

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

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PART 2

1. STRATEGIES GENERATION AND MARKET EXPANSION

3.1. Strategies formulation by using SWOT Matrix

After Apple has stated clearly its vision and mission statement and evaluate the internal and external environment taking into consideration of the SWOT Analysis –i.e., strength, weakness opportunities and threat faced by the Company, a proper strategy generation process should be employed to figure out the most attractive strategies for the continued growth of the Company. After the Company has developed the best available strategies, it has to analyze the advantages, disadvantages, costs and benefits of the chosen strategies, certain analytic tools should be employed to match the strategies with the chosen criteria for comparison to ascertain the feasibility of the strategies. Those tools such as Competitive Profile Matrix to determine the competitive edge over its competitors, EFE Matrix to analyze the strength and weakness and IFE model on opportunities and threats of the Company have already been used to analyze the external and internal environment of the Company. The Company has to focus on the generated feasible alternative strategies aligning them with the prevailing external and internal factors and such matching process is essential for the decision making process of the management for the business growth of the Company.

QSMP

		Relocate the plant from China to India and offer new lines of products at low price	Form a joint venture with local distributors and other brands in India			
Opportunities		Weight	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
1	Technological advancement	0.08	3	0.24	1	0.08
2	Steady customer growth	0.03	2	0.06	1	0.03
3	Utilize AI & LOT	0.08	2	0.16	2	0.16
4	Expand distribution network	0.05	0	0	1	0.05
5	Coloration with other Brands	0.04	1	0.04	3	0.12
6	Growing market	0.05	1	0.05	4	0.20
7	Smart wearable technology	0.05	2	0.10	3	0.15
8	Apple TV and Electric Car	0.10	2	0.20	2	0.20

Threats		Weight	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
1	Coronavirus outbreak	0.10	4	0.40	2	0.20
2	Counterfeit products	0.05	0	0	1	0.05
3	Market penetration	0.05	2	0.10	3	0.15
4	Increased competition	0.08	2	0.16	3	0.24
5	Lawsuits	0.05	1	0.05	1	0.05
6	Trade War	0.08	2	0.16	3	0.24
7	Economic Uncertainty	0.06	2	0.12	1	0.06
8	Rising labour cost	0.05	2	0.10	2	0.10

		Relocate the plant from China to India and offer new lines of products at low price	Form a joint venture with local distributors and other brands in India			
Strengths		Weight	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
1	Leadership Position	0.10	2	0.20	3	0.30
2	Innovation Products	0.08	4	0.32	2	0.16
3	Brand Identity	0.07	1	0.07	2	0.14
4	Design and Technology	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.10
5	High Profit Margin	0.05	2	0.10	4	0.20
6	Strong distribution chain	0.06	1	0.06	0	0
7	Apple product ecosystem	0.05	2	0.10	2	0.10
8	Sustainability of product	0.06	2	0.12	3	0.18

Weakness		Weight	AS	TAS	AS	TAS
1	High price products	0.05	0	0	2	0.10
2	Incompatibility	0.08	1	0.08	0	0
3	Depending on few products	0.05	0	0	1	0.05
4	Limited advertisement and promotion	0.06	1	0.06	1	0.06
5	Matching customers' expectation	0.05	1	0.05	3	0.15
6	Decline sales in China	0.10	4	0.40	0	0
7	Market share behind competition	0.06	0	0	2	0.12
8	Long waiting time for new product	0.06	2	0.12	1	0.06
TOTAL			2	3.77	1	3.80

After reviewing the feasibility of the two strategies, it is noted that both strategies should be implemented to enhance the penetration into the high potential market of India. With the change of strategies of Apple for the investment in Asian countries, India will be the focus of penetration in the next few years.

3.1.1 SO Strategies

The main objective of SO (strength-opportunities) Strategies is to use Apple's internal strength to take advantage of external opportunities. Apple has constantly reviewing its marketing penetration into Asian countries. Apple can exploit more on how to connect Apple brand with fashionable brand. Apple has the disadvantage of high pricing strategy but the high pricing can relate to top fashion brand. It is generally agreed that top brand luxury bag such as Channel, Prada are expensive and with top quality. High price iPhone can be advertised as fashionable phone with characteristic that will be welcomed by the middle class, professional and the young generation of India. Senior citizen with high purchasing power should be exposed to iPhone's care for the environment and user- friendliness. Apple should also modernize the retail stores to make it not only a place of sale but also educational and retreat center. A library may be provided to the customers so that they will love to visit the stores and chat with those iPhone fans as social gathering area. Apple can cooperate or crossover with existing brands to enhance sales. The cooperation with Beats on Air pods, and Nintendo on iPhone apps and even reputable lens manufacturer on iPhone lens in future would also help when the Company develop new product

