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SUGGESTED SOLUTION

CA INTERMEDIATE

SUBJECT- STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Test Code – CIM 8449

BRANCH - () (Date :)

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ANSWER 1

1. A
2. D
3. D
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. B
8. D
9. B
10. D

ANSWER 2(a)

Decision making is a managerial process of selecting the best course of action out of several alternative courses for the purpose of accomplishment of the organizational goals. Decisions may be operational, i.e., which relate to general day-to-day operations. They may also be strategic in nature.

As owner manager at the top level in the company, Shri Alok Kumar should concentrate on strategic decisions. These are higher level decisions having organisation wide implications. The major dimensions of strategic decisions are as follows:

- ◆ Strategic decisions require top-management involvement as they involve thinking in totality of the organization.
- ◆ Strategic decisions involve significant commitment of organisational resources.
- ◆ Strategic decisions necessitate consideration of factors in the firm's external environment.
- ◆ Strategic decisions are likely to have a significant impact on the long-term prosperity of the firm.
- ◆ Strategic decisions are future oriented.
- ◆ Strategic decisions usually have major multifunctional or multi-business consequences.

(6 MARKS)

ANSWER 2(b)

Strategic management involves developing the company's vision, environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and control. It emphasises the monitoring and evaluation of external opportunities and threats in the light of a company's strengths and weaknesses and designing strategies for the survival and growth. It helps in creation of competitive advantage to outperform the competitors and also guide the company successfully through all changes in the environment.

The major benefits of strategic management are:

- ◆ Strategic management gives a direction to the company to move ahead. It defines the goals and mission.

- ◆ It helps organisations to be proactive instead of reactive in shaping its future.
- ◆ It provides framework for all major decisions of an enterprise such as decisions on businesses, products, markets, manufacturing facilities, investments and organisational structure. It provides better guidance to entire organisation on the crucial point - what it is trying to do.
- ◆ It helps organisations to identify the available opportunities and identify ways and means to achieve them.
- ◆ It serves as a corporate defence mechanism against mistakes and pitfalls.
- ◆ It helps to enhance the longevity of the business.
- ◆ It helps the organisation to develop certain core competencies and competitive advantages that would facilitate survival and growth.

(6 MARKS)

ANSWER 3(a)

The Ansoff's product market growth matrix (proposed by Igor Ansoff) is a useful tool that helps businesses decide their product and market growth strategy. With the use of this matrix a business can get a fair idea about how its growth depends in new or existing products in both new and existing markets.

Companies should always be looking to the future. Businesses that use the Ansoff matrix can determine the best strategy. The matrix can help them to decide how to do this by demonstrating their options clearly, breaking them down into four strategies, viz., *Market Penetration, Market Development, Product Development, Diversification*. Determining which of these is best for their business will depend on a number of variables including available resources, infrastructure, market position, location and budget.

(4 MARKS)

ANSWER 3(b)

The presence of strategic management cannot counter all hindrances and always achieve success. There are limitations attached to strategic management. These can be explained in the following lines:

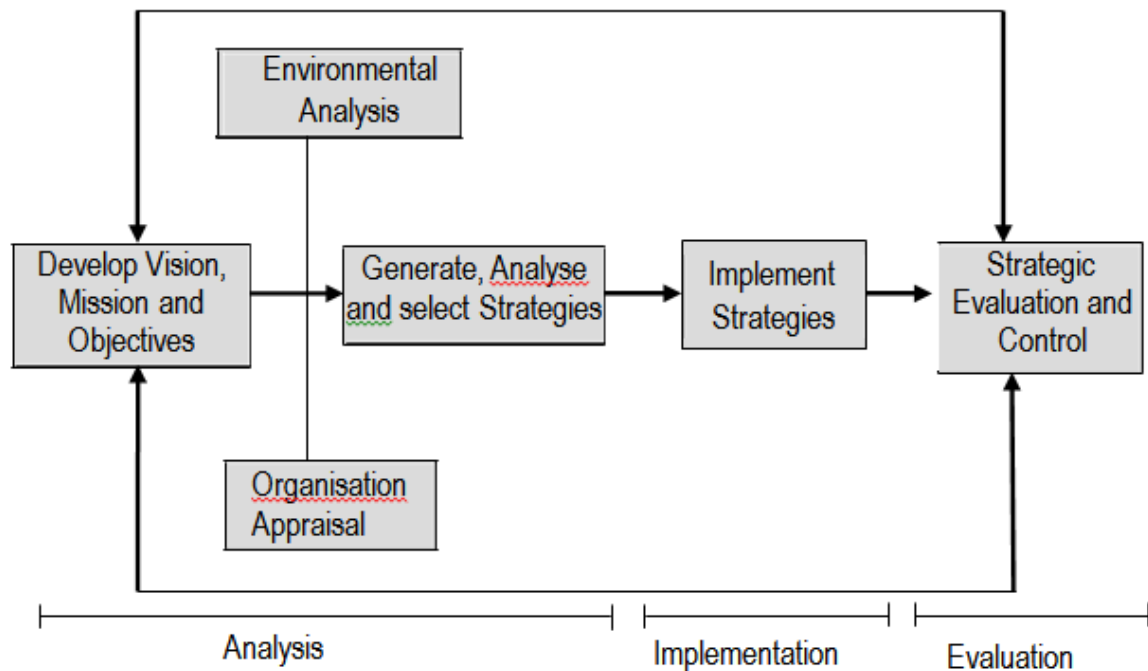
- ◆ Environment is highly complex and turbulent. It is difficult to understand the complex environment and exactly pinpoint how it will shape-up in future. The organisational estimate about its future shape may awfully go wrong and jeopardise all strategic plans.
- ◆ Strategic management is a time-consuming process. Organisations spend a lot of time in preparing, communicating the strategies that may impede daily operations and negatively impact the routine business.
- ◆ Strategic management is a costly process. Strategic management adds a lot of expenses to an organization. Expert strategic planners need to be engaged, efforts are made for analysis of external and internal environments devise strategies and properly implement. These can be really costly for organisations with limited resources.
- ◆ In a competitive scenario, where all organisations are trying to move strategically, it is difficult to clearly estimate the competitive responses to a firm's strategies.

