**Values and Strategy**

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# Identify the major components of the strategic management process

The strategic management process is a feedback loop for executing strategy and measuring success (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015). It starts with the analyzing a problem and researching a direction forward. Based on the results of the research, the company will choose a strategy to capitalize on the outcome. Lastly, the performance of the strategy is measured and compared against the expected outcomes of the analysis.

# Discuss how these components work together to create value for the organization.

After executing an iteration of the ASP model, the company will have additional questions. Perhaps the performance was insufficient, and the strategy needs to be revised. This will lead to more research and analysis to drive a different strategy. Alternatively, the results could be above-average, and the company will need to diversify into new areas instead of seeking micro-optimizations (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015).

Renaissance Learning, an education technology firm, uses this model to drive innovation into their company. For instance, customers frequently reported that it was cost probative for small school districts to leverage their software.

To address the concerns, the business decided to host the software for the districts. This lead to research between maintaining private data centers or using the public cloud. Cost analysis lead to a strategy designed around Amazon Web Services.

As the engineering teams design the software, performance metrics are already being collected. For example, the software needs to be ready before the first day of school. Having these metrics help drive decisions to make sure they timely meet the expectations of the customer.

# Evaluate Renaissance Learnings…

## Mission Statement

Their mission is “to accelerate learning for all children and adults of all ability levels and ethnic and social backgrounds, worldwide (Renlearn, 2017).”

## Vision Statement

The mission statement is accompanied by a vision of enabling teachers to have insight into their students. They accomplish this by building technologies to apply machine learning and other statistical models to test results. This is delivered through hosted web applications which expose custom content for educating math, science, and language arts.

## Motivation Strategy

When the company was founded in 1984, it was because the founder’s oldest child had difficulties reading. They felt that software could make it fun to learn and encourage him to catch up. The program was successful and was adapted to helping other students in the district. That story has continued to building outward, now becoming the number one name in k-12 software.

It is not surprising that same passion has trickled down to all staff members, as they are motivated to enrich education for millions of children.

## Innovation Strategy

The business started as a family owned company, however they quickly acknowledged a lack of expertise. To mitigate these challenges the organization hired a management firm and talented computer software designers.

Typically, family owned businesses are unsuccessful when an outsider is brought in to runs the company (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015). That was not the case in part because the founders wanted to buy talent and make the best product possible. In contrast many family owned businesses exist to enrich the life of family (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015). This alternative view has enabled them to be more innovation by delegating to expertise.

## People Strategy

The company knows that their people are the lifeblood of the organization. This is where all the talent and ideas will come from; in addition to the execution. They work hard to retain talent with competitive pay and frequent benefits, such as free lunch. Keeping the employees happy and motivated is such a critical concept, Renaissance even has a Chief People Officer.

# Explain the role of ethics and corporate social responsibility in strategic planning.

## How does this direct their strategy?

A company that lacks ethical and social responsibility will have difficulties succeeding in the long term (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015). This is because customers will boycott products which do not align with their own moral compass.

There are also complexities introduced to an organization being corrupt. For example, foreign countries which high amounts of bribery tend to have lower export numbers (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2015). Customers have lower expectations and simply want less of the product.

## How does the organization's vison and mission align with your own values and vision?

It’s difficult to be overly critical of an organization, whose sole mission is to improve education for millions of children. I see that as a very respectable goal and one that is worth striving to achieve.

## If you are currently working for the organization, how does your role influence this and vice versa?

My role is to design backend systems and mentor junior engineers, as they learn to build cloud solutions. Like our final product intends, I gain satisfaction knowing my work helps teach others. It is great to see the benefit that my peers receive from my insights.

# Conclusion

Using the strategic management process, it is possible to determine areas of investment. Once those areas have been identified strategy can be executed and the results measured. As the company performs iterations of the loop, they will drive closer toward a more efficient solution.

However, the company needs to initially kick off the SAP loop-- by figuring out what their business wants to accomplish. This requires a clear mission and vision statement, along with a plan to motivate and innovate people. If they lack any of these components the strategic management process will lack the human capital required to succeed.

Lastly businesses need to be ethical and apply corporate governance. These ensure that the business will be sustainable and deliver a product that agrees with the customer’s moral compass.

# References

Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson. (2015). *Strategic Management Competitiveness & Globalization.*

Renlearn. (2017, Feb 6). *Renaissance Homepage*. Retrieved from Renaissance Learning: http://www.renaissance.com/