In view of the expected penetration into India, Apple would focus on expansion of the distribution network in the country. The strong network chain in Asia and the future relocation of Chinese plant to South East Asian countries would further enhance the efficient supply chain and distribution network in the region. With the expected opening of apple stores in India, the integration of all facilities and resources in Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore would help the setting up of the stores in India. The growing market of iPhone and other apple products in India would allow Apple to introduce different lines of product to expand the product line and services

3.1.2. WO Strategies

WO (weakness-opportunities) Strategies aim at improving Apple's internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities. Apple also takes the opportunity of the declining sales in China to extend their sale points to other countries so as to minimize the over-reliance of the sales in China. The expected depreciation of Renminbi and the decreased consumption power of the Chinese in the prevailing pessimistic economic environment brought by coronavirus outbreak should be the right time for Apple to shift their marketing strategy from conservative to more aggressive approach in their extension of presence in Asia. In addition, the United States government also promised to subsidize those companies with Chinese manufacturing plants back to the United States.

The decreasing cost of raw materials due to the declining economic conditions might open opportunity for Apple to introduce lower price products such as iPhone SE products. The continuous hacking of the Android system proves to the customers that Apple operating system is more reliable although not compatible with other operating system. Apple is very cautious on monitoring of the apps in their apps store and any suspicious virus spreading apps will be removed by Apple. With the increased competition from Chinese mobile phone like Xiaomi, Samsung also lost its dominating position in India. Apple would take this opportunity to expand the market share by invest heavily in India to increase the market share and establish a strong base for further expansion in the region.

3.1.3 ST Strategies

ST (Strengths-threats) Strategies use Apple's strengths to avoid or reduce the impact of external threats. Apple can utilize its strong design and technology in the prevailing coronavirus and trade war impacts. Its strong R & D often produce innovative product to

meet the market demand and offset the unfavourable impact. People are expecting Apple to bring innovative Iphone, Ipad and Macbook and new features, updated operating system and modern and fashionable accessories such as unique Apple keyboard, mouse, case and apple pen etc. are new weapons to guarantee the continuous demand of the apple products in gloomy economic environment.

Apple is concentrating to enhance its human resources in foreign countries, in particular the Asian market so as to lower the operating cost such as labour cost, marketing cost and regulatory cost etc. Apple also strengthens its legal team to tackle the counterfeit products and customers' claim on poor quality products and intentional decreasing the efficiency of the old version products. Apple also increase the investment in the marketing of the products for building the brand image and cooperate with the educational institution for offering discounted price for apple products used for educational purposes.

3.1.4 WT Strategies

WT (weakness –threat) Strategies is Apple's defensive tactics directed at reducing internal weakness and avoiding external threat. Apple is exploring technology and product design to adjust the high price strategy by differentiating product lines with bottom lines products allowing lower price such as the new introduction of Iphone SE with the selling price from around US\$420 with the more expensive models focusing on top technological breakthrough such as faster CPU, finer screen display and better camera feature and picture quality. The technological advancement ultimately produce more advanced products that are difficult to imitate or copy which will diminish the emergence of counterfeit products in developing countries, in particular in China to minimize the potential loss of revenue.

With the outbreak of COVID-17, Apple can focus on the policy more on green and environmental-friendly so as to uphold the core strategy of health and climate-consciousness. The decreased consumption for all smartphones including Android phones and iPhone might be an opportunity for Apple to strength its leadership position by launching more innovative products and unique technology that can attract wide spectrum of people.

3.2 Implementation of strategic options, barriers and measures to overcome

		Products	
		Existing	New
Existing M A R K E T		Market Penetration	Product Development
	NEW	Market Development	Diversification

3.2.1 Market penetration Strategy

The basic philosophy of market penetration strategy is to sell existing products to existing markets to gain market share and the risk is relatively low. The company would concentrate on its own resources to market the product in order to expand its market share in North America and no extra cost needed to set up new unit. Apple often use this strategy by producing iPhone, MacBook, iPad in various platforms, from Apple stores, Apple.com and local telecommunication retailers such as Orange, 3, BT etc .and often launch vast promotion programme to penetrate into the market in its five operating segments: America, Europe,

Greater China, Japan and rest of Asian Pacific. This strategy is feasible only if there is scope for increasing market share as higher cost will be incurred for saturated market. Apple has annual event to introduce its new products and iOS system through the sale of more technological products to more customers to maintain its dominant position in the market. Apple's ecosystem produces plays an important role in pursuing this strategy with high efficiency.

