

***Dummy Report for Strategic
Management Assignment 1 2017***

**STRATEGY ANALYSIS OF
STARBUCKS**



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1.0 Executive Summary

The report will:

- Identify which strategy is used in Starbucks.
- Analyze how Starbucks achieve the strategy.
- The advantage of the strategy which used in Starbucks for Starbucks.
- The disadvantage of the strategy which is used in Starbucks for Starbucks.
- The recommendation which can improve Starbucks' competitive advantage.

The information within the report was collected a variety of sources including textbooks, academic journals and the Starbucks's website.

The report found Starbucks use differentiation from Bowman's Strategy Clock. Starbucks employ the follow methods in order to achieve this strategy:

- Pay attention to the products and service quality.
- Using different and flexible model to operate and invest its stores form all around the world.
- Special brand promote method.

There are a variety of strengths of the differentiation strategy which Starbucks have gained by adopting the strategy, these are:

- Starbucks can distinguish with other competitors by providing different products and service.
- High customers' loyalty ensures the Starbucks's product premium ability.
- Starbucks's differentiated services based on customer needs have greatly increased customer loyalty.

The implementation of differentiation strategy also brings some limitations to Starbucks, such as:

- The improvement of products and service increase the cost at the same time.
- Because of the differentiation strategy. Employees are specially trained to be more capable than other coffee shops. This may cause employees setting themselves up or looking for better-paid companies.
- Differentiated strategies that are easily imitated will likely result in the company losing its competitive edge.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendation which could possibly improve Starbucks competitive advantage:

- Focus on a point in the difference painting strategy and do it best.
- Strictly require the brand stores comply with differentiation strategies, such as product and service quality.
- Under the premise of not affecting quality of products and services , expanding store size.
- Under the premise of not affecting quality of products and services, reducing operating costs as much as possible to compete with the competitors price war.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Report remit

- Identify which strategy is used in Starbucks.
- Analyze how Starbucks achieve the strategy.
- The advantage of the strategy which used in Starbucks for Starbucks.
- The disadvantage of the strategy which is used in Starbucks for Starbucks.
- The recommendation which can improve Starbucks' competitive advantage.

2.2 Background of the organization

Starbucks was founded in 1971, which is the world's leading specialty coffee retailer, bakery and brand owner. Its retail products include 30 of the world's top coffee beans, handmade espresso, a variety of coffee, hot and cold drinks, all kinds of fresh and delicious pastry food, a variety of coffee machines, coffee mugs and other commodities. In June 1992, Starbucks, as the first professional coffee company successfully listed, and promoted the company's business growth and brand development quickly. Currently, the company has more than 12,000 coffee shops in 37 countries across North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific Ocean and employs more than 117,000 people. The mission of Starbucks: to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time(Starbucks, 2017).

2.3 Definitions of major concepts

2.3.1 Business level strategy

The definition of strategy is that:

Henrik von Scheel defines the essence of a strategy as an activity that provides a unique combination of values - choosing different activities or performing activities different from those of competitors(Rosing,M., et al, 2010).

The strategy of an organization can be divided to many types:

- Corporate-level Strategy
- Business-level Strategy
- Operation Strategy

The strategy level which used in Starbucks is business-level strategy. The strategy at the enterprise level is to create a difference between the position of the firm and its competitors. Businesses must

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position themselves to decide whether or not they intend to carry out their activities in different ways or to carry out different activities with their competitors (Business-level strategy, 2012).

2.3.2 Competitive advantage

As Lynch has said that competitive advantage is just like the significant strong point that a company has but its competitors do not have (Lynch, 2003). In the context of same value products provided, organization can offer lower price than its competitors or provide higher value products to obtain higher profitability. Competitive advantage is core competencies and opportunities (Hill, B.W., 2004).

2.3.3 Bowman and Faulkner's strategy clock

In 1996, Bowman's Strategy Clock was developed by David Faulkner. This enterprise strategy model extends Porter's three strategic positions to eight, and explain cost and perceived value combinations which used by many companies and ensure possibility of every strategies success. The figure shows eight different strategies for Bowman to be determined by different price and value levels (Radut, Casiana, 2015).



Figure 2-1 Bowman's Strategy Clock

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The first is Low price and Low value. Due to the lack of differentiation, companies in this position can only attract present customers through affordable prices.

The second is low price, companies in this position minimize prices by controlling costs.

The third is hybrid. It means moderate price and moderate differentiation. The cost of the companies' products in this position are less expensive, but offer products that have higher perceived value than other low-cost competitors. It can build customer loyalty.

The fourth is differentiation. Companies that use differentiation strategies provide people with high perceived value to control prices to gain different perceived value, maintain high margins, or seek greater market share, and brands are important.

