



Assignment 2: How to Win: Strategic Options Assessment and Recommendation

Due: Monday, 9:00 am (eastern), Week 9 (Weight: 25%)

Introduction

"Strategy means making clear-cut choices about how to compete. You cannot be everything to everybody, no matter what the size of your business or how deep its pockets."

– Jack Welch –

Congratulations! In your first executive brief, you generated some great insights about the playing field and competitors and how your own organization stacks up. Now you will transition from looking back to looking ahead. You will develop your “How to Win” strategy that will feature your game-winning move!

Your CEO has clarified that you need to think expansively and recommend a move that is *transformative* rather than *incremental*. To help with this, you have decided to consider each of the seven common winning moves outlined in the Week 6 Lecture Notes and pick one of them as your preferred game-winning move.

You know that your game-winning move will be a decisive choice for the company. But in choosing this move (as is the case with any strategic initiative), the company will risk money and resources. If your move is the right one, you will grow sales and profits and beat your competitors. If your move is the wrong one, you risk disappointing your investors and letting your competitors gain competitive advantage. Given the importance of this decision, you will evaluate *each* of the seven common winning moves and then do a deep dive into the attractiveness, feasibility and risks of your chosen strategy.

Your CEO is expecting your second executive brief in Week 8 to summarize your analysis of the strategy you believe offers the most potential and your recommendation for the game-winning move that you will be presenting in Week 10.

Instructions for Assignment 2

Your objective is to create a game-winning move, not just evaluate other people's moves. For this assignment, do NOT recommend a move that is identical or very similar to a real-life move made by your company. For example, don't recommend that Tesla/Apple/Google/Uber/etc. invest in self-driving car technology or recommend that CVS acquire Aetna as those are all in the public domain. Instead, recommend a move that is novel and innovative for your company.



Craft your second executive brief to include the following:

1. An opening paragraph summarizing the **purpose and content** of the brief.
2. **Rank Order Your Three Top Moves:** Review the applicability and attractiveness of each of the 7 common winning moves (from the Week 6 Lecture Notes) for your organization and your competitive situation in your chosen playing field. List your top three most attractive moves in order from most attractive to least attractive.
3. **Detail your Recommended Move:** For your most attractive move, provide details about what you would recommend as a part this move. For example, if you chose acquisition, who might you buy? If you chose geographic expansion, where would you expand? If you chose discontinuous innovation, what would the innovation be? Explain why you think it will generate financially attractive growth (which includes both incremental revenue growth and commensurate incremental profit growth).
4. **Alignment of the Move to Organizational Strength and Weakness.** How does this move address your key strength/weakness identified in your playing field assessment from Assignment 1?
5. **Required Investments.** Most strategic initiatives require an investment of resources and money. What are some significant investments that would be necessary to implement this move? Note, we are not looking for dollar figures; instead, we are looking for the key categories of investments such as hiring people, investing in new capabilities, building new manufacturing plants, etc.
6. **Risks and Risk Mitigation.** Most game-changing moves are bold initiatives and have risks that need to be considered. What are the most significant risks and what is your recommended risk-mitigation plan?
7. **Competitive Response:** How do you think the competition will react to your move?
8. **Concluding statement.** Conclude with a brief a summary of your game-winning move and conclusions on the above topics. Consider how the move effectively balances investments and risks. How will the move position your company against the competition?
9. **References:** Include in-text citations for all data, assertions, and facts, and a corresponding reference list. Appendices are allowable if additional supplemental information is needed for the brief.



Formatting and Submission Requirements

- The executive brief submission should be 2 to 3 pages (not including the cover page or appendixes/references page).
- Typed, single-spaced, professional font (size 10 – 12) with one-inch margins on all sides.
- Include a cover page containing the title of the assignment, your name, professor's name, and the course title and date.
- Include a references page at the end documenting sources and citations used. You must cite three or more current sources.
- Use headings to identify main topics and subtopics.
- You are welcome to include charts, tables, and graphs in-text or in an appendix.
- Develop and support your research with facts and in-text citations, appendixes, and references.



