

Syllabus

Course Overview

The 21st century presents us with expanding globalization, swiftly transforming markets, unpredictable government policy shifts, rapidly evolving technologies, and constantly changing consumer preferences. Together, these make the task of strategic management more demanding and critical over time. This course focuses on the strategic management process of how strategies are analyzed, developed, communicated, and implemented within this challenging environment.

This course will help you sharpen your business acumen, develop the ability to think strategically, and analyze the elements that affect an organization's competitive advantage.

Course Structure

The course is designed around three major themes:

Theme 1: Strategic Process and Analysis: The first five weeks examine the internal and external environments of an organization to uncover where the greatest opportunities (and threats) exist.

Theme 2: Strategy Formulation: These three weeks use the information from the internal and external environment analysis to develop a sound strategy for the organization.

Theme 3: Strategy Implementation: The final two weeks consider what it will take for an organization to implement a proposed strategy and how to maintain ethical business practices in the context of the overall strategies being implemented.

Assignments

Week 5: Strategic Process and Analysis: Perform a VRIO or value chain analysis and analyze the key components of an AFI strategic planning framework. 25% of grade. **Scoring Guide.**

Week 8: Business Strategy Formulation: Analyze the generic and global business strategies used by your selected company. 25% of grade. **Scoring Guide.**

Week 10: Strategy Implementation: Present your findings from the previous assignments in this course. 25% of grade. **Scoring Guide.**

Discussions

Overall participation is worth 20% of your grade.

Week 1: Strategy Aligned With Vision for a Competitive Advantage: How does an organization prepare competitive strategies to support its vision and mission?

Week 2: Environment and Industry Influences: Which environmental and industry influences are a concern for your chosen organization?

Week 3: Resources, Capabilities, and Organizational Strengths: What are your chosen company's strengths and opportunities?

Week 4: Competitive Advantage: What might be a meaningful measure of performance for your chosen company and yourself?

Week 6: Business and Corporate Strategies: Break down your chosen company's corporate strategy.

Week 9: Strategic Alliances: Analyze your chosen company's advantages and disadvantages in a global market.

Quizzes

Week 2: Strategy Foundations: How much do you know about the foundations of strategy?

Course Competencies

(Read Only)

To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

- 1 Assess the importance of strategic management for supporting long term success and sustained competitive advantage.
- 2 Apply strategic thinking approaches to resolve business-related challenges.
- 3 Analyze the internal and external environments of an organization in order to formulate and implement successful strategies.
- 4 Apply strategic concepts and models to ensure the fit between strategy, organizational structure, capabilities, and goals; and the external environment.
- 5 Communicate business needs, opportunities, and strategies with multiple stakeholders.

Course Prerequisites

Completion of or concurrent registration in MBA5002.

Syllabus >> Course Materials

Required

The materials listed below are required to complete the learning activities in this course.

Integrated Materials

Many of your required books are available via the VitalSource Bookshelf link in the courseroom, located in your Course Tools. Registered learners in a Resource Kit program can access these materials using the courseroom link on the Friday before the course start date. Some materials are available only in hard-copy format or by using an access code. For these materials, you will receive an email with further instructions for access. Visit the [Course Materials](#) page on Campus for more information.

Book

Rothaermel, F. (2021). *Strategic management* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 9781260261288.

Library

The following required readings are provided in the Capella University Library or linked directly in this course. To find specific readings by journal or book title, use [Journal and Book Locator](#). Refer to the [Journal and Book Locator library guide](#) to learn how to use this tool.

- Barney, J. (1991). [Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage](#). *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99.
- Drucker, P. F. (1994). [The theory of the business](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 72(5), 95–104.
- Dyer, J. H., Kale, P., & Singh, H. (2004). [When to ally & when to acquire](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 82(7/8), 108–115.
- Ghemawat, P. (2007). [Managing differences: The central challenge of global strategy](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 85(3), 58–68.
- Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (2005). [Strategic intent](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 83(7/8), 148–161.
- Hills, S. D. (Ed.). (2012). [Porter's five-forces model](#). In *Encyclopedia of Management* (7th ed.). Farmington Hills, MI: Gale.
- Hughes, J., & Weiss, J. (2007). [Simple rules for making alliances work](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 85(11), 122–131.
- Johnson, M. W., Christensen, C. M., & Kagermann, H. (2008). [Reinventing your business model](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 86(12), 50–59.
- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1992). [The balanced scorecard: Measures that drive performance](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), 71–79.
- Peteraf, M. A. (1993). [The cornerstones of competitive advantage: A resource-based view](#). *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(3), 179–191.
- Porter, M. E. (1987). [From competitive advantage to corporate strategy](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 65(3), 43.
- Porter, M. E. (1996). [What is strategy?](#) *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6), 61–78.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (1990). [The core competence of the corporation](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 68(3), 79–91.
- Rumelt, R. P. (1991). [How much does industry matter?](#) *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(3), 167–185.
- Wall Street Journal*. (2018). [From phonographs to Spotify: A brief history of the music industry](#). [Video]. WSJ Video.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- 365 Careers. (2018). [Cost leadership: When a company sells cheap and makes money](#). [Video]. | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOEUQg7GW0s>
- AciaNetMedia. (2007). [Steve Jobs and Bill Gates historic interview](#). [Video]. | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85PMSYAguz8>
- Amadeo, K. (2019). [Vertical integration, its pros and cons with examples](#). Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-vertical-integration-3305807>
- Amadeo, K. (2019). [What is competitive advantage? Three strategies that work](#). Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-competitive-advantage-3-strategies-that-work-3305828>
- Brunings, J. (n.d.). [What is the difference between a business plan and a strategic plan?](#) Retrieved from <https://onstrategyhq.com/resources/what-is-the-difference-between-a-business-plan-and-a-strategic-plan/>
- Bryson, J. M., Hamilton Edwards, L., & Van Slyke, D. M. (2017). [Getting strategic about strategic planning research](#). Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14719037.2017.1285111>
- Business-to-You. (2016). [VRIO: From firm resources to competitive advantage](#). Retrieved from <https://www.business-to-you.com/vrio-from-firm-resources-to-competitive-advantage/>
- Business-to-You. (2018). [Porter's diamond model: Why some nations are competitive and others are not](#). Retrieved from <https://www.business-to-you.com/porter-diamond-model/>
- Buzzell, R. D. (1983). [Is vertical integration profitable?](#) Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/1983/01/is-vertical-integration-profitable>
- Capella Career Center. (2015, December 28). [Career exploration - introduction](#). [Video]. | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ddd04vS348&index=1&list=PL4zQKMBI7HgxITXIRGtAmwKOBw6zSgFcWSLeQtVw>
- Dayan, Z. (2016, June 16). [Go SWOT yourself: Taking an objective look at your leadership style](#). *Entrepreneur*. Retrieved from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/275796>
- EnrichWise. (2011, December 10). [The CAGE framework - distance matters in globalization!!!](#). [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.enrichwise.com/the-cage-framework-distance-matters-in-globalization/>
- Gregg Learning. (2018). [Differentiation strategy](#). [Video]. | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nshl_qoaf7g
- Harvard Business Review. (2008). [The five competitive forces that shape strategy](#). [Video]. | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYF2_FBCvXw&list=PLoGhZQgdhGJws7SPKJqY8FnzGm-QCcLj&index=1
- Henke, N., Bughin, J., Chui, M., Manyika, J., Saleh, T., Wiseman, B., & Sethupathy, G. (2016). [The age of analytics: Competing in a data-driven world](#). [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/McKinsey%20Analytics/Our%20Insights/The%20age%20of%20analytics%20Corr-The-Age-of-Analytics-Full-report.ashx>
- Howard, C. (2013). [Disruption vs. innovation: What's the difference?](#) Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinehoward/2013/03/27/you-say-innovator-i-say-disruptor-whats-the-difference/#4eff9e856f43>
- Jurevicius, O. (2013). [What makes your business unique?](#) Retrieved from <https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/vrio.html>