The fifth is Focused Differentiation. The company's products have high perceived value and high price characteristics, with highly targeted market and high profit margins to survive.

The sixth is Increased Price/Standard Product. Sometimes, the company increases the price of the product in order to obtain a higher profit without increasing the value of the other side of the equation ($\text{Value} = \text{Benefit} - \text{Effort} - \text{Risk} - \text{Price}$) (Catalogues4Business, 2017), and when the solution is accepted, the company will have a better profitability, if this is not accepted, which will cause the company to lose its original market share until the price or value is adjusted. Because in the highly competitive market, unreasonable price premium will soon be found.

The seventh is High Price and Low Value. Companies that are in this position are generally monopolies, and it is not important for companies to increase products' value. When customers need product or service that only one company can offer, it only needs to pay the company's set price.

The eighth is Low Value and Standard Price. In a highly competitive market, the only competitive advantage of low-value products is price, if price can not be the competitive advantage without value, any companies will lose market share (MBA knowledge base, 2017).

This strategy is quite helpful for analyzing the company's market competitiveness. It can analyze Starbucks market competitiveness well by understanding the strategy.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Implementation of the strategy

Starbucks is at the fourth position in Bowman's strategic clock which is differentiation. Differentiation aims to provide customers with the highest level of perceived value added. Differentiation is Starbucks' competitive advantage. By providing differentiated products and services in the coffee beverage industry, the company earned higher profit rate than normal coffee shops. Specific performance:

3.1.1 Product of Starbucks

Starbucks provide customers the best coffee, only a cup of coffee cooking customers. It focus on quality and service, Starbucks has gained a competitive advantage based on its unique and diversified products, focusing on customers' needs and creating products that customers think are valuable at the right price, which win the favor of consumers and better reputation(Jacksonville, 2011). In order to successfully apply this strategy, Starbucks buy the world's highest quality coffee beans to ensure coffee quality, information dissemination and create reputation and offers differentiated services and products in the coffee sales and store industries. Include: a variety of coffee product sales outside their stores through partnership with PepsiCo, Starbucks brand liqueur through partnership with Jim Beam, food and merchandise sales, and other acquisitions such as Tazo tea. (Business Wire,2005) They are able to hook customers with the quality and service provided in their coffee shops which leads to customers' purchases of other Starbucks labeled items such as bottled coffees in grocery stores or Starbucks brand liqueur at the liquor store (Thompson,2013).

3.1.2 Investment and cooperation model of Starbucks

Starbucks use flexible investment and cooperation model based on different markets around the world (Fair-Trade Coffee Boost, 2005). Starbucks started its multinational operations very early, and share of the U.S. headquarters in subsidiaries around the world is different. Three types of commercial organizations structures are universally adopted in the world: joint ventures, licensing agreements and sole proprietorship. Starbucks strategy is more flexible. It will be based on market conditions around the country and take the appropriate mode of cooperation. Based on the proportion of shares held by Starbucks headquarters in Starbucks offices around the world, there are mainly four types of cooperation modes in Starbucks: 1. Starbucks accounts for 100% of the shares, for example, in the United Kingdom, Thailand and Australia; 2.Starbucks holds 50% of the whole equity, for example, Japan, South Korea and other places; 3. Starbucks holds less equity, generally

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about 5%, such as China's Taiwan, Hong Kong, Hawaii and capital increase prior to Shanghai; 4. Starbucks does not account for shares, just purely authorized to operate, such as the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Beijing.

Starbucks's partners are different around the world, but the brands they operate are same. The advantage of doing this is that 'it can do many things with the power of others and do it together at the same time.'

Because all the power of the direct store is owned by the parent company, and the owner of the franchise has some rights and the parent company only provides the technology or related resources. Why Starbucks do not open franchise stores is that Starbucks wants to makes the best quality control. For example, Starbucks will never save waste materials, but only to provide customers the best coffee. However, if the franchise is opened, it is hard to say that each franchise owner will not begrudge increasing the cost all the time, just provide guests a good cup of coffee (Gross, Tessone, 2006). When all the power of direct sales stores owned by the parent company, the headquarters can strictly require its stores to strictly abide by a series of Starbucks rules, regulations and implementation of strategies to avoid affecting the brand impact of Starbucks in order to ensure the successful implementation of differentiation strategy

3.1.3 Staff training of Starbucks

Starbucks spend a great deal on employee benefits and training, which make its employees less mobile, which play an important role in the brand management of Starbucks(Rounds, 1993). In Starbucks, the training of employees depends on the content of the work of the staff, training consists of three parts.

First, determine aspects of employee abilities, and listen to customer complaints. Starbucks employees face different customers every day, there are many types of customers, there are good, bad, arrogance and so on. If they think employees do something wrong or work too slowly, they will complain and blaming employees. The content of training will teach them how to deal with customer complaints without making him angry. Because of the relationship with the customer is very important as a service worker.