3.2.2 Market Development Strategy

Market development strategy refers to selling of existing products to new markets and regions. Apple is a global brand and it continues to expand its market in developed and underdeveloped countries in the world. This is very important for Apple as the local market will stagnate at certain point and the guaranteed growth and penetration in other regions with high growth potential is important for the sustained growth of the Company. There are some very good examples of those companies adopting market development strategy such as Reebok, Nike and Adidas which have started to enter the international market for market expansion. The Company may expand out of their regions to find new market focusing on new product dimensions such as packaging and product line and new distribution channels for that particular area. Of course Apple may have to adopt different pricing policies for the target region such as different price rates for different iPhones and iPads.

3.2.3 Product Development Strategy

The product development strategy develops and sells new products to the existing market. Apple has been developing new products since its incorporation and the process is ongoing to produce new products and services such as iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, AppleTV, iCloud, macOS iPadOS and many other new products such as Apple Watch, Apple Pay (mobile

payment), Apple Card(credit card) and Apple TV(entertaining business producing own films) are of huge success. This strategy is more risky than market penetration as Apple has to invest heavily to develop new products and incidental investments in distribution, marketing and labour force. Apple has to focus on research and development and cater for product ideas and development and assist the management to make decision for product specification to meet the market demand. Apple has to assess customer needs by collecting feedback from questionnaires and online survey in order to understand the need of the customer

3.24 Diversification Strategy

Apple is the market leader in the computer and mobile industry. After reviewing the SWOT Analysis and other tools, it shows that the organization should diversify its products and channel of distribution. Also, after exploring the various developed and developing countries for market expansion, it is noted that India should be the target company to expand and relevant strategies and marketing plans should be prepared for this particular market. Three types of diversifications including Forward diversification, Full diversification and Backward diversification may be employed.

The diversification guideline for an organization like Apple is that it has a strong management team. It also states that adding new but related products that can significantly enhance the sales of the current products and offer the products at highly competitive prices. With the population of 1.3 billion and having the world's second largest telecom market, it is estimated that more than 100 million smartphones were shipped in India in 2015 and the numbers will still increasing. However, Apple was reported to have only 2% share of the market while Samsung

and Xiaomi lead the market with 23% each. There is lot of room for market penetration into India for Apple and other smartphone producers. It is apparent and mature for Apple to strive for diversification strategy to diversify the products and market.

Apple started to apply for opening of new stores in India from 2016. The main reason for the attraction of India in diversifying Apple products is that India has continuous investment such as airports, road, bridges, hospitals and power plant in infrastructure. India has a strong middle class who are willing to spend money on mobile phones and luxurious consumer products. India also provides opportunities for tech startup and enhances integration of the digital platforms and infrastructure. The consumers of India are highly educated and young talents and there is a strong thrives for leveraging technology.

3.3 The Barriers and the Strategies to Overcome Barriers

The Barriers:

a. Mix of Customers Expectation

Unlike customers from Western countries who focus on upgrading version, Indian consumers are trying to enjoy the fashionable iPhone at low price. The price sensitivity of the Indian market is high. A large portion of the market cannot afford to pay the retail price of iPhone. Despite the fact that Apple share about 2% of the smartphone market in India, the demand for older and cheaper device such as iPhone 6 and iPhone 7 still contributes to a higher growth in Apple's revenue there. Apple initial marketing strategy seems to be waiting India to get wealthier and fit its business model and the strategy is gradually changing as the potential growth in this area is promising with the change of political environment.

b. General mindset of the Indian still conservative

Although India has a comprehensive technology platform to enable them to enhance the advancement of their telecommunication industry, it is still an innovative desert. The high- end professional might have strong power in digital and software talent leaving the general public only chasing for the mobile phones and tablets for routine work. The persistency of the Indian people to focus on the high-end mobile and computer products like Apple is still low.

a. Tariff on imported electronic products

Although Apple understands the importance of adopting new price strategy in order to enhance sales in India, the tariff imposed on apple products is another barrier to Apple. Indian government requires single branded retailers that are more than 51% foreign-owned to buy at least 30% of the raw materials from local vendors.

b. The bad strategy of Tim Cook

In the past Tim Cook is relying on Chinese market for integration of its apple products manufacturing plants and retail stores. With the change of Apple strategy in diversifying the business in Asian market, Apple started to invest heavily in India since 2015 and exploited the opportunity of opening new stores in India to extend its presence in this area.

c. Financial performance

On February 17, 2020, the quarterly earnings showed a decline of 13.8% year over year as Apple only sold just over 38 million in second quarter 2019 whereas, Samsung, its main competitor had sold 75 million smartphones in the same period showing an increase of 1.1% year over year.

d. Covid 19 Outbreak

The covid-19 outbreak in the world poses great threat to the continued growth of Apple in global market and it is greatly hit by the epidemic. With around 3 million reported cases of covid-19 and the death toll of around 200,000 as at 20 April 2020, the situation might be getting out of control if it is not properly monitored by the various governments.

