Business and Technology

Accenture

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PART-A: Exploring Innovation

Literature review

Analyzing the external environment, market and technology in order to identify trends and to devise appropriate direction for product or service development is an essential skill for all innovators, especially those working within a continually changing economy. The ability to foresee potential changes within a particular market allows appropriate decisions to be made regarding the organization's plans for bringing innovations to the market. Understanding the dynamics of innovation-leading growth and advertising is therefore critical for firms that wish to take advantage of opportunities and avoid unnecessary risks. Strategic competition calls for more than just routine strategic behaviors as competition becomes "a lot more intense, faster paced, and integrated from a global perspective than ever before. (McKelvevy et al., 2015) New innovative opportunities arise when multiple technologies in use at different times emerge, creating a mix of fresh solutions to manage the conflict between technology developments and emerging market needs. Important new advancements from other disciplines may be capable of disrupting existing solutions and offer competitive advantage. These advancements allow the development of new products and processes, which will generate the threat of substitution of incumbent products or services, leading to the development of new technologies.

Opportunities for developing new and existing products arise through a number of different sources. Opportunities may be discovered during the Industry Analysis stage, however, opportunities could also be identified through an extensive marketing research phase that involves both qualitative and quantitative research design. The discovery of opportunities is typically a lengthy and costly process which requires extensive resources to identify new market direction which can lead into successful innovation. Improving existing models by using modular or 'plug in' technology is another way to generate opportunities for technological growth. (Benn et al., 2016) also writes that Management has set realistic objectives for innovation and provides resources and opportunity to innovate where required. Other pillars of innovation focus, including cultural values, are also in place to create an ongoing culture of innovation that supports continual development of products and services. The opportunities were created by identifying emerging trends and customer needs by management. Opportunities were identified through interacting with customers at trade shows, job fairs, various social media outlets, and other sources.

(Cascio et al., 2016) argues that for decades, innovations have been introduced to meet “a need looking for a home”. Technology was migrating from the physical to the digital, so that it could be easily and safely accessed. Yet, users of these early innovations were still having difficulty meeting their own individual needs and often had distaste for the traditional processes with which they had long been accustomed. Today, after years of practice and streamlined processes, companies are finally starting to catch on to what makes new technology helpful and relevant within an organization.

The first step prior to the adoption of innovation in the organization is to evaluate whether an innovation has any excellence. The process begins with a study of the characteristics of the innovation as it compares with other innovations. Innovation appraisal does not necessarily involve money or other resources; however, recommendation and endorsement for acceptance can make use of these resources. In the views of (Dorow et al., 2015) they stated in their research that, the process of idea generation began by assembling a cross-functional team of employees from all levels and all areas of the organization. Generating ideas can be done in several ways. Creativity is the cornerstone of innovation; therefore inspiration should be sought to spark the creative process. Our company has an extensive library of books, trade journals and other information sources available. Methods can be varied as well. One could have a brainstorming session or an individual could glance out the window at something unusual and see how it relates to the business.

Making innovation decisions for an organization is not something that can be done as well by a simple straightforward approach. It requires many methods and processes to come together. The SMART criteria process is one very useful mechanism to use to help assess and make trade-off decisions throughout a process of innovation. (Lilien et al., 2002) writes that Performance assessment of the lead user idea-generation process for new product development is a relatively new area of research. It has been restricted largely to construction based research, where there are a number of relevant lead users. However, its relevance, particularly within other industries, is growing in response to the imposition and enforcement of various environmental legislation, and also the rapid development in IT. Basically, the lead user methodology is used as the basis for generating new product ideas. The approach is essentially a traditional brainstorming session, enriched by an inductive analysis of successful lead users' needs. How well the method works

depends on how well a problem's critical characteristics are described in advance of a meeting with users.

According to the views and opinion of (Khorakian, 2011) he writes in his research that An innovator needs to develop new technological concepts that satisfy customer needs, does this by experimenting with different concepts. In the early phases, these experiments will be very risky and can easily fail. The cost of failure can be high, in terms of resources required to shut down a failed experiment, and previous investments in terms of time and effort spent on developing an unsuccessful concept.

Interview among Senior Manager from the Operations Team and Senior IT Manager

An Interview was conducted to identify and evaluate the major factors associated with innovation in the organization including innovational technologies, impacts on society, innovation networks and other important points. This interview was conducted between Senior Manager from the Operations Team and Senior IT Manager. Some of the questions and their views are described below:

1. What are the ways of applying broader innovation knowledge combined with a clear understanding of the context of the business?