Second, manager survey employees is based on the performance of new employees during the training, managers can clearly know if he is fit for the job and how responsible for the job

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Third, assess the skills and knowledge of employees. This can not only know the lack of staff ability and have a targeted training, but also can understand the strengths of staff then to find a more suitable position.

The differences with other coffee shops are as follows, firstly, Starbucks employees training methods are only suitable for Starbucks. In Starbucks, the staff is responsible for the part that they are responsible for, the less responsibility for the matters, the more energy one thing can be put into. In Starbucks, the basic staff is mainly responsible for three things: making coffee, cashier and cleaning of the shop. Each employee needs to perform their duties, rather than other coffee shops, each employee can replace any one's job. Secondly, employees in all positions must be responsible for the healthy status of the post. For example, even if the barista still has a lot of coffee to do and many customers wait in line, the barista must clean the bar after finishing a cup of coffee then to start making the next cup. Thirdly, communication with customers. Each Starbucks stores absolutely have no less than two seats can sit down to see where the bar operation. This seat is for those who like to communicate or who wants to know about Starbucks, even if you do not sit in this position. Employees and each customer have to go through at least three times' communications. These differences greatly enhance the stability, productivity and quality of service of Starbucks employees (makegoodcoffee, 2013).

3.1.4 Starbucks experience

Starbucks think its products not only a coffee but also a coffee shop experience, so he focuses primarily on communicating with customers, placing special emphasis on communicating with them. In addition, debugging and managing the store atmosphere, personalized design, lighting and music to create a more comfortable atmosphere. These are mainly manifested in:

First, storefront site, Starbucks start from the shopping habits of consumers, it is usually a convenient commercial prime location, to build a consumer place and environment to meet the cultural experience.

Second, building a comfortable service experience like home, Starbucks pursuit of each store's brand image are same, but each store presents unique style. Stores' design mostly designed by the United States headquarters, At the same time in design, mix the local cultural and business district features and Starbucks together, make the store modeling special and match the local customs. Starbucks focus on employees grooming, staffs' clothes are clean and tidy, wearing a baseball cap

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printed with Starbucks logo, casual t-shirts, trousers and aprons, looks very personal, friendly smile of the staffs make customers seem to stay at home.

Third, Starbucks pay attention to the concept of the supremacy of customers, attaches importance to customers experience in the coffee shop. In the service process, the clerk not only show knowledge of professional, but also shows the natural kind and enthusiasm to narrow the distance between customers.

Forth, in terms of brand management, Starbucks connects the brand with the lives of consumers (Cleff, Lin, Walter, 2014). Starbucks will become the second living room of people's lives, thereby making Starbucks become an important part of people's cultural life.

3.1.5 Promotion of Starbucks

Promote and educate consumers, promote their products through networks, clubs and other means, and create a deep-rooted culture with various interesting and innovative propaganda modes. There are some ways about Starbucks promotion. Firstly, Starbucks advocates patriotism. During the government shutdown in 2013, Starbucks provided free coffee to anyone who purchased coffee for others. The promotion of a free coffee at Starbucks did not end the government shutdown. CEO Schultz explain that company wanted to set a good example and "help people support and connect with one another, even as we wait for our elected officials to do the same for our country (propel, 2015)." Starbucks promote products with this opportunity, although some people see it is actually a one-for-one selling behavior, but this did not affect the success of the strategy, which greatly increased the degree of credibility and brand image of Starbucks in people's minds.

Second, Starbucks maintains personal contact with customers. When a customer orders a cup of coffee at Starbucks, Starbucks clerks always ask the customer's name and write the name in the guests' cups. Most customers can accept this behavior, and are very interested in this. Customers always share a coffee cup with their own name on social networking sites (Cole, 2014). This approach to promotion is not only innovative, but also brings closer relationships with customers, most importantly, customers sharing on social networking sites is a no cost brand promotion that makes more people know the Starbucks brand.

Unlike other coffee shops, Starbucks has not invested much in product promotion, but Starbucks has achieved great success with its brand reputation and reputation through channels such as the television media and social networking sites (M2 Presswire; Coventry, 2004).

3.2 Advantage of the strategy

3.2.1 Different from competitors

Organizations that implement differentiated strategies often create differentiated products to gain greater competitive advantage in highly competitive markets (Meek, et al., 2003). In order to create higher quality coffee, Starbucks buy the best coffee beans in the world and offer differentiated products and services, partner with the PepsiCo brand, and work with Jim Beam to deliver food and merchandise sales. As well as the acquisition of other brands such as Tazo Tea. In the same coffee products market, Starbucks differentiated and launched the product has greatly attracted customers, most customers are willing to try new things, which may change their spending habits, duplication of consumption. Starbucks launch new coffee and a variety of products may give Starbucks more market share, more sales, thereby get more profits.

