



INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGY & COMPETITIVENESS

[ABOUT THE INSTITUTE](#)[RESEARCH AREAS](#) ▼[RESOURCES](#) ▼[HEALTH CARE](#)[COMPETITIVENESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT](#)[CREATING SHARED VALUE](#)[STRATEGY](#)[ABOUT MICHAEL PORTER](#)[HBS](#) → [ISC](#) →[Strategy](#) ▼ →[Creating a Successful St...](#) ▼ [Email](#) [Share](#)

Creating a Successful Strategy

Competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value. Consider companies like Southwest Airlines or IKEA, which shook up their industries in the 1980s by doing things in a novel way. They essentially rewrote the playbooks for how to run an airline and sell furniture—and carved out long-lasting, unique strategic positions in the marketplace.

Elements of a Successful Strategy

A UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

Delivering a **unique value proposition** compared to competitors.



A DISTINCTIVE VALUE CHAIN

Choosing how the organization will **operate differently** to deliver on its value proposition.



MAKING STRATEGIC TRADE-OFFS

Making clear tradeoffs, and choosing what **not to do**.



FIT ACROSS VALUE CHAIN

Integrating activity choices across the value chain to **fit together** and **reinforce each other**.



CONTINUITY OVER TIME

Continuity of strategic direction.



Institute for Strategy &
Competitiveness
Harvard Business School
Ludcke House
Boston, MA 02163
Email: isc@hbs.edu

→ [Map & Directions](#)

→ [More Contact Information](#)



Make a Gift

[Site Map](#) [Jobs](#) [Harvard University](#) [Trademarks](#) [Policies](#) [Accessibility](#) [Digital Accessibility](#)

Copyright © President & Fellows of Harvard College