2. How innovation helps or contributes in various strategies of the organization?

3. What are the major digital innovations that are affecting the organization?

4. What are the major impacts of innovational technologies on society, environment and political agendas?

An Interview was conducted to identify and evaluate the major factors associated with innovation in the organization including innovational technologies, impacts on society, innovation networks and other important points. This interview was conducted between Senior Manager from the Operations Team and Senior IT Manager. Some of the questions and their views are described below:

1. What are the ways of applying broader innovation knowledge combined with a clear understanding of the context of the business?

Operation Manager's View: Providing time and space to team members for innovation helps a lot in creating an environment of applying broader innovation knowledge.

IT Manager's View: Hiring new employees with different perspectives such as different passions, backgrounds and abilities.

Both the managers are of the same view that innovation is really important for growth in business.

2. How innovation helps or contributes in various strategies of the organization?

Operations Manager's View: It helps in reinventing or redesigning the corporate strategies which are essential for growth in business, developing competitive advantage and also in establishing value for the customers and the company as well.

IT Manager's View : It helps a lot in saving time, money and the available resources with improved productivity and reduced costs along with better working or operating practices.

3. What are the major digital innovations that are affecting the organization?

Operation Manager's View: Process Transformation helps a lot in improving the elements of the business procedures in order to get desirable outcomes. Some of the major steps that needs to be included are identification, developing baseline metrics, mapping out the best possible scenarios and setting out live and monitoring the procedures.

IT Manager' View: Incorporating Artificial intelligence in the business processes would help a lot in achieving the desired digital innovations. It includes improving or bringing out certain changes in various operational activities and procedures

PART B: Executing Innovation

- **Structuring of Innovation process at Accenture**

  The way the innovation process is structured is actually very simple. The entire structure is divided into two stages: idea generation and idea selection/validation. The first stage, idea generation, comprises of four steps: ideation, screening, prioritization and selection. Prioritization is done by Accenture's innovation unit and the selected ideas are taken forward for validation in the second stage of this process. The business innovation methodology is a stage-gate process that comprises of five stages namely: Idea generation, idea screening, idea development, business plan and commercialization. Business opportunity mapping is done at the first stage to understand the gap in the market and relevant customer problems (Schiavi et al., 2020). The process helps the company to decide which projects to execute and which ones not to.

- **Activities undertaken in parallel and designing of R and D team**

  Accenture, inc is the largest consulting, technology services and outsourcing company in the world. They have become experts at being able to predict consumer trends an Accenture innovation process is now a routine part of the process. Innovation gets input from around the firm, such as clients, new business units, and our own knowledge networks. The 3rd stage is to identify new ideas that can be applied to Accenture's business. This development phase is completed by R&D teams with breakthrough thinkers take ideas from prototype to finished product.

- **Structure of incentive structure within a team & across teams in Accenture**

  Within a team, there is a competitive environment which focuses on our top performers leading the next generation of teams. To maintain this leadership role, there are incentives for more results and greater client impact. In addition, each leader of a team has allocation of Accenture Capital for investments in exciting innovations. These projects often translate to new solutions and services that support our clients. Across teams, managers meet frequently to discuss progress against strategy, share ideas and look for opportunities to collaborate (Nellen et al., 2020). There is an overall incentive structure that drives good performance and focus on our priorities.

- **Controlling and management of business process**

  Accenture has always been thought of as a progressive, visionary organization. As part of its growth vision and to meet changing customer needs more effectively, Accenture has ongoing innovation initiatives. The innovation program is designed to create value for customers through innovations in process, technology and business models where Accenture can add significant value. Accenture has a strong, vertically integrated management system that sets the horizons and coordinates innovation at the firm. Its horizontal structure greatly aids in fostering "bottom up" innovative activity, but may have a negative effect on coordination (Pisar and Bilkova, 2019). A coordination team works at the global level handling high- potential, cross-functional projects. These are initially funded by or through special corporate funding by Accenture's executive committee but are later included in its main R&D budget when more mature.

  Moreover, Accenture's Global Innovation Centers are customer-focused innovation centers located in the Capital Markets, Communications, and Technology & Media industries. These innovation centers build on Accenture's industry and practice-based capabilities to support clients' transformation initiatives, leveraging Accenture's global reach and expertise.

