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Module Name: Marketing Management

Module Code: LCMB7024

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Word Count: 2482

Term 1

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Introduction

Businesses need to determine whether pioneering new market positions benefit them better than following behind competitors for growth along with innovation and market superiority goals. Market entry methods differ through pioneering or following approaches providing companies with separate sets of benefits and limitations. Companies that function as pioneers enter new markets initially by presenting revolutionary products and services which change established standards to secure an early dominance of this space. Businesses need to determine whether pioneering new market positions benefit them better than following behind competitors for growth along with innovation and market superiority goals (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2019). Pioneering the market allows companies to gain leadership status by shaping consumer standards while building devoted customer bases. Marketing leadership comes with substantial hazards because it requires substantial financial investments and brings unanswered market questions besides the threat of business collapse. Followers choose to observe market maturation to gain insights from pioneer companies before entering the market. Following an established idea enables one to leverage pioneer accomplishments and thus create better products than already exist on the market. Founders in this position need to separate themselves from competitors who lead the market while creating distinctive value positions of their own. The pioneer strategy has allowed Deliveroo, TransferWise (now Wise) and Just Eat to reshape the food delivery industry along with cross-border payment services (Amit & Schoemaker, 2021). The pioneers in their industries were followed by companies like Barclays with Mobile Banking along with Virgin Atlantic operating Low-Cost flights and RBS implementing Digital Banking. This paper analyses strategic advantages between pioneer and follower companies by studying these selected organisations. The study approaches Product Life Cycle (PLC) strategy implementations during growth and maturity stages to demonstrate how businesses endure their market dominance.

The Advantages of Being a Pioneer Company

Companies that lead their markets succeed because they become first to enter the field thereby gaining valuable market share and establishing recognisably strong brands that prolong their competitive dominance. Marketing leadership comes with substantial hazards because it requires substantial financial investments and brings unanswered market questions besides the threat of business collapse (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2019).

Market Leadership through First-Mover Advantage: Strategic leadership comes from entering industries first because pioneering businesses create market standards that establish consumer standards. Kerin, Varadarajan, and Peterson's (1992) findings demonstrate that pioneering companies maintain an average market share superiority of 36% above subsequent market entrants. Deliveroo used its status as an early entrant in UK food delivery to generate extensive brand awareness as well as lasting customer loyalty before rivals entered the fight. The early start-up allowed efficient operation growth which established dominant market leadership.

Innovative Edge and Enhanced Consumer Loyalty: Pioneering firms introduce innovative products or services through their design and technology development which creates a distinction between themselves and their follower companies. The primary introduction of innovative products attracts customers because they choose to maintain relationships with companies which initially satisfy their requirements (March & Sutton, 2019). Consumer satisfaction was swift when TransferWise (now Wise) entered the financial market with its transparent and low-cost international money transfer system which won over customers looking for better alternatives than conventional banking fees. The loyal customer base does not waver even when new market competitors appear.

Defining Industry Standards: New market participants who become pioneers get to set both performance standards and operational routines within emerging industries. Competitors found it necessary to duplicate or surpass Just Eat's online food delivery system to achieve a substantial market position. Just Eat established initial standards which helped its market dominance and simultaneously shaped how rival services would be managed and regarded by the consumer base.

Securing Intellectual Property and Creating Entry Barriers: Market leaders have the chance to establish ownership rights on their inventions and business procedures which

create barriers for potential competitors to enter the marketplace. Step one for protection leads to both replicated innovation prevention and powerful competition barriers against potential business challenges. The initial establishment of Google's search algorithms followed by patenting achievements enabled the company to gain complete dominance in the internet search field thus keeping potential challengers at bay through patent infringement difficulties.

Access to Crucial Customer Data and Market Trends: Market pioneers obtain first-hand access to both vital customer information and the most current industry trends because they have started their venture before others. Consumer data plays a vital role in product implementation because it helps companies improve their offering while maintaining competition in front of competitors. By analysing data from its retail operations Amazon developed outstanding logistics and customer relationship management systems which turned into the pillars of its achievements.

Sustained Profitability and Market Dominance: Being the first in the market introduction can lead to extended profitability together with a sustained leadership position within the market sphere. Market pioneers maintain increased control of their market share throughout the life cycle primarily because consumers have familiarised themselves with these brands when the market first started (Lewin & Volberda, 2018). The global beverage market leadership position of Coca-Cola has been sustained because the company established its operations early while acquiring broad market coverage.

