of the pandemic? (I argue yes, but the company's leadership team should wrestle with the question.) What other decisions impact business flexibility?

Suppliers of both goods and services are critical to most businesses, and the pandemic has challenged many of them.

The business planning session is often done in person, with small breakout groups, people moving post-it notes around, and listing key points on flip charts. Virtual meetings can use all of these tools. Organizations that want a virtual planning session should engage a virtual facilitator familiar with electronic tools for collaboration and discussion.

(Source: Forbes EDITORS' PICK | Jun 23, 2020)

You are required to answer the following questions.

- a)** *“Most companies will not have to change their missions and fundamental values don't have to change because of the pandemic. Which is good news, because they are hard to change.”*

Do you agree with the above statement? Explain.

(18 Marks)

- b)** *‘A company's desired product mix may have changed in the pandemic and recession.’*

How do you react to consequences of Covid 19 pandemic when carrying out an external environmental analysis? Describe how you address this situation with competitive strategies of an organization?

(18 Marks)

- c) *“Is work-from-home just a short-term fix, or will it become a regular part of work? And for those who come into the office, do we need to have a crowded open office, or should we go back to cubicles and private offices? What technology additions will enable our workforce to be more productive in the new environment?”*

In line with the above scenario, as a Senior Human Resource Manager, express your view on the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment for strategy implementation and review. (16 Marks)

(Total 52 marks)

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