- **Management of IP and the members in innovation process in Accenture**

  Innovation is a key driver of value creation in every company. Successful innovation execution means aligning the right resources behind the right opportunities at the right time. Accenture has a highly disciplined process for identifying and developing winning technologies and business models. Accenture is striving to become the world's leading digital enterprise. It focuses on becoming an industry-specific leader in innovation, through its clients and deep domain knowledge, which is used to provide new business models for all its services. The organization has invested heavily in change management to achieve this, including specific ways of working and development of technology tools. It strongly believes that "failing fast" is better than spending years planning something big that then doesn't work as intended (Janssen, 2020).

  Apart from that, Accenture works with a wide variety of partners, suppliers and clients. These relationships are managed very carefully to protect the IP which Accenture has developed independently, or which has been provided to Accenture by the customers or other third-party providers. The first step in managing brand identity and IP is to set a clear direction for the brand. Accenture's RAPP members work with the legal team each step of the way, from ideation to development to ensure that there are no obstacles or misunderstandings. To maintain brand consistency without losing the unique voice of its employees, Accenture also has a contract with each social media agency in which they must adhere to Accenture's guidelines while maintaining authenticity.

- **Role in process of Innovation**

  My role in the innovation process at Accenture is that of an active consultant. As a staff member, I am responsible for creating innovative solutions to our client's problems and unmet needs. We create these solutions through our design methodology, which introduces the clients to new ways of thinking about their business challenges and helps them identify new opportunities. Using this approach, we enable our clients to design better products and services, improve their customer relationships, enhance employee productivity, and develop attractive marketing strategies.

PART C: Exploiting innovation

Drivers of Commercialization and efficiency saving

Within the Accenture case, the identification of the banking customer requirement for a more effective technology and business process enables the first use. The engineers within Accenture were very successful in creating a new technology that would provide the efficiency savings for their clients. However, it was not until later when a project manager was able to speak with a client that they discovered they client had already been looking at a similar solution, but it wasn't until speaking to Accenture that they were convinced to have a go and purchase this product (Csedő and Zavarkó, 2020).

Strong IP of Accenture

Yes, Accenture have strong intellectual property. They were the first to market with an online ERP SFA system called Coda. Today Accenture is the world's largest consulting firm and the 15th largest global IT services firm. Most of their clients are Fortune 500 companies in the banking, manufacturing, technology and telecommunications industries. Their clients cover automotive, hospitality, consumer goods, travel and tourism industry and also retailing to name but a few.

- Reliability of Asset

  I would say Accenture rely a lot on their management functions such as resources and systems. They also use their technology as a competitive advantage because they are able to deliver high quality services quicker and smarter than anyone else. They have been implementing a ERP system (Enterprise Management System) into their business that manages all of their business activities and processes from one platform. They are also using cloud computing to deliver applications and files which increases the ability for its employees to work remotely.

- Engagement in Strategic Partnership

  Strategic partnerships allow Accenture to partner with other organizations that will mutually benefit both parties. The partnership is based on shared interests which allows for the creation of a win-win relationship. Accenture provides more relevant products and services to potential customers while the partnering companies gain access to the sales and customer service developed by Accenture. Through strategic partnerships, Accenture is able to work with small and mid-sized companies, which offer them entry into new markets (Lincan, 2018). This strategy has helped them enter into new markets across the globe and gain access to skillsets that would be difficult for them to find or create within the firm.

- Market to be Focused initially

  Accenture has developed a strategy of entering and establishing business in emerging markets. They are aware of the importance of different management functions and their integration into their strategy. They combined marketing, sales and business development functions in order to create a framework for growth. To meet the demands of growing global markets, Accenture has merged its ESS (enterprise software and services) and SSS (server software services) business units into one formal subsidiary. The workforce changes make it the second-largest professional-services operation in the industry, behind IBM and ahead of Hewlett-Packard. To spearhead growth, Accenture says it will leverage the strengths of both companies and deliver a stronger portfolio of offerings.

- Platform strategy and Technology roadmap with Accenture

  Yes, Accenture has a platform strategy and technology roadmap and it is based on a combination of three value propositions: managed services, consulting solutions, and business process outsourcing.

