

Environmental Scanning - Internal & External Analysis of Environment

Organizational environment consists of both external and internal factors. Environment must be scanned so as to determine development and forecasts of factors that will influence organizational success. **Environmental scanning refers to possession and utilization of information about occasions, patterns, trends, and relationships within an organization's internal and external environment.** It helps the managers to decide the future path of the organization. Scanning must identify the threats and opportunities existing in the environment. While strategy formulation, an organization must take advantage of the opportunities and minimize the threats. A threat for one organization may be an opportunity for another.

Internal analysis of the environment is the first step of environment scanning. Organizations should observe the internal organizational environment. This includes employee interaction with other employees, employee interaction with management, manager interaction with other managers, and management interaction with shareholders, access to natural resources, brand awareness, organizational structure, main staff, operational potential, etc. Also, discussions, interviews, and surveys can be used to assess the internal environment. Analysis of internal environment helps in identifying strengths and weaknesses of an organization.

As business becomes more competitive, and there are rapid changes in the external environment, information from external environment adds crucial elements to the effectiveness of long-term plans. As environment is dynamic, it becomes essential to identify competitors' moves and actions. Organizations have also to update the core competencies and internal environment as per external environment. Environmental factors are infinite, hence, organization should be agile and vigile to accept and adjust to the environmental changes. For instance - Monitoring might indicate that an original forecast of the prices of the raw materials that are involved in the product are no more credible, which could imply the requirement for more focused scanning, forecasting and analysis to create a more trustworthy prediction about the input costs. In a similar manner, there can be changes in factors such as competitor's activities, technology, market tastes and preferences.



While in **external analysis**, three correlated environment should be studied and analyzed —

- immediate / industry environment
- national environment
- broader socio-economic environment / macro-environment

Examining the **industry environment** needs an appraisal of the competitive structure of the organization's industry, including the competitive position of a particular organization and its main rivals. Also, an assessment of the nature, stage, dynamics and history of the industry is essential. It also implies evaluating the effect of globalization on competition within the industry. Analyzing the **national environment** needs an appraisal of whether the national framework helps in achieving competitive advantage in the globalized environment. Analysis of **macro-environment** includes exploring macro-economic, social, government, legal, technological and international factors that may influence the environment. The analysis of organization's external environment reveals opportunities and threats for an organization.

Strategic managers must not only recognize the present state of the environment and their industry but also be able to predict its future positions

Steps in Strategy Formulation Process

Strategy formulation refers to the process of choosing the most appropriate course of action for the realization of organizational goals and objectives and thereby achieving the organizational vision. **The process of strategy formulation basically involves six main steps.** Though these steps do not follow a rigid chronological order, however they are very rational and can be easily followed in this order.

- 1. Setting Organizations' objectives** - The key component of any strategy statement is to set the long-term objectives of the organization. It is known that strategy is generally a medium for realization of organizational objectives. Objectives stress the state of being there whereas Strategy stresses upon the process of reaching there. Strategy includes both the fixation of objectives as well the medium to be used to realize those objectives. Thus, strategy is a wider term which believes in the manner of deployment of resources so as to achieve the objectives.
While fixing the organizational objectives, it is essential that the factors which influence the selection of objectives must be analyzed before the selection of objectives. Once the objectives and the factors influencing strategic decisions have been determined, it is easy to take strategic decisions.
 - 2. Evaluating the Organizational Environment** - The next step is to evaluate the general economic and industrial environment in which the organization operates. This includes a review of the organizations competitive position. It is essential to conduct a qualitative and quantitative review of an organizations existing product line. The purpose of such a review is to make sure that the factors important for competitive success in the market can be discovered so that the management can identify their own strengths and weaknesses as well as their competitors' strengths and weaknesses.
After identifying its strengths and weaknesses, an organization must keep a track of competitors' moves and actions so as to discover probable opportunities of threats to its market or supply sources.
 - 3. Setting Quantitative Targets** - In this step, an organization must practically fix the quantitative target values for some of the organizational objectives. The idea behind this is to compare with long term customers, so as to evaluate the contribution that might be made by various product zones or operating departments.
 - 4. Aiming in context with the divisional plans** - In this step, the contributions made by each department or division or product category within the organization is identified and accordingly strategic planning is done for each sub-unit. This requires a careful analysis of macroeconomic trends.
 - 5. Performance Analysis** - Performance analysis includes discovering and analyzing the gap between the planned or desired performance. A critical evaluation of the organizations past performance, present condition and the desired future conditions must be done by the organization. This critical evaluation identifies the degree of gap that persists between the actual reality and the long-term aspirations of the organization. An attempt is made by the organization to estimate its probable future condition if the current trends persist.
 - 6. Choice of Strategy** - This is the ultimate step in Strategy Formulation. The best course of action is actually chosen after considering organizational goals, organizational strengths, potential and limitations as well as the external opportunities
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Strategy Implementation - Meaning and Steps in Implementing a Strategy

Strategy implementation is the translation of chosen strategy into organizational action so as to achieve strategic goals and objectives. Strategy implementation is also defined as the manner in which an organization should develop, utilize, and amalgamate organizational structure, control systems, and culture to follow strategies that lead to competitive advantage and a better performance. Organizational structure allocates special value developing tasks and roles to the employees and states how these tasks and roles can be correlated so as maximize efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction-the pillars of competitive advantage. But, organizational structure is not sufficient in itself to motivate the employees.