- Kryscynski, D. (2015). [What is strategy? \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD7WSLeQtVw>
- Market Business News. (n.d.). [What is blue ocean strategy? Definition and examples \[Article with video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/blue-ocean-strategy/>
- MindToolsVideos. (2014). [What is strategy? The three levels of business strategy \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHfFoINNEKI>
- Robichaux, A. (n.d.). [To be a better leader, start on the inside, with inner work \[Blog post\]](#). *BetterUp*. Retrieved from <https://www.betterup.co/inner-work/>
- Smith, R. (n.d.). [The blue ocean strategy summary \(with 3 examples\)](#). Retrieved from <https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/blue-ocean-strategy/>
- tutor2u. (2016). [PESTLE analysis \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP2sDw5waEU>
- Van Vliet, V. (n.d.). [Porter's value chain analysis](#). Retrieved from <https://www.toolshero.com/management/value-chain-analysis-porter/>
- VanDusen, P. (2019). [How to differentiate your brand: Brand differentiation strategies for business success \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTTHzLCeRZU>
- virtualstrategist. (2016). [How to perform a SWOT analysis \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_6AVRGLXGA

Suggested

The following materials are recommended to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course, but they are aligned to course activities and assessments and are highly recommended for your use.

Optional

The following optional materials are offered to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course.

Unit 1 >> Strategy Foundations: What Is Strategic Leadership and Strategy?

Introduction

The Strategic Planning Process

Your company has recently started the strategic planning process and needs to analyze the current internal and external environments. The vice president of strategy has asked you to prepare an objective analysis of the internal and external environments of the organization over the next ten weeks. She is hoping that your insight can be used to plan for the future direction of the company.

Developing a strategic leadership style requires understanding how the organizational vision and competitive advantage are achieved through successful objective analysis, strategic development, and tactical implementation. Any position in any industry requires all three of these components in order to be successful. How do you currently make decisions in your career? In your personal life? Do you base decisions on objective research? Do you think strategically? Do you periodically evaluate your tactics as complementing your vision?

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** How does an organization prepare a competitive strategy to support its vision and mission?
- **Prepare:** Start thinking about business strategy.
- **Prepare:** Learn about the assignments for this course.

Learning Activities

u01s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

This week we consider how an organization prepares a competitive strategy that accurately reflects its vision and mission.

u01s2 - What You Need to Know

Rothaermel (2019) describes strategy as "the set of goal-directed actions a firm takes to gain and sustain superior performance relative to competitors" (p. 6). Strategy involves highlighting key internal and external challenges, identifying effective approaches to address these challenges, and developing key actions to actually implement a course of action for the organization. In this week's readings you will further explore how strategy and strategic leadership help organizations gain and sustain their competitive advantage. To this end, you will explore tools that aid in analysis to develop a sound strategy and subsequently to implementation of that strategy. You will explore the importance of mission, vision, and values. You will look at the organization through the AFI framework, a time-tested model for strategic development. You will further explore the overall strategic management process and the importance of leadership, establishing a foundation for future work throughout the term.

About Strategy

This video will help you begin to learn the language used in strategy development, including definitions and a focus on corporate, business, and team strategic levels. You will begin to explore core tools and models that will serve as a platform from which to build your strategic knowledge in weeks to come.

- MindToolsVideos. (2014). [What is strategy? The three levels of business strategy \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhfFoINNEKI) | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhfFoINNEKI>

This video discusses real-world strategy and outlines four questions that a great strategy should address.

- Kryscynski, D. (2015). [What is strategy? \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD7WSLeQtVw). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD7WSLeQtVw>

Discover how your work with BetterUp might support the development of your inner strategic leadership attributes. BetterUp is a wonderful resource to help you enhance your leadership talents overall, supporting your efforts toward leadership excellence!

- Robichaux, A. (n.d.). [To be a better leader, start on the inside, with inner work \[Blog post\]](https://www.betterup.co/inner-work/). *BetterUp*. Retrieved from <https://www.betterup.co/inner-work/>

These readings and supplemental materials support the development of your contextual framework of strategy overall. They initiate your discovery of the role of strategic leadership and the beginning application of concepts that will aid in the development of your work this term:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 1, "What Is Strategy?"
 - Chapter 2, "Strategic Leadership."

MBA Program Resources

See the MBA Program Resources in the Tools and Resources for this course for helpful information on succeeding in this program.

Career in the Courseroom

Gaining academic credentials by completing your program is an important step in your career development, but it is only one piece of the puzzle. Connecting with people, gaining knowledge and experience, and learning how to market yourself in your field is also necessary for career management and success.

It is never too early to take action! The Capella University Career Center has resources and tools on career exploration and job search to help learners and alumni manage their career at every stage. Be sure to check out Capella Connect, a career networking and mentoring platform for learners and alumni.

Reference

Rothaermel, F. (2021). *Strategic management concepts* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

u01d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Strategy Aligned With Vision for a Competitive Advantage

The following article will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your first assignment. It is available full-text in the Capella University Library. Search for it by clicking the linked title and following the instructions in the Library Guide:

- Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (2005). [Strategic intent](#). *Harvard Business Review* 83(7/8), 148–161.

Discussion Instructions

For this discussion, you may base your post on your own organization, or you can think of an industry where one company has enjoyed a clear advantage over its competitors and use that company for your post.

On pages 6–8 in your *Strategic Management* textbook, Rothaermel discusses three key elements of a good strategy in the quest for competitive advantage:

- Describe how the company you have selected incorporates those elements in its quest for competitive advantage. How successful has this strategy been for the company?
- Provide the vision/mission statement for the company you are using for the course assignments. How does the competitive strategy support the vision/mission of the company?