Challenges and Strategic Considerations: Strategic Considerations along with Challenges create a complex path for pioneering a new market since its advantages are substantial. The initial creation of new markets together with educating consumers about new products and dealing with market failure represent primary obstacles (Frynas, 2021). Market leaders must consistently dedicate resources to innovation since taking the lead will naturally bring on many competing companies. Xerox stands as an exemplary case of market leadership through its development of the photocopier machine which became obsolete against competing technological innovations that threatened their extensive market dominance.

Navigating Market Uncertainties: Pioneer companies must deal with higher levels of market uncertainty when seeking acceptance from consumers while ensuring market sustainability. Companies face a significant threat when exploring untested markets since financial losses become substantial after failed investments (March & Sutton, 2019). Successful navigation of market uncertainties by companies like Netflix has let them innovate into streaming services which transformed their business model while making them industry leaders.

By being a market champion you gain major advantages that include dominance over competitors along with control of standards and protection of intellectual possessions. The pioneers in a market develop industry standards while achieving loyal customer relations because they initiate market-serving operations (March & Sutton, 2019). Continuous innovation and risk management present themselves as necessary conditions for enjoying the market advantages. Pioneering companies Deliveroo, Wise and Just Eat demonstrate effective utilisation of first-mover benefits for continuing their market leadership and dominance.

The Advantages of Being a Follower Company

The opportunity to enter first produces positive effects but adoption of existing concepts by followers delivers essential strategic benefits. Profiting from an established customer base and receiving industry knowledge becomes possible for following companies when they study pioneer market experiences (Harris & Crane, 2018).

Risk Reduction through Market Validation: The entry of follower companies into established markets benefits greatly because pioneers have previously validated and tested the market sector. Using this business plan allows market and financial enterprises to cut their uncertainties regarding customer reception and market demand levels. Market followers can speed up their penetration throughout the market through the analysis of pioneer insights about consumer behaviour and product preferences (Roberts, 2019). Pepsi chose to enter the cola market after Coca-Cola established the market demand for cola beverages so it dedicated its resources toward marketing efforts alongside product differentiation initiatives.

Cost Efficiency in Market Entry and Operations: Market entrants who follow the pioneers can minimise their launch expenses because they need not duplicate the pioneering market education efforts and distribution network development. Followers obtain market advantages which enables them to dedicate their resources toward product advancement together with marketing initiatives (Harris & Crane, 2018). Followers investing in market entry expenses need to pay only about 30% of what pioneers spend. The mobile banking sector experienced initial education of consumers by fintech startups before Barclays entered. Barclays deployed its resources to improve its security features and integration capabilities during this strategic timing to attract a wider customer segment.

Leveraging Technological Advancements: Leveraging modern technology becomes possible for market followers by waiting until a later period to enter because they can refine and surpass original pioneering products. The late entrance allows companies to develop products with enhanced features which satisfy customer requirements better (Williamson, 2022). The entry of Sony into the gaming console sector after Nintendo allowed the company to employ better technology which produced the PlayStation console with upgraded visual elements and a bigger game selection that rapidly gained notable market success.

Strategic Flexibility and Adaptation: Strategic Followers gain benefits from monitoring pioneer performance since they develop their plans through effective adaptation. Strategic flexibility bestowed upon followers allows them to prevent the mistakes of pioneers while developing new ideas that pioneers might lack (March & Sutton, 2019). Among the smartphone manufacturers, Samsung took advantage of its late entry to develop superior products by increasing display dimensions while enhancing power capacity to meet emerging consumer demands for enhanced multimedia functions.

Differentiation and Positioning: The opportunity for followers comes through innovative changes to pioneer products and fill unmet customer needs. Difference between products frequently acts as a decisive element for companies trying to win market share. Hyundai entered the U.S. automobile market late after Toyota but created a strong budget consumer segment through warranty-backed low-priced vehicles that addressed existing cost and reliability concerns of potential buyers.

Avoiding Obsolescence and Capitalizing on Established Markets: Followers have the advantage of observing which technologies or business models fail while benefiting from produced established markets. Companies under this strategy actively pick investments in modern efficient systems together with market-advantageous profitable technologies (Tushman & O'Reilly, 2021). Strategic positioning enables followers to bypass pioneers in the development process of particular products. Although Amazon did not initiate the ecommerce industry it used the weaknesses of previous market participants to deliver ease-of-use and higher service quality that set them apart for success.