JWI 540: Strategy

Assignment 2

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Criteria	Honors	High Pass	Pass	Low Pass	Unsatisfactory
1. Describe and rank three the top potential game winning moves and recommend a preferred game-winning move. Weight: 30%	The 3 moves are exceptionally well described. Recommended move is innovative and presented in a clear and unambiguous way. Excellent rationale for how the move will generate financially attractive growth for the company. The move is clear logical and feasible	The 3 moves are well described and clearly ranked. Recommended move has well-articulated specificity to provide a clear understanding of how the move will generate financially attractive growth for the company. The move is reasonably clear, logical and feasible	The 3 moves are ranked and satisfactorily described. Recommended move is identified and how it will generate financially attractive growth is satisfactorily explained; however, there is a lack of detail in one of the three areas: clarity, feasibility or logic.	Does not include a move ranking and/or is missing a ranked option. Partially describes recommended move. A basic explanation for how the move might generate financially attractive growth for the company is provided; however, the move lacks sufficient detail that impacts two of the three areas: clarity, feasibility, or logic.	Does not provide any ranking and/or unsatisfactorily describes a recommended move and how it might generate financially attractive growth for the company.
2. Explain the alignment of recommended move to a core company strength and weakness and identify necessary Investments Weight: 20%	Clearly and concisely explains how the move relates to the company's strength and weakness. Demonstrates excellent logic, reasoning and foresight about the most significant investments that will be required.	Clearly and concisely explains how the move relates to the company's strength and weakness. Demonstrates sound logic and reasoning regarding most of the significant investments that will be required.	Satisfactorily explains how the move relates to the company's strength and weakness. Provides satisfactory description of some of the significant investments that will be required but may be missing at least one important investment category.	Partially explains how the move relates to the company's strength and weakness. May include a basic description of investment but lacks more than one important investment category.	Does not include or unsatisfactorily explains how the move relates to the company's strength and weakness or does not identify significant investments that will be required.



JWI 540: Strategy

Assignment 2

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3. Identify risks and anticipated competitive response Weight: 20%	<p>Clearly and logically explains the most significant risks of the move.</p> <p>Provides cogent and novel risk-mitigation plans to address each identified risk.</p> <p>Competitive response predictions demonstrate exemplary logic and reasoning and are clearly explained.</p>	<p>Clearly and logically explains most of the significant risks of the move.</p> <p>Provides cogent and novel risk mitigation plans for most of the identified risks.</p> <p>Competitive response predictions demonstrate sound logic and are clearly explained.</p>	<p>Clearly explains at least two risks of the move.</p> <p>Provides logical risk mitigation plans for at least one of the identified risks.</p> <p>Competitive response predictions are reasonable and include an acceptable amount of detail.</p>	<p>Explains at least one risk associated with the move but these risks may be lacking in detail or logic.</p> <p>Risk mitigation plans may not be complete, logical, or aligned with the risks.</p> <p>Competitive response predictions partially address the likely outcomes but are overly vague.</p>	<p>Does not include, or unsatisfactorily demonstrates anticipation of the most significant risks of the move or</p> <p>Does not include risk mitigation plans for the identified move.</p> <p>Unsatisfactorily anticipates competitive response.</p>
4. Provide an effective and persuasive conclusion that is "fit for use" for a CEO. Weight: 15%	<p>Conclusion is extremely well crafted and provides a clear and succinct synopsis of the move.</p> <p>Persuasively asserts the recommended move while providing a reasonable, fair, and balanced position on investments and risks.</p> <p>Excised from the brief, the conclusion could effectively be used as the elevator pitch for the move.</p>	<p>Conclusion presents a complete and succinct synopsis of the move and persuasively asserts the recommended move while simultaneously providing a reasonable, fair and balanced position on investments and risks.</p>	<p>Conclusion is a satisfactory synopsis of the key elements of the move and satisfactorily asserts the recommended move while simultaneously providing some perspective on risks and/or investments.</p>	<p>Conclusion partially summarizes the move and partially addresses other factors of risks and investments.</p>	<p>Conclusion is missing or presents an unsatisfactory summary of the move, risks, and investments.</p>



JWI 540: Strategy

Assignment 2

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5. Present information professionally within the three-page limit, and support recommendation, assertions, and facts with in-text citations, appendixes, and references. Weight: 15%	Brief is succinct and exceptionally well-written and professional in appearance. Conforms to page-limit and formatting requirements There are no grammatical and mechanical usage errors.	Brief is succinct and well-written and professional in appearance. Conforms to page-limit and formatting requirements Grammatical and mechanical usage errors, if any, are minor and have no impact on the flow. The majority of recommendations, assertions, and facts are supported with in-text citations and references.	Brief is well-written and generally professional in appearance. Conforms to page-limit and formatting requirements There may be a few grammatical and mechanical usage errors, but they do not have a major impact on the flow. Most of the recommendations, assertions, and facts are supported with in-text citations and references.	Brief is partially well-written and professional in appearance. Has several grammatical and mechanical usage or spelling errors that make parts of the text difficult for the reader to understand. Some recommendations, assertions, and facts are supported with in-text citations and references.	Brief is missing significant content or is generally unprofessional in appearance due to multiple grammatical and mechanical usage or spelling errors. Most recommendations, assertions, and facts are not supported with in-text citations or references.