Provide support and relevant data for your responses. Be sure you follow APA guidelines for all citations and references.

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your responses should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u01s3 - Prepare: Your Assignments in This Course

Review the overall assignment guidelines to develop your template and start your research for the first assignment due in Week 5.

For this course's assignments, you will analyze the internal and external factors that shape and influence an organization's strategy. Your work on this assignment will demonstrate your understanding of industry forces and how an organization can leverage its strengths to its advantage. This project asks you to analyze the strategic process using the AFI framework. This analysis will clearly demonstrate your ability to think critically and strategically, and to use evidence to support your thinking.

By Week 10 you will:

- Analyze the internal environment of the organization.
 - What are the key findings from your VRIO or Value Chain analysis?
- Analyze the external environment of the organization.
 - What are the key findings from your PESTLE analysis?
 - What are the key findings from your Five Forces analysis?
- Develop a SWOT matrix for the company.
- Recommend a course of action for leadership based on your analysis.

For this first week, begin to get yourself acquainted with the concepts and models of business strategy. Focus this week on analyzing the internal and external environments of the organization.

Pay particular attention to reviewing the AFI framework: analysis, formulation, and implementation. Begin your research by visiting the Capella library for scholarly articles in business journals.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research. The [Industry and Company Data](#) page, found in the MBA Program Guide, will be particularly helpful for this course. This can be found under Research Skills.

Unit 2 >> Strategy Foundations: External Environment Analysis

Introduction

External Analysis

To start the ball rolling, the vice president of strategy has asked you to do an external analysis of the business and the trends in the industry. This external analysis will set the stage for formulating and implementing successful strategies.

This week, you will focus on how external issues and position affect an organization's strategy and competitive advantage within the industry. Specifically, you will explore two key models in conducting your external environmental analysis: the PESTLE and Porter's Five Forces models. These two models have long been accepted as the standard in analyzing the external environment of any organization. No matter the industry, organization structure, or type, these concepts will assist in highlighting in greater detail the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that can be incorporated into a strategy to gain and sustain a competitive advantage. Just creating a general SWOT analysis is not enough in today's business environment. To garner the greatest success, a significant level of detailed analysis across various aspects of the external environment, as illustrated by PESTLE and Five Forces, is vital. By engaging in PESTLE and Five Forces analysis, you will enhance your critical thinking through a more sophisticated analysis. This will serve you well in every aspect of life.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** Which environmental and industry influences are a concern for your chosen organization?
- **Quiz:** Check your understanding of strategy foundations.
- **Prepare:** Look ahead to your first assignment.

Learning Activities

u02s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

Consider the environmental and industry influences for your chosen organization.

Quiz Overview

Check your understanding of the foundations of strategy.

u02s2 - What You Need to Know

An external environmental analysis begins at a macro level with strategic tools such as the PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Ethical/Environmental) and Porter's Five Forces models to forecast how the external environment might change over time.

These videos will help to develop your understanding by defining the concepts further and providing examples on how they could be applied. Given you will be expected to now apply these concepts to your work this term, these videos give you a firsthand look at how to engage this level of analysis. Having a firm

foundation in these frameworks will not only support your success in developing an exemplary assignment, it will help you enhance your talents in strategic analysis by utilizing two of the gold standards in strategic development.

- tutor2u. (2016). [PESTLE analysis \[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP2sDw5waEU>
- Harvard Business Review. (2008). [The five competitive forces that shape strategy \[Video\]](#) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYF2_FBCvXw&list=PLoGhzQgdhGJws7SPKJqIY8FnzGm-QCcLj&index=1
- Hills, S. D. (Ed.). (2012). [Porter's five-forces model](#). In *Encyclopedia of Management* (7th ed.). Farmington Hills, MI: Gale.

u02d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Environment and Industry Influences

The following resources will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your second assignment:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 3, "External Analysis."

Discussion Instructions

Using the PESTLE model and Porter's Five Forces model from the discussion resources, which environmental and industry influences do you think should be a concern for your chosen organization? Which might present an opportunity? Provide support and relevant data for your responses. Be sure you follow APA guidelines for all citations and references.

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your responses should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u02s3 - Prepare: Week 5 Assignment

You will complete your first assignment in Week 5. This assignment will focus on the company you have been using in your discussions so far. Review the assignment instructions so you know what will be required of you. The resources and activities in weeks 1–5 will help support your successful completion of the assignment. Your findings in the PESTLE and Five Forces analyses will be especially important in this assignment, so you may wish to start identifying these factors and organizing your information.

u02q1 - Take the Quiz: Strategy Foundations

This quiz provides you with several questions to demonstrate your understanding of strategy foundations.

There are six questions in this quiz, and the quiz is worth 5 percent of your course grade.

- You may take the quiz only once.
- There is no time limit on the quiz.

- When you have answered all questions, submit your quiz to receive credit. The quiz is scored automatically, and you will receive feedback immediately.

Click the button to access the quiz. If you have any issues with the quiz, contact your instructor.

Unit 3 >> Strategic Analysis: Internal Analysis

Introduction

Working With the Data

So you have the data from your external analysis. Now what? You need to analyze it and figure out how it can help your company achieve its competitive advantage in the marketplace. But this is only one step in the analysis.

Equally important to knowing the external environment is analyzing the internal one. This week, the focus shifts to an examination of those internal assets, resources, capabilities, and competencies which allow an organization to be successful and develop long-term competitive advantage. You will learn how models like VRIO (Value, Rareness, Imitability, Organization) and Value Chain can help organize information about the internal environment of an organization and present analysis systematically and in an easy-to-understand format. By gaining a comprehensive and objective view of the internal environment relative to the marketplace, this will serve you well to create the most successful strategy for moving forward. It will also begin to identify marketplace trends that may influence your strategic endeavors down the road. By identifying and monitoring key influencing conditions, a strategic leader can adjust the organization's course well before its competitive position is changed.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** Talk about your chosen company's strengths and opportunities.
- **Prepare:** Learn about VRIO, Pestle, and value chain analysis.

Learning Activities

u03s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

What are your chosen company's strengths and opportunities? We break them down in a detailed discussion.

u03s2 - What You Need to Know

An internal environmental analysis begins at a macro level with strategic tools such as the VRIO (value, rareness, imitability, organization) and value chain models to forecast how the internal environment might be leveraged for a competitive advantage.

In the first article, you will explore additionally the VRIO concepts as a resource-based framework. You will look at the organization's internal characteristics and its performance providing internal sources and strengths in achieving its competitive advantage. In the second article, you will look at the internal environment through a different but equally important perspective, the value chain. Though in this course you are only expected to use one of these frameworks to analyze the internal environment, be encouraged to have a working understanding of both. It will serve you well in your career bringing more depth to your strategic leadership skills.