(4 MARKS)

ANSWER 4(a)

The strategic management process can best be studied and applied using a model. Identifying an organization's vision, mission, goals and objectives, is the starting point for strategic management process. The strategic management process is dynamic and continuous. A change in any one of the major components in the model can necessitate a change in any or all of the other components. Therefore, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation activities should be performed on a continual basis, not just at the end of the year or semi-annually.

Formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategies are the major components of the strategic management that are represented in the following model:



The strategic management process is not as cleanly divided and neatly performed in practice. Strategists do not go through the process in lockstep fashion. Generally, there is give-and-take among hierarchical levels of an organization. Many organizations conduct formal meetings semi-annually to discuss and update the firm's vision/mission, opportunities/threats, strengths/weaknesses, strategies, objectives, policies, and performance. Creativity from participants is encouraged in meeting. Good communication and feedback are needed throughout the strategic management process. **(6 MARKS)**

ANSWER 4(b)

According to C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel, major core competencies are identified in three areas - competitor differentiation, customer value, and application to other markets.

- ◆ **Competitor differentiation:** The company can consider having a core competence if the competence is unique and it is difficult for competitors to imitate. This can provide a company an edge compared to competitors. It allows the company to provide better products or services to market with no fear that competitors can copy it.
- ◆ **Customer value:** When purchasing a product or service it has to deliver a fundamental benefit for the end customer in order to be a core competence. It will include all the skills

needed to provide fundamental benefits. The service or the product has to have real impact on the customer as the reason to choose to purchase them. If customer has chosen the company without this impact, then competence is not a core competence.

- ◆ **Application of competencies to other markets:** Core competence must be applicable to the whole organization; it cannot be only one particular skill or specified area of expertise. Therefore, although some special capability would be essential or crucial for the success of business activity, it will not be considered as core competence, if it is not fundamental from the whole organization's point of view. Thus, a core competence is a unique set of skills and expertise, which will be used through out the organisation to open up potential markets to be exploited.

(6 MARKS)

ANSWER 5(a)

Yummy foods is proactive in its approach. On the other hand Tasty Food is reactive. Proactive strategy is planned strategy whereas reactive strategy is adaptive reaction to changing circumstances. A company's strategy is typically a blend of proactive actions on the part of managers to improve the company's market position and financial performance and reactions to unanticipated developments and fresh market conditions.

If organizational resources permit, it is better to be proactive rather than reactive. Being proactive in aspects such as introducing new products will give you advantage in the mind of customers.

At the same time, crafting a strategy involves stitching together a proactive/intended strategy and then adapting first one piece and then another as circumstances surrounding the company's situation change or better options emerge-a reactive/adaptive strategy. This aspect can be accomplished by Yummy Foods.

(4 MARKS)

ANSWER 5(b)

Experience curve is similar to learning curve which explains the efficiency gained by workers through repetitive productive work. Experience curve is based on the commonly observed phenomenon that unit costs decline as a firm accumulates experience in terms of a cumulative volume of production. The implication is that larger firms in an industry would tend to have lower unit costs as compared to those of smaller organizations, thereby gaining a competitive cost advantage. Experience curve results from a variety of factors such as learning effects, economies of scale, product redesign and technological improvements in production.

The concept of experience curve is relevant for a number of areas in strategic management. For instance, experience curve is considered a barrier for new firms contemplating entry in an industry. It is also used to build market share and discourage competition.

(4 MARKS)