An organizational control system is also required. This control system equips managers with motivational incentives for employees as well as feedback on employees and organizational performance. Organizational culture refers to the specialized collection of values, attitudes, norms and beliefs shared by organizational members and groups.

Following are the main **steps in implementing a strategy:**

- ✓ Developing an organization having potential of carrying out strategy successfully.
- ✓ Disbursement of abundant resources to strategy-essential activities.
- ✓ Creating strategy-encouraging policies.
- ✓ Employing best policies and programs for constant improvement.
- ✓ Linking reward structure to accomplishment of results.
- ✓ Making use of strategic leadership.

Excellent formulated strategies will fail if they are not properly implemented. Also, it is essential to note that strategy implementation is not possible unless there is stability between strategy and each organizational dimension such as organizational structure, reward structure, resource-allocation process, etc.

Strategy implementation poses a threat to many managers and employees in an organization. New power relationships are predicted and achieved. New groups (formal as well as informal) are formed whose values, attitudes, beliefs and concerns may not be known. With the change in power and status roles, the managers and employees may employ confrontation behavior

Strategy Formulation vs Strategy Implementation

Following are the main differences between Strategy Formulation and Strategy Implementation-

Strategy Formulation	Strategy Implementation
Strategy Formulation includes planning and decision-making involved in developing organization's strategic goals and plans.	Strategy Implementation involves all those means related to executing the strategic plans.
In short, Strategy Formulation is placing the Forces before the action.	In short, Strategy Implementation is managing forces during the action.
Strategy Formulation is an Entrepreneurial Activity based on strategic decision-making.	Strategic Implementation is mainly an Administrative Task based on strategic and operational decisions.
Strategy Formulation emphasizes on effectiveness.	Strategy Implementation emphasizes on efficiency.
Strategy Formulation is a rational process.	Strategy Implementation is basically an operational process.
Strategy Formulation requires co-ordination among few individuals.	Strategy Implementation requires co-ordination among many individuals.
Strategy Formulation requires a great deal of initiative and logical skills.	Strategy Implementation requires specific motivational and leadership traits.
Strategic Formulation precedes Strategy Implementation.	SStrategy Implementation follows Strategy Formulation.

Strategy Evaluation Process and its Significance

Strategy Evaluation is as significant as strategy formulation because it throws light on the efficiency and effectiveness of the comprehensive plans in achieving the desired results. The managers can also assess the appropriateness of the current strategy in today's dynamic world with socio-economic, political and technological innovations. Strategic Evaluation is the final phase of [strategic management](#).

The significance of strategy evaluation lies in its capacity to co-ordinate the task performed by managers, groups, departments etc, through control of performance. Strategic Evaluation is significant because of various factors such as - developing inputs for new strategic planning, the urge for feedback, appraisal and reward, development of the strategic management process, judging the validity of strategic choice etc.

The process of Strategy Evaluation consists of following steps-

- 1. Fixing benchmark of performance** - While fixing the benchmark, strategists encounter questions such as - what benchmarks to set, how to set them and how to express them. In order to determine the benchmark performance to be set, it is essential to discover the special requirements for performing the main task. The performance indicator that best identifies and expresses the special requirements might then be determined to be used for evaluation. The organization can use both quantitative and qualitative criteria for comprehensive assessment of performance. Quantitative criteria includes determination of net profit, ROI, earning per share, cost of production, rate of employee turnover etc. Among the Qualitative factors are subjective evaluation of factors such as - skills and competencies, risk taking potential, flexibility etc.
- 2. Measurement of performance** - The standard performance is a benchmark with which the actual performance is to be compared. The reporting and communication system help in measuring the performance. If appropriate means are available for measuring the performance and if the standards are set in the right manner, strategy evaluation becomes easier. But various factors such as managers contribution are difficult to measure. Similarly divisional performance is sometimes difficult to measure as compared to individual performance. Thus, variable objectives must be created against which measurement of performance can be done. The measurement must be done at right time else evaluation will not meet its purpose. For measuring the performance, financial statements like - balance sheet, profit and loss account must be prepared on an annual basis.
- 3. Analyzing Variance** - While measuring the actual performance and comparing it with standard performance there may be variances which must be analyzed. The strategists must mention the degree of tolerance limits between which the variance between actual and standard performance may be accepted. The positive deviation indicates a better performance but it is quite unusual exceeding the target always. The negative deviation is an issue of concern because it indicates a shortfall in performance. Thus in this case the strategists must discover the causes of deviation and must take corrective action to overcome it.
- 4. Taking Corrective Action** - Once the deviation in performance is identified, it is essential to plan for a corrective action. If the performance is consistently less than the desired performance, the strategists must carry a detailed analysis of the factors responsible for such performance. If the strategists discover that the organizational potential does not match with the performance requirements, then the standards must be lowered. Another rare and drastic corrective action is reformulating the strategy which requires going back to the process of strategic management, reframing of plans according to new resource allocation trend and consequent means going to the beginning point of strategic management process

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