- Business-to-You. (2016). [VRIO: From firm resources to competitive advantage](https://www.business-to-you.com/vrio-from-firm-resources-to-competitive-advantage/). Retrieved from <https://www.business-to-you.com/vrio-from-firm-resources-to-competitive-advantage/>

- Van Vliet, V. (n.d.). [Porter's value chain analysis](https://www.toolshero.com/management/value-chain-analysis-porter/). Retrieved from <https://www.toolshero.com/management/value-chain-analysis-porter/>

u03d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Resources, Capabilities, and Organizational Strengths

The following resources will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your second assignment:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 4, "Internal Analysis."
 - "The VRIO Framework," page 128.
- The following resources are somewhat old, but the information is still relevant, and the authors are considered to be leading authorities on the topic:
 - Barney, J. (1991). [Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage](#). *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99.
 - Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (1990). [The core competence of the corporation](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 68(3), 79–91.
 - Peteraf, M. A. (1993). [The cornerstones of competitive advantage: A resource-based view](#). *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(3), 179–191.

Discussion Instructions

Using the same organization that you are using for the course assignments, answer the following:

- What do you see as the company's core competencies, resources, capabilities, and activities?
- What are the things that set the company apart from its competition?
- Are there any internal weaknesses that should concern the organization?
- What role does the effectiveness of leadership play in supporting resources, capabilities, and strengths assuring its competitive advantage?
- What opportunities do you see to exploit the key capabilities of your organization?

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your response should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u03s3 - Prepare: Week 5 Assignment

You will complete your first assignment in Week 5. This assignment will focus on the company you have been using in your discussions so far. Review the assignment instructions so you know what will be required of you. The resources and activities in weeks 1–5 will help support your successful completion of the assignment. Your findings in the VRIO and Value Chain analyses will be especially important in this assignment, so you may wish to start identifying these factors and organizing your information.

u03v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Applying VRIO and PESTLE

Click the button to launch Applying VRIO and PESTLE, which will strengthen your understanding of the VRIO model and PESTLE and support your successful completion of this week's assignment.

Unit 4 >> Strategic Analysis: SWOT Analysis

Introduction

You Versus the Competition

Knowing where you and your competitors excel and where you can improve is crucial to staying competitive. This week, your vice president wants you to do a thorough SWOT analysis of your company and its nearest competitor. This analysis will help identify strengths to continue, weaknesses to improve upon, opportunities to pursue, and threats to guard against. It will help to identify characteristics within your main competitor that can be part of your strategy to gain the competitive advantage.

This week will introduce the concept of conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, building the key elements of both external and internal analysis into a meaningful framework for strategy formulation. Though typically thought of in terms of organizational strategy, this same SWOT framework can be used to develop your personal career strategy. Such a personalized SWOT analysis can help you promote your strengths and develop your weaknesses, while identifying opportunities and threats to your career aspirations.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** Determine a meaningful measure of performance for your chosen company and yourself.
- **Prepare:** Start thinking about how you might want to develop your career.

Learning Activities

u04s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

To see how well a strategy works, you must decide on how your results are to be measured. This is true for your personal growth as well. This week's discussion takes a look at how to meaningfully measure progress and performance.

u04s2 - What You Need to Know

Completion of this activity will strengthen your understanding of the SWOT model and support your successful completion of future assignments, particularly Week 10.

The following resource is being provided to increase your knowledge and understanding of the SWOT model and how it related to the internal and external environments:

- virtualstrategist. (2016). [Howto perform a SWOT analysis \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_6AVRGLXGA) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_6AVRGLXGA

This interview with Steve Jobs and Bill Gates offers an interesting perspective on competition and seeking the competitive advantage with two of the premier tech leaders of our time:

- AciaNetMedia. (2007). [Steve Jobs and Bill Gates historic interview\[Video\]](#). | [Transcript](#) Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85PMSYAguZ8>

Preparing for Your Career

It's never too soon to start preparing for your career. These materials will help you prepare for the discussion this week as you begin the development of your personal career strategy. Start by looking at:

- Dayan, Z. (2016, June 16). [Go SWOT yourself: Taking an objective look at your leadership style](#). *Entrepreneur*. Retrieved from <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/275796>

The Career Center is filled with many helpful resources to support your career growth:

- [Career Center](#).
- [Career Exploration and Planning](#).
- Capella Career Center. (2015, December 8). [Career exploration - introduction \[Video\]](#) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ddd04vS348&index=1&list=PL4zQKMBI7HgxITXiRGtvAmwKOBw6zSgFcWSLeQtVw>
- [Capella Career Center Career Exploration Workbook](#).

u04d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Competitive Advantage

The following resources will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your second assignment:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 5, "Competitive Advantage, Firm Performance, and Business Models."
- The following required readings are available full-text in the Capella University Library. Search for each article by clicking the linked title and following the instructions in the Library Guide:
 - Johnson, M. W., Christensen, C. M., & Kagermann, H. (2008). [Reinventing your business model](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 86(12), 50–59.
 - Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1992). [The balanced scorecard: Measures that drive performance](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), 71–79.

Discussion Instructions

The focus of strategic management activities is to gain and sustain competitive advantage over competitors. Competitive advantage is related to firm performance and key performance indicators such as accounting profitability, shareholder value creation, and economic value creation. Use the discussion resources and your own research to support your statements. Follow APA guidelines for all citations and references.

For the company you have selected to use in this course:

- Identify a meaningful measure of performance for the company.
- Identify key competitors.
- Briefly explain how the company uses its business model to gain and sustain competitive advantage. What are the key elements of the business model to consider?
- Relate these concepts to your career growth. Why not create a personal SWOT analysis. Give some thought to these areas throughout your program. Uncover opportunities to capitalize on your talents and further develop others that can set you apart from your colleagues.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your response should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u04s3 - Prepare: Week 5 Assignment

You will complete your first assignment in Week 5. This assignment will focus on the company you have been using in your discussions so far. Review the assignment instructions so you know what will be required of you. The resources and activities in weeks 1–5 will help support your successful completion of the assignment. Your findings in the SWOT analysis will be especially important in this assignment, so you may wish to start identifying these factors and organizing your information.

This would be a great time to create a rough draft of your assignment. Doing this now will let you submit your work to Smarthinking for feedback on your writing and organization before you submit it for a grade.

Unit 5 >> Strategic Analysis: Competitive Advantage

Introduction

Weaknesses Into Strengths

Equally important to building on your strengths and seizing opportunities is addressing your weaknesses and threats. Now that you know your company's weaknesses and threats, how do you create a strategy for continuous improvement? How do you enhance weaknesses, turning them to strengths? How do you use your strengths to mitigate threats?