Challenges and Considerations: Followers need to deal with two main challenges in the market because they must compete past branded inertia while developing innovations beyond pioneer-defined standards. Differentiation strategies should become the primary focus because they prevent company shutdown effects against established market leaders. Followers must thoroughly examine market conditions to prevent entering industries that show signs of sustaining at their maximum capacity.

Companies which choose the follower role can access markets with minimal danger combined with optimised operational efficiency. Success for market followers depends on learning pioneer lessons along with adopting modern technologies and developing strategic market positioning strategies to gain and expand their market control (Porter, 2018). The outcome of this business model heavily depends on how well companies master market changes while effectively innovating and establishing differentiation for their products against pioneer companies in the market. Several follower companies like Pepsi and Sony alongside Hyundai demonstrate how intelligent market entry can help businesses surpass their gaze competitors while generating successful market capture.

PLC Strategies in the Growth and Maturity Stages

By using the Product Life Cycle (PLC) organisations can understand the natural evolution of their products from introduction to decline phases. The growth and maturity periods demand pioneers and followers to modify their competitive plans to defend market supremacy along with their advantageous positions (Quinn, 2023). Different

organisational strategies work best for pioneers compared to followers when they operate in various stages of the Product Life Cycle.

General leadership during the growth period through intensive market growth activities includes operational expansion alongside market share increase and product development based on customer needs. The growth stage enabled Deliveroo to expand its operations tremendously while increasing its market penetration and developing its delivery systems (Sharma, 2024). The company dedicated substantial financial resources to strengthen its delivery system while expanding its connexions with restaurants to deliver fast service. The company boosted customer satisfaction by developing technology-based solutions such as real-time tracking and customized recommendations which maintained customer loyalty.

When followers attempt growth they can use established market demand to speedily broaden their operations. TransferWise operated as Wise to leverage its record of efficient international money transfer services when the company expanded into new business sectors and markets worldwide (Sharma, 2024). Wise entered the market when affordable cross-border payments presented established demand so the company dedicated itself to developing its technology and enhancing user experience. Through its transparent pricing together with its efficiency-minded approach the company earned major market share points beyond the pioneers.

During the maturity phase pioneers alongside followers both experience rising market competition and complete market saturation while facing lower growth rates. Just Eat and similar pioneer firms struggle to keep their market control during maturation by developing differentiating features in their products. The rising competition in the online food delivery market led Just Eat to expand its product range while shortening delivery periods and establishing partnerships with various restaurants to broaden its customer network.

During the maturity stage followers must preserve their market position by delivering excellent service alongside enhanced functionality to their customers. Virgin Atlantic managed to overcome growing competition from low-cost airlines by providing superior services to EasyJet and Ryanair among other competitors (Roberts, 2019). Virgin Atlantic devoted resources toward enhancing its airline services including better seating offerings

and route expansion to preserve its position against other premium low-cost service providers.

The maturity stage of Sainsbury's strategic development involves plant-based product expansion together with sustainable initiatives and broadened alternative meat ranges for consumers (Frynas, 2021). The company dedicated major capital to plant-based product development so it could remain effective against rising competition from contemporary business entities as well as established competitors.

Conclusion

The market position decision between pioneer or follower shapes both strategic path and long-term business success for companies. Advantageous first-movement opportunities enabled Deliveroo, TransferWise and Just Eat to strengthen their market position while defining industry norms with loyal customer bases (Lewin & Volberda, 2018). Pioneering entails substantial market development expenses along with unpredictable market conditions because followers must continue innovating to protect their leadership position. The followers who joined Barclays Virgin Atlantic RBS gained entry to markets that already showed signs of demand reduction because these markets diminished uncertainty and they could utilise established infrastructure (Harris & Crane, 2018). When followers enter the market they can minimise risks however they need to set themselves apart from market competitors to reach success. Adaptations to original features and service adjustments for modern customer needs enable trails to generate major market revenue while becoming vital members of their industry. The Product Life Cycle (PLC) model functions as a vital model which helps organisations guide their operations through various stages of product development. Followers together with pioneers need to regularly develop new strategies and modify them to handle shifts in market conditions as well as changes in consumer preferences and competitive challenges. The combined approach allows these companies to retain their market edge in intensely competitive fields so they achieve enduring achievement.

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