

Company Analysis

Pro Nav

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Introduction

The strategy of ProNav is based off low cost and mass market. From our interviews with the management team, it seems their goal is to change their market strategy. To have a more effective business model, they aim to become a more niche market and differentiated business. In terms of differentiation, they could strive for quality as excellence, quality as reliability, customer responsiveness or innovation.

Strengths

Our team noticed several strengths, such as innovation. ProNav is also an agile/flexible business. Another strength of ProNav's product and business would be the cost. Their angler product is cheaper than other similar products and therefore more accessible to more markets than their competitors.

Weaknesses

One weakness of ProNav is having weak/inadequate marketing of their brand and products. Perhaps finding creative solutions to reaching out with a stronger voice to their market. Not enough cash flow is a major weakness for the company. By having to juggle between working other jobs to be able to support themselves, ProNav isn't able to allocate enough funds to improve marketing. Lastly, not being

clearly defined as low cost or differentiated in the mass market, the business strategy of ProNav is considered unclear.

Opportunities

Some opportunities include open source, crowd funding, emerging trends and tech [2]. One aspect of this approach is that it doesn't cost ProNav any funds to implement. Pro Sponsorship, seeking out professional fishers to represent and use ProNav products. Another opportunity would be a strategic alliance, by reaching out to motor manufacturers to partner with. Refurbished products can be loaned to finishing clubs and groups to allow them to try out the product for a time. This allows for a product that would have to be sold at a diminished profit to make even more profit than originally possibly due to bringing in more customers through exposure

Threats

Potential threats of ProNav that our team noticed were their current competition, Humminbird, Garmin or Motorguide. Another threat ProNav could face would be copy cats. Other companies basically recreating and distributing a similar product. New technology is another potential threat of the company.

Alternatives

To help address and provide creative solutions to some of ProNav's situation, our team has researched several alternatives. Crowdsourced, customer discovery, and lead user research is an easy alternative as it involves low risk nor funds. One example at Michigan Technological University is the Consumer Products Day

Competition. In this competition teams of students from 3-5 must design and set up marketing for a new product using products provided by the company[1].

Vertical integration would require a compromise or buying out a motor manufacturer. Reaching out to the motor manufacturing company and considering a strategic alliance with them or potentially being able to buy the company and umbrella them under ProNav, this could give them the edge of vertical integration.

Partnership or being absorbed, while this may not be an option ProNav is looking for, it is realistic. ProNav wants to remain in control of their company and the decisions, so selling the company outright isn't what they want for their immediate future.

Recommendations

Our group recommends the alternative of crowd sourcing, lead user research, online presence and or customer discovery. Each of the four options or all four would cost ProNav little to no extra funds. Crowdsourcing would involve a system like the enterprise program at Michigan Tech, approaching a course like BA 5740 to solve an issue, or a competition like consumer products day. Lead user research involves researching how some of the top users of the ProNav Angler are currently using the product, there are usually users that have creative uses of the product that may have occurred to the company. Online presence is also vital for inbound marketing because quality online content will help attract customers even if they haven't heard of your brand. Lastly, with customer discovery to test varies product

ideas on customers to refine and get a better idea of what exactly your market is looking for in your product.

Explanation

Crowdsourced or open innovation involves reaching out to university's such as Michigan Technological University or Finlandia University, to create a competition for either a course, an enterprise program, or just the community at large. The competition would consist of a real issue the company is faced with and the objective would be to come up with the best possible and realistic solutions. That way ProNav would have multiple options to choose from. Possible rewards could be, free products, an internship or potentially percentage of the profits for a period of time etc. Lead user research would identify users that use the product the most or the best, then looking at how they are using the technology and trying to implement what that customer is doing. Customer discovery would be a way to test different hypothesis the company has and talk to people to find out who exactly their customers are. Then adjust as necessary based off findings. The customer discovery process might seem tedious but it will save a ton of headaches down the road.

Justifications

The weaknesses that could be removed by choosing a crowdsourced option would be the insufficient marketing as well as the unclear business strategy while circumventing the tight funds. ProNav could pose the issue to a course, an enterprise group, or host a competition as to how to better market their products

and brand, for example. This could solve both weaknesses in one by giving them options to consider and utilize which as the best fit for their company. The solutions could suggest different strategies as how to better achieve the niche low cost markets or creative ideas to improve upon their current marketing as to be able to reach those niche markets more easily. Another potential gain would be to increase ProNav's online presence through answering questions related to the products on forums. These questions could be found through a simple google search of the products, the same way their customers would find them. Either way, there would be low risk involved for ProNav.

Implementation

To implement this alternative, it would depend upon which of the three free resources ProNav is the most interested in whether it be crowdsourcing, lead user research or customer discovery. Initially, contact either a professor, such as André LaPlume, to discuss a potential project for his course to compete in. Part of the discussion would include the main problem focus, timeline, perimeters, goals, prizes and any other specifics. Then ProNav may need to come to the class a few times to give adequate information to ensure good results. The final product could involve either presentations or final reports to deliver to ProNav for analysis. With lead user research, to go about that it would involve identifying who is using the angler the best or the most, contacting them and interviewing them on how they use it, contacting users who post video reviews on social media are great targets for this. Then have a strategy meeting to discuss as a collective if any of those techniques

would be a viable option to replicate. Lastly, in customer discovery testing various hypothesis with different groups of people, whether in person or online through surveys. With this data, ProNav could then narrow down what exactly their customers are looking for and who specifically are their target audience while identifying any possible issues and resolving them before they become mainstream. All three of these options could greatly improve ProNav's online presence to boost sales.

References

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