Organizational performance and creating long-term competitive advantage are at the heart of strategic management performance. This week you will explore some of the ways performance can be measured in organizations and how value is created for shareholders. You will also be introduced to the concept of popular business models and the important contributions they make to organizational performance. Your vice president asks for your input on this important initiative.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment:** Perform a VRIO or value chain analysis and analyze the key components of an AFI strategic planning framework.

Learning Activities

u05s1 - Activity Overview

Assignment Overview

AFI, VRIO and value chain are just three concepts you need to understand as a business strategist. This week's assignment focuses on these important facets of business analysis.

u05s2 - What You Need to Know

This week you will be introduced to the concept of popular business models and the important contributions they make to organizational performance. As you assimilate the information you have been gathering over the past five weeks, you are now asked to make recommendations to senior leadership. Be

an innovator! Be a disruptor! Check out these examples for some inspiration:

- Howard, C. (2013). [Disruption vs. innovation: What's the difference?](https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinehoward/2013/03/27/you-say-innovator-i-say-disruptor-whats-the-difference/#4eff9e856f43) Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinehoward/2013/03/27/you-say-innovator-i-say-disruptor-whats-the-difference/#4eff9e856f43>
- Jurevicius, O. (2013). [What makes your business unique?](https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/vrio.html) Retrieved from <https://www.strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/vrio.html>

u05a1 - Strategic Process and Analysis

Introduction

For this portfolio work project, you will analyze the internal and external factors that shape and influence an organization's strategy. Your work on this assignment will demonstrate your understanding of industry forces and how an organization can leverage its strengths to its advantage. This portfolio work project asks you to analyze the strategic process using the AFI framework. This analysis will clearly demonstrate your ability to think critically and strategically, and to use evidence to support your thinking.

Scenario

The vice president of strategy has asked you to prepare an objective analysis of the internal and external environments of the organization. She is hoping that your insight can be used to plan for the future direction of the company.

Your Role

You are a strategic analyst for the company you have selected to use in this course. The company has recently started the strategic planning process and needs to analyze the current internal and external environments.

Requirements

To complete this assignment, be sure you understand the AFI framework as presented in your text. Conduct your own research to find recent articles on the value of strategic planning and the role of leadership in the strategic planning process. (Note that the Strategic Management Process Map on pages 30 and 31 of the course text will be very helpful in completing this assignment.)

For this assignment, you will need to complete a VRIO or Value Chain analysis, a PESTLE analysis based on research of the organization (not conjecture or opinion), and a Five Forces model (pay attention to the relationships of elements from both PESTLE and Five Forces). Your prior discussion work should help here. These must be included as appendices in the document you submit. You should also research the industry your company is in, as well as the company's website for information and supporting evidence. Once you have this research completed, prepare an executive briefing report that will be distributed to senior executive leadership. In your report, address the following:

- Analyze the key components of the AFI strategic planning framework. Assess the value of using a strategic planning framework for long-term success and sustained competitive advantage.
- Analyze the internal environment of the organization.
 - What are the key findings from your VRIO or Value Chain analysis?
 - How well does the organization leverage its strengths to execute the business strategy?
 - How effective is the organizational structure and management system design?
- Analyze the external environment of the organization.
 - What are the key findings from your PESTLE analysis?
 - What are the key findings from your Five Forces analysis?
 - How can the organization respond to these forces to better position itself?
- Explain the role of leadership in the strategic planning process. Be sure to address the ethical responsibilities of leaders in the strategic planning process.
- Recommend a course of action for leadership based on your analysis.

Deliverable Format

The strategic process and analysis is a professional document and should therefore follow the corresponding MBA Academic and Professional Document Guidelines, found under Writing in the MBA Program Resources, which you can find in the Tools and Resources for this course. Pay attention to the sections on APA formatting and citing references.

In addition to the analysis, include:

- Title page.
- Table of contents.
- Executive summary.
- References page with APA formatted references from at least five sources.
- Appendices: VRIO or Value Chain analysis, PESTLE analysis, and Five Forces analysis.
- Target length of 5–7 content pages in addition to title, references pages, and appendices including your VRIO/Value Chain, PESTLE, and Five Forces analyses.
- Written for an audience of executive leaders.

Evaluation

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies through corresponding scoring guide criteria:

- Competency 1: Assess the importance of strategic management for supporting long term success and sustained competitive advantage.
 - Analyze the key components of the AFI strategic planning framework, assessing the value of using a strategic planning framework for sustained competitive advantage.
 - Explain the role of leadership in the strategic planning process.
- Competency 2: Apply strategic thinking approaches to resolve business-related challenges.
 - Recommend a course of action based on an internal and external environmental analysis.
- Competency 3: Analyze the internal and external environments of an organization in order to formulate and implement successful strategies.
 - Analyze the internal environment of an organization.
 - Analyze the external environment of an organization.
- Competency 5: Communicate business needs, opportunities, and strategies with multiple stakeholders.
 - Address assignment purpose in a well-organized text, incorporating appropriate evidence and tone in grammatically sound sentences.
 - Apply the standard writing conventions for the discipline, including structure, voice, person, and tone.

Your course instructor will use the scoring guide to review your deliverable as if they were the vice president of strategy. Review the scoring guide prior to developing and submitting your assignment.

ePortfolio

This portfolio work project demonstrates your competency in applying knowledge and skills required of an MBA learner in the workplace. Save this activity to your ePortfolio for future reference in the workplace.

Note: Your instructor may use the [Writing Feedback Tool](#) when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Unit 6 >> Strategy Formulation: Business Strategy: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Blue Oceans

Introduction

Pulling It All Together

Your manager is pleased with what you've produced so far. Now, she asks you to create a generic strategy for the company based on everything you've learned.

After analyzing the internal and external environments of an organization, strategic decision makers formulate the business-level strategies for the organization. These strategies help determine how the company can thrive in this global market, attaining and sustaining a competitive advantage. A couple of strategies to consider are the cost leadership and differentiation strategies. We will explore these two this week. But every bit as important is the

role innovation plays in the development and implementation of strategy. As we have been learning, innovation is the key to the future. How are you developing your innovation skills today?

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** Break down your chosen company's corporate strategy.
- **Prepare:** Get ready for your next assignment.

Learning Activities

u06s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

Every business needs a strategy to move ahead. This week you discuss the details of your chosen company's strategic management.

u06s2 - What You Need to Know

Two fundamentally different business strategies considered in this unit are a cost leadership strategy (focused on keeping costs of production and delivery low) and differentiation strategy (focused on keeping customer or market value high). It can be challenging to pursue both of these generic strategies at the same time in a hybrid strategy than can result in a company being stuck in the middle. This week you will also explore how blue ocean strategies focus on innovation to both lower costs for production and delivery while delivering increased value and benefits to customers.