Relevant Strategies to Overcome the Barriers

a. Transformation of marketing strategy

Like other competitors, Apple should evolve their basic models and make products more appealing, affordable and accessible to customs for the Indian market. Their marketing team would develop new innovative products on an ongoing basis.

b. Indian Economic prosperity

Prime Minister Modi estimated that Indian's economy, being the fifth largest economy in the world, will double to US\$ 5 trillion by 2025. With the relocation of manufacturing plants from China to other Asian countries, India will play an important role in the distribution network and the marketing of iPhone products in the Asian market. With the continued expansion of the economic and digital infrastructure in India, it is expected that Apple will have a sustained growth in the country.

c. Growth in Research and Development in India

Apple must develop and understand the socio-political, environmental and institutional factors, which are unique in Asia. Surveys must be prepared and statistics gathered to keep track the consumer taste and buying behavior so that the Company can adapt to market faster and more sensitive to the competitive environment.

d. “Think Different” philosophy of Apple

The “think different” philosophy allows the APPL’s staff to strive for continuous innovation spirit and customer-focused services strategy. Apple is the first company which launches iPod and iPhone under Steve Jobs before and the core principle is how to serve the customers better. Apple staff is experienced fighters and will find new solutions and strategies to combat the rivalry of the competitors in this adverse economic environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

After conducting the strategic audit of the internal and external environment of Apple together with the analysis of its SWOT, it is apparent that Apple is still the pioneer in technology industry. Although the financial performance of Apple has weakened due to US-China trade wars in 2019 and covid-19 epidemic in early 2020, the Company is still in a favorable position to achieve better results in 2021 with the increase in revenue from service like Cloud and music download. The core strength of Apple is its focus on innovation and product quality which has helped to maintain its leadership position. However, in order to reduce its dependency on personal computing and mobile computing products, Apple needs to diversify into other areas. The research and development team should concentrate to develop innovative products to lead the market. The challenges before Apple are big and it has to formulate and implement the strategies with tact and should focus on expanding its resources of revenue and attracting new segments so as to close the gap between it and Microsoft, Samsung and Huawei. The customer base of Apple is still strong and reliable and the strong cash flow will support Apple to make investment in areas with great growth potential. On reviewing the financial performance of Apple in 2019, it is noted that the decrease of revenue and gross profit is slight (a decrease of US\$5.4 million and US\$3.5 million in revenue and gross profit respectively as compared to 2018) and the potential growth in revenue is still encouraging upon the control of the epidemic in later part of 2020.

After reviewing the analysis, it is advisable to Apple to continue outsourcing the manufacturing of the hardware parts and display panels from third party and the assembling of the product in India or adjacent countries to save cost and enhance efficiency of operations. Apple should also continue to find local partners in the countries to form joint venture and franchises as this would lower the cost of marketing and increase the branding image. The local government will also support the activities of Apple as the collaboration with local partners would benefit the domestic consumption.

Learning from the experience of Sony and Disney, Apple seems to strive for the integration of hardware and software under the principle of growth business strategies and practices. Apple tries to control their apps and services and filter them to deliver a safe and private digital experience. The strength of Apple to make their operating system and iTunes to be unique seems to receive support from the customers and the trend should continue and elements of user-friendliness should be enhanced to make Apple products both functional and fashionable.

Although Apple still faces criticism on its governance, customers of Apple product do not normally swift to Android phones and the customer satisfaction ratio is high. Along with cost minimization, Apple should also work on price minimization. The Company should continue to increase investment and should pay more focus on emerging markets like India which has already occupied by competitors and the market share can be enlarged with more talented participants. .

India is both an opportunity and a headache for Apple's penetration into the market. The headaches include bureaucratic rules and regulations, strong labour unions, corruption and underdeveloped institutions. However, with the determination of Indian Government to boost the economy in the next five years, there are still opportunities for Apple to exploit and utilize for the long term investment and diversification into the Indian smartphone market.

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