Accenture is an enterprise with global presence and hence they need a technology platform that can help them roll out applications in the most efficient way. The technology platform and the strategy can explain why Accenture provide the solution through mobility and social media as per the size of the client (small, medium or large).The Technology operations for Accenture are key and flow through the organization, enabling the alliance between innovation and delivery. As a relatively young business when it comes to technology development and implementation, Accenture has developed a core 'platform' on which the products and services are built. The reason for this is to allow for flexibility in delivering a product that has been proven by customers, whilst allowing for interoperability with other products within the portfolio. This allows for more creative freedom in the product developing process as well as not having to build everything from scratch, saving time and money.

- Challenges faced by Accenture in management of portfolio and platform

  Accenture is a service company that provides extensive services for the management of companies in all countries regardless of size. These companies have their own unique requirements and this is why Accenture has the ability to provide appropriate solutions and services for them. It is for this reason that Accenture platform and portfolio management are closely linked to the business strategies that each company wishes to follow (Phoon and Koh, 2017). The team at Accenture is set up to provide the right platform and portfolio for various businesses hence it's essential for the business to be closely linked to the platform so as to get better solutions that will enable it succeed in the market.

  Management of the platform and portfolio for the firm Accenture include challenges associated with diversity in approaches to value creation and innovation across the platform. For example, some firms are product-focused and service-oriented, while others focus mainly on marketing and R&D or business process outsourcing. This diversity can impair the integration of different parts of an organization into an effective portfolio or platform. Also, different cultural preferences in worldwide teams can hamper interoperability within an organization's portfolio strategy.

- Role in innovation process

I am a hardware designer for the energy and power section of the Information Services Division. I have responsibility for developing circuit cards and electronic systems for the generation and transmission of electrical power for Accenture's clients. My role in the innovation process is to provide my views on new technology developments, such as software changes and how they are likely to affect my area. I am responsible for seeing that any new technology has no adverse impacts on our systems and meets our business objectives.

Apprenticeship Standard Evidence Mapping

Apprenticeship Standard	Evidence
TS1: Identify, document, review and design complex IT enabled business processes that define a set of activities that will accomplish specific organisational goals and provides a systematic approach to improving those processes;	It is located at the page no. 8 of the report in the section Activities undertaken in parallel and designing of R and D team
TS2: Design and develop technology roadmaps, implementation strategies and transformation plans focused on digital technologies to achieve improved productivity, functionality and end-user experience in an area of technology specialism;	It is located in page no 9 of the report in the section Management of IP and the members in innovation process in Accenture
TS4: Negotiate and agree on digital and technology specialism delivery budgets with those with decision-making responsibility;	It is located at the page no 3 in the first literature review of the report
TS6: Professionally present digital and technology solution specialism plans and solutions in a well-structured business report;	It is located in the page no 9 of the report in the section Controlling and management of business process
TS11: Apply broader technical knowledge combined with an understanding of the business context, and how it is changing, delivering to the company's business strategy;	It is located in the page no 11 of the report in part C of the report in section Drivers of Commercialization and efficiency saving

TS13: Create and implement innovative technological strategies to support the development of new products, processes and services that align with the company's business strategy, and develop and communicate compelling business proposals to support these.	It is located in the page no 8 of the report in the section Structuring of Innovation process at Accenture
TK1: The strategic importance of technology enabled business processes, and how they are designed and managed to determine a firm's ability to compete effectively;	It is written at the top of the page no 12 of the report in the section Engagement in Strategic Partnership
TK2: The principles of business transformation and how organisations integrate different management functions in the context of technological change;	It is written in page no 12 in section Platform strategy and Technology roadmap with Accenture
TK4: Own employer's business objectives and strategy, its position in the market and how own employer adds value to its clients through the services and/or products they provide;	It is found in page no 12 of the section Market to be Focused initially
TK5: How to justify the value of technology investments and apply benefits management and realisation;	It is located in third paragraph of literature review at page no 4 of the report.
TK6: How to monitor technology related market trends and research and collect competitive intelligence;	It is found in page no 11 of the report in section Reliability of Asset

TK9: Technology road-mapping concepts and methods and how to apply them;	It is written in page no 12 in section Platform strategy and Technology roadmap with Accenture
B1: Be results and outcomes driven to achieve high key performance outcomes for digital and technology solutions objectives	It is found in page no 4 in second paragraph of literature review.

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