Cost leadership:

- 365 Careers. (2018). [Cost leadership: When a company sells cheap and makes money \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOEUQg7GWOs) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOEUQg7GWOs>

Brand differentiation strategy:

- VanDusen, P. (2019). [How to differentiate your brand: Brand differentiation strategies for business success \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTTHzLCeRZU) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTTHzLCeRZU>
- Gregg Learning. (2018). [Differentiation strategy \[Video\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nshl_qoaf7g) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nshl_qoaf7g

Are you an innovator? A disruptor? Maybe both? Take a look at these resources that explore the blue ocean strategy:

- Market Business News. (n.d.). [What is blue ocean strategy? Definition and examples \[Article with video\]](https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/blue-ocean-strategy/) | [Transcript](#). Retrieved from <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/blue-ocean-strategy/>
- Smith, R. (n.d.). [The blue ocean strategy summary \(with 3 examples\)](https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/blue-ocean-strategy/). Retrieved from <https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/blue-ocean-strategy/>

u06d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Business and Corporate Strategies

The following resources will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your second assignment:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 6, "Business Strategy: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Blue Oceans."
 - Chapter 7, "Business Strategy: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Platforms."
 - Chapter 8, "Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration and Diversification."

Discussion Instructions

The discussion of business and corporate strategy is at the very heart of strategic management. Briefly discuss the business and corporate strategy for the company you are using for the course assignments, and include the following elements (if your company has multiple business segments, identify one that is especially important to the overall organization):

- Which customer segments are served?
- What customer needs, wishes, and desires are satisfied?
- Describe two or three key business units within the company that satisfy these needs.
- How closely related are these business units?
- Explain whether there are opportunities for vertical integration for the organization.

Use the discussion resources and your own research to support your statements. Follow APA guidelines for all citations and references.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your responses should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u06s3 - Prepare: Week 8 Assignment

You will complete your second assignment in Week 8. This assignment will focus on the company you have been using in your work so far. Review the assignment instructions so you know what will be required of you. The resources and activities in weeks 1–8 will help support your successful completion of the assignment. Your findings in exploring these business strategies will be especially important in this assignment, so you may wish to start identifying these factors and organizing your information.

Unit 7 >> Strategy Formulation: Corporate Strategy

Introduction

Expanding Your Strategy

Your company has more products than just the one line your department manages, and your vice president has given you the opportunity to expand your strategy to fit all product lines. Where do you start?

While the business strategies discussed in Week 6 focused on competing in a single product market, Week 7 will look specifically at how companies formulate decisions on corporate strategies that seek competitive advantage in several different product markets or industries simultaneously. Key decisions in this area of strategy formulation focus on vertical integration, diversification, and geographic scope. This week examines those three dimensions of corporate strategy and offers helpful models and concepts to understand key company decisions related to formulating corporate strategy.

To-Do List:

- **Prepare:** Work on the Week 8 assignment.
- **Prepare:** Learn about generic strategy.

Learning Activities

u07s1 - Activity Overview

Overview

This week includes no discussions or assignments to give you time to perfect your Week 8 assignment. Make use of this time to research, understand, and write about all required aspects.

u07s2 - What You Need to Know

Completion of this activity will reinforce the concepts you have been studying and help you complete next week's assignment. Let's start by looking at the difference between a business plan and a strategic plan.

- Brunings, J. (n.d.). [What is the difference between a business plan and a strategic plan?](https://onstrategyhq.com/resources/what-is-the-difference-between-a-business-plan-and-a-strategic-plan/) Retrieved from <https://onstrategyhq.com/resources/what-is-the-difference-between-a-business-plan-and-a-strategic-plan/>

As you are learning, there are seminal leaders in the area of business strategy. Here are some important articles on the nature of strategy from Drucker and Porter, two of the most influential. These required readings are available full-text in the Capella University Library. Search for each article by clicking the linked title and following the instructions in the Library Guide:

- Porter, M. E. (1996). [What is strategy?](#) *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6), 61–78.
- Drucker, P. F. (1994). [The theory of the business.](#) *Harvard Business Review*, 72(5), 95–104.
- Porter, M. E. (1987). [From competitive advantage to corporate strategy.](#) *Harvard Business Review*, 65(3), 43.

Attaining and sustaining the competitive advantage is key to any underlying strategy. Here are new ways to look at competitive advantage:

- Amadeo, K. (2019). [What is competitive advantage? Three strategies that work.](#) Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-competitive-advantage-3-strategies-that-work-3305828>
- Rumelt, R. P. (1991). [How much does industry matter?](#) *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(3), 167–185.

We live in a fast-changing world where industries are constantly having to adapt to new trends and technologies. This *Wall Street Journal* brief history series helps explain the now, by looking back at how we got here. Here's one example, but feel free to browse the collection for more. Note: You will need to sign in to your WSJ account to view this video. For more information, see Wall Street Journal in the Tools and Resources.

- *Wall Street Journal*. (2018). [From phonographs to Spotify: A brief history of the music industry.\[Video\]](#). WSJ Video.

One way to adapt to the ever-changing business environment is to create opportunities for vertical integration. Vertical integration can help promote efficiencies and reduce costs by controlling more of its production chain. It can acquire the input or raw material supplier to help reduce costs or acquire companies that enhance distribution post production to increase revenue and reduce cost. How can vertical integration support your select organization? Why not check out these sources and consider the strategic role vertical integration might play? We will continue to explore this concept in the context of a global marketplace in Week 8. But let's begin to develop an understanding through the following resources:

- Amadeo, K. (2019). [Vertical integration, its pros and cons with examples.](#) Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-vertical-integration-3305807>
- Buzzell, R. D. (1983). [Is vertical integration profitable?](#) Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/1983/01/is-vertical-integration-profitable>

u07s3 - Prepare: Week 8 Assignment

You will complete your second assignment in Week 8. This assignment will focus on the company you have been using in your work so far. Review the assignment instructions so you know what will be required of you. The resources and activities in weeks 1–8 will help support your successful completion of

the assignment. Your findings in exploring these business and corporate strategies will be especially important in this assignment, so you may wish to start identifying these factors and organizing your information.

This would be a great time to create a rough draft of your assignment. Doing this now will let you submit your work to Smarthinking for feedback on your writing and organization before you submit it for a grade.

u07v1 - Interactive Learning Module: Generic Strategy

Click the button to launch Generic Strategy, which will reinforce the concepts you have been studying and help you complete the third assignment.

Unit 8 >> Strategy Formulation: Global Strategy

Introduction

Managing Relationships

Your company has started an alliance with a company overseas. Your vice president asks for your opinion on how to manage this relationship, both from a practical standpoint and a strategic one.

Many argue that technology and globalization are the key driving forces in strategic thinking today. Building on our knowledge from last week, this week we will examine the use of global alliances, diversification, and vertical integration for a competitive advantage. We will focus on the product, geographical, and vertical scope in which a company operates to complement the overall business strategy.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment:** Analyze the generic and global business strategies used by your selected company.

Learning Activities

u08s1 - Activity Overview

Assignment Overview

This week you analyze your company's overall business strategies and how well they fit with one another.

u08s2 - What You Need to Know

As you examine global strategy this week, consider the extent of global influence on current organizational strategies, why companies pursue global strategies, and how global strategies can be difficult to implement. The CAGE (Cultural, Administrative, Geographic, and Economic) is one such framework introduced as a way strategic decision makers organize their thinking about global strategies. Porter's Diamond Model is another strategic framework to consider the competitive advantage of nations in which a company might operate or compete. Take a look at these resources as a means to enhance your understanding of global business:

- EnrichWise. (2011, December 10). [The CAGE framework - distance matters in globalization!!! \[Blog post\]](http://www.enrichwise.com/the-cage-framework-distance-matters-in-globalization/). Retrieved from <http://www.enrichwise.com/the-cage-framework-distance-matters-in-globalization/>
- Business-to-You. (2018). [Porter's diamond model: Why some nations are competitive and others are not](https://www.business-to-you.com/porter-diamond-model/). Retrieved from <https://www.business-to-you.com/porter-diamond-model/>

Successful strategic businesses can range from a local small business to a multi-national corporation. The strategic models and frameworks illustrated this term can make any business endeavor a success. But the proof is in the data. Developing strategies and monitoring their implementation using objective data allows business leader to make sound decisions that will take their organizations to the next level. [The Age of Analytics: Competing in a Data-Driven World \[PDF\]](#) is an interesting resource, one you may wish to include in your business library for consultation down the road. For now, just review the book, becoming familiar with its content. Then read pages 1–18 for this week.

u08a1 - Business Strategy Formulation

Introduction

This portfolio work project will help you differentiate between business strategy and corporate strategy, and analyze the fit of a business strategy to an organization.

Scenario

Building on your work from Assignment 1, the vice president of strategy has now tasked you with providing a business analysis of the organization's business strategy. This includes level of diversification (product scope), geographical and vertical scope, and the overall fit with the business strategy or strategies.

Your Role

You are a strategic analyst for the company you have selected to use in this course.

Requirements

Use information from the company's website, the Capella Library, and your course textbook to complete this assignment. Write a business analysis that includes:

- Explain the generic business strategies for the company. Include cost, differentiation, and focus or hybrid information.
- Analyze the business strategy the company uses in its marketplace approach. Provide examples of how the strategy is used to position the company in a competitive environment.
- Analyze the company's business model.
 - What are the core products?
 - How does the organization make money?
 - What is the customer value proposition?
 - What is the profit proposition?
- Analyze the corporate strategy of the company. Include the product, geographical, and vertical scope in which it operates.
 - Has the company expanded from its original product line or field of operation?
 - Does the company own vertically related activities along the value chain for its products?
- Analyze the overall corporate structure and key management systems.
 - Does the company employ diversification, vertical integration, or globalization?
 - Are global alliances part of the corporate strategy?
- Analyze the strategic fit between the business and corporate strategies of the company.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Deliverable Format

The Business Strategy Analysis is a professional document and should therefore follow the corresponding MBA Academic and Professional Document Guidelines, including single-spaced paragraphs.

In addition to the analysis, include:

- Title page.
- References page.
- APA formatted references from at least five sources.
- 7–10 pages in length, in addition to the title and references pages.
- Written for executive leadership.

Evaluation

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies through corresponding scoring guide criteria:

- Competency 3: Analyze the internal and external environments of an organization in order to formulate and implement successful strategies.
 - Explain the generic business strategies for a company.
 - Analyze the business strategy a company uses in its marketplace approach.
- Competency 4: Apply strategic concepts and models to ensure the fit between strategy, organizational structure, capabilities, and goals; and the external environment.
 - Analyze a company's business model.
 - Analyze the corporate strategy of a company.
 - Analyze the overall corporate structure and key management system of a company.
 - Analyze the strategic fit between the business and corporate strategies of a company.
- Competency 5: Communicate business needs, opportunities, and strategies with multiple stakeholders.
 - Address assignment purpose in a well-organized text, incorporating appropriate evidence and tone in grammatically sound sentences.
 - Apply the standard writing conventions for the discipline, including structure, voice, person, and tone.

ePortfolio

This portfolio work project demonstrates your competency in applying knowledge and skills required of an MBA learner in the workplace. Save this activity to your ePortfolio for future reference in the workplace.

Note: Your instructor may use the [Writing Feedback Tool](#) when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Unit 9 >> Strategy Implementation: Strategic Leadership and Alliances

Introduction

What's Next?

Your company is doing well but your analysis shows that you need to expand your capabilities if you are to continue to sustain your competitive position. You've been asked to work with a group of strategists to decide how to best accomplish this.

As organizations pursue their overall strategies, they often require more significant capabilities than they currently possess. Strategy makers must decide whether to grow organically with internal investment, seek alliances with other companies, or acquire entire companies to help the organization grow and pursue its overall growth strategy. We touched on this just a bit in Week 7 when we explored vertical integration. This week, you will build on earlier learning in the course regarding inter-organizational strategies and consider how to best implement strategies by building, borrowing, or buying key capabilities.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion:** Analyze your chosen company's advantages and disadvantages in a global market.

Learning Activities

u09s1 - Activity Overview

Discussion Overview

This week you analyze your chosen company's advantages and opportunities in a global market, propose how best to address these advantages and opportunities, and relate this to your own career.

u09s2 - What You Need to Know

For many organizations, global growth has led to important strategic initiatives that drive key activities for much of the organization. Strategic alliances, mergers, and acquisitions are instrumental in positioning an organization for success. And often, such alliances have helped shape the strategic future of the company. The following resources are being provided to increase your knowledge and understanding of such strategic initiatives. Completion of this activity will reinforce the concepts you have been studying and help you complete the Week 10 assignment.

The following required readings are available full-text in the Capella University Library. Search for each article by clicking the linked title and following the instructions in the Library Guide:

- Dyer, J. H., Kale, P., & Singh, H. (2004). [When to ally & when to acquire](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 82(7/8), 108–115.
- Ghemawat, P. (2007). [Managing differences: The central challenge of global strategy](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 85(3), 58–68.
- Hughes, J., & Weiss, J. (2007). [Simple rules for making alliances work](#). *Harvard Business Review*, 85(11), 122–131.

Your Career

Equally important in creating alliances in organizations, is creating personal alliances for your career growth. Networking and professional memberships help create connections that enhance career growth possibilities and industry knowledge. It can help develop professional relationships, internally and externally, to facilitate business dealings and strategic alliances. Several resources are currently available to help make these personal alliances.

These resources from the Career Center can help you network for your future (and current) career. Be sure to consider them for this week's discussion:

- [Networking](#)
- [Capella Connect](#)

Utilizing external resources, such as LinkedIn and industry specific organizations, is also key to your professional success.

u09d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Strategic Alliances

The following resources will help you complete this discussion and may be useful in completing your final assignment:

- In *Strategic Management*, read:
 - Chapter 9, "Corporate Strategy: Alliances, Mergers and Acquisitions."
 - Chapter 10, "Global Strategy: Competing Around the World."

Discussion Instructions

For many organizations, global growth has led to important strategic initiatives that drive the activities for much of the organization. Most large companies have some level of participation in strategic alliances, and many have been part of mergers and acquisitions that have helped shape the strategic future of the company.

- What specific advantages or disadvantages of competing in global markets or supply chains exist for the company?
- What should organizational leaders do to strategically address the global marketplace?
 - Explain the product, geographical, and vertical scope in which the company operates given the global strategy.
 - Briefly describe any key alliances, mergers, or acquisitions, and explain how they relate to the strategic direction of the company.
- How does the use of global alliances, diversification, and vertical integration of the company support the overall competitive advantage?
- What key alliances do you need in order to be successful in your career? How can you engage in such alliances? Check out Capella's exclusive career networking and mentoring platform, Capella Connect, or search for professional organizations in your field at [MBA Central: Professional Associations and Organizations](#), which also provides great networking opportunities.

Use the discussion resources and your own research to support your statements. Follow APA guidelines for all citations and references.

See the [MBA Program Resources](#) for guidance on getting started with business research.

Response Guidelines

After you have posted your discussion, respond to at least two other learners. Your responses should serve to keep the dialogue going by asking questions for clarity or offering a different perspective.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 10 >> Strategy Implementation: Organizational Design and Corporate Governance

Introduction

Reorganization

Your company needs to reorganize itself to maintain costs and improve efficiency. Once more, your vice president turns to you for help.

This week will help you understand how strategy is related to structure through structural building blocks including specialization, formalization, centralization, and hierarchy. The structural types examined this week offer a foundation for strategic decision makers considering structural options for the organization (and vice-versa). This week also integrates key ethical ideas from throughout the course into strategic decisions about the overall ethical orientation of the organization, as well as its overall governance structure.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment:** Present your findings from the previous assignments in this course.
- **Prepare:** Learn about SWOT.
- **Prepare:** Think ahead to your career.

Learning Activities

u10s1 - Activity Overview

Assignment Overview

This week you compile all of your findings from this course into a PowerPoint presentation for executive management.

u10s2 - What You Need to Know

Based on all your work conducted this term, what do you recommend internally? As you consider how to best implement strategy, organizational structure is often a very important element. How does your select company's structure support the recommended strategy? Does there need to be a shift in organizational design to better complement the future direction? What role does its corporate governance play in the successful implementation of its strategy? And what is the overall ethical orientation the organization assumes? What are future ethical watchouts? How can the organization ensure its ethical integrity? All great questions to consider as we now synthesize the learning from this term into a strategic recommendation.

In order to assist with this synthesis, be sure to review the resources and notes taken this term. Take a look at this resource about strategic planning research:

- Bryson, J. M., Hamilton Edwards, L., & Van Slyke, D. M. (2017). [Getting strategic about strategic planning research](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14719037.2017.1285111). Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14719037.2017.1285111>

Capella Career Center

As you wrap up this course, now is a good time for you to reflect on how you can apply the knowledge you have gained and talk about it professionally. Possible opportunities could include performance review conversations, promotion proposals, and salary negotiations, as well as resume accomplishment statements, interview responses, and professional networking conversations.

Refer to MBA Program Resources to access Capella's [Career Center](#) for resources that can help you make the most of your experience and education to achieve your goals, including how to use your ePortfolio effectively to showcase your work as part of a job search.

PowerPoint Presentation

Finally, as you develop your PowerPoint presentation, consider this resource for some helpful hints: [Guidelines for Effective PowerPoint Presentations \[PDF\]](#).

u10a1 - Strategy Implementation

Introduction

This assignment will help you demonstrate your understanding of strategy and the factors that must be considered when formulating and implementing strategy.

Scenario

Organizational leadership of your company has requested that you present your analyses of the company, as well as recommend potential strategic actions that could be taken to address issues raised by your analyses.

Your Role

You are a strategic analyst for the company you have selected to use in this course.

Requirements

The SWOT Framework activity in Week 4 will be very useful in completing this assignment.

Develop a PowerPoint presentation of 8–12 slides that synthesizes the work you did on Assignments 1 and 2. Use the speaker's notes sections of each slide to expand your talking points. Be sure your presentation includes:

- A summary of the AFI framework.
- Results from your internal analysis (VRIO or Value Chain)
- Results from your external analysis (PESTLE and Five Forces)
- A SWOT matrix for the company.
- Recommendations:
 - Do the current strategies need to be changed?

- What strategies will move the organization forward?
- How do your recommendations align with organizational structure and governance?
- Do your recommendations reflect ethical responsibility?

Deliverable Format

PowerPoint presentation:

- 8–12 content slides (in addition to the title and references slides).
- Include additional details on each slide in the speaker's notes section.
- Additional requirements:
 - Title slide.
 - References slide.
 - APA formatted references from at least ten sources.
 - Be sure you consider the audience.

Evaluation

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies through the corresponding scoring guide criteria:

- Competency 1: Assess the importance of strategic management for supporting long term success and sustained competitive advantage.
 - Summarize the strategic framework for a company.
- Competency 2: Apply strategic thinking approaches to resolve business-related challenges.
 - Develop a SWOT matrix for a company.
- Competency 3: Analyze the internal and external environments of an organization in order to formulate and implement successful strategies.
 - Summarize the findings of an internal environmental analysis.
 - Summarize the findings of an external environmental analysis.
- Competency 4: Apply strategic concepts and models to ensure the fit between strategy, organizational structure, capabilities, and goals; and the external environment.
 - Recommend strategic actions for a company that align with organizational structure and governance and reflect ethical responsibility.
- Competency 5: Communicate business needs, opportunities, and strategies with multiple stakeholders.
 - Address assignment purpose in a well-organized text, incorporating appropriate evidence and tone in grammatically sound sentences.
 - Organize content so ideas flow logically with smooth transitions.

ePortfolio

This portfolio work project demonstrates your competency in applying knowledge and skills required of an MBA learner in the workplace. Save this activity to your ePortfolio for future reference in the workplace.

Note: Your instructor may use the [Writing Feedback Tool](#) when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

u10v1 - Interactive Learning Module: SWOT Framework

Click the button to launch SWOT Framework, which will reinforce the concepts you have been studying and help you complete the final assignment.