3.2.2 Product premium ability

Customer loyalty of the brand mainly comes from the quality of brand products, a brand with high quality products more easily win the customers' loyalty. Brand loyalty is the tendency of customers to work on a particular brand and continue to buy the same brand. This loyalty can last anytime. (Block & Roering, 1979) The Starbucks brand has a high degree of loyalty and cost-leadership strategy has never been a core Starbucks strategy. The threat of cheap competitors for Starbucks is very low, and customers do not lost Starbucks loyalty because of price of other coffee brands are cheaper

3.2.3 Competitive advantage

Differentiation strategies can help organizations gain greater competitive advantage (Meek, et al., 2003). In Starbucks, its differentiation is mainly reflected in its products and services. To ensure product quality and diversity, it won customer loyalty for Starbucks. Starbucks's flexible operation and investment patterns, staff training and welfare, etc ensure the quality of service and customer experience at Starbucks. These services, which differentiate them from other coffee shops, retain customer loyalty while delivering greater premium capabilities and gain greater profitability from Starbucks. When customers feel these differentiated products and services, if these can attract customers, this will bring more customer loyalty to Starbucks, increase market share and obtain higher profits

3.3 Disadvantages of the strategy

3.3.1 Higher cost

The organization which use differentiation will always provide higher quality products, thus cause higher cost, because suppliers often require for more fee (Meek, et al., 2003). When the cost of products go up to much, company has to increase sell price and this can not be accepted by customers, finally the company will lose its customers. Otherwise the price need to keep low and the company will lose its profit.

Differentiation of Starbucks main divide into produce and service (Exemplary Goods: The Product as Economic Variable,2016). First, high quality coffee needs good coffee beans, Starbucks always want to purchase best coffee beans of the whole world, so cost is definitely higher than the other coffee shops. Simultaneously, training good baristas also cost more. Second, unique Starbucks experience like shops site, decoration, employees' training all need amount of capital investment.

If Starbucks could not win dominant position in cost, and competitors can compete with Starbucks with a lower cost, then it will lose a lot of customers. So economic situation and customers' purchasing ability have great influence on market competitive position, and Starbucks have no advantage in this field.

3.3.2 The risk of brain drain

Brain drain can be defined as the loss of academic and technical workforce through the shift of human capital to a more favorable geographical, economic or occupational environment. There are a variety of sources of brain drain, but it varies according to the country you are experiencing. The main reasons include employment or high paying jobs, political turmoil and seeking a better quality of life(study.com, 2017). Starbucks, in order to improve service quality, work efficiency and customer spending experience, pay great attention to employees' training, welfare and invest a lot of money. However, this does not completely guarantee the possibility of brain drain. Starbucks special training methods will train a lot of the staff who have high ability. When the staff's ability is very strong, if Starbucks can not provide better benefits, these employees may be self-reliant or looking for better-paying companies, especially management layers of staff. If there is too much brain drain in Starbucks, this will directly lead to a decline in service levels and an impact on consumer spending experience, which will have a negative impact on the brand reputation of Starbucks. And this will also have big influence on cost for training more employees.

3.3.3 The risk of imitation

Creating a new product is one way to implement a differentiation strategy. When an organization launches a new product, its competitors may try to imitate it. There are two ways in which imitation can happen: substitution or repetition. When differentiated products are imitated, the market competitiveness will be significantly reduced, if competitors gain a competitive advantage, the loss of customers will be very obvious (Barney, 1995). There are many ways that Starbucks can differentiate its strategies, such as higher quality coffee, the diversity of products, and the unique Starbucks experience. But these can be all imitated, if Starbucks' competitors implement the same differentiation strategy, and gain advantages on price, then Starbucks will completely lose the market competitive advantage.

4.0 Conclusion

By using differentiation strategy, Starbucks has gained the competitive advantage successfully. Cause Starbucks have gained the competitive advantage. Brand reputation is very good, and it has high customers loyalty . Although Starbucks do not pay attention cost leadership strategy, compared with other coffee brand, charge higher product prices, customers will still buy Starbucks products.

Starbucks have used the differentiation strategy by:

- Starbucks pursues high-quality coffee and offers diverse products for its customers.
- Starbucks uses flexible investment and operation model to ensure the quality of service at its stores.
- Starbucks pay attention to welfare and training of employees, and differentiated training methods can make them enhance their customers' consumption experience better.
- Starbucks pays attention to the personal experience of customers and creates a sense of home for customers from many aspects.
- Starbucks's unique promotion methods enhance the brand's image of Starbucks.

By using the differentiation strategy, Starbucks gain some competitive advantage, these are:

- Starbucks can distinguish with other competitors.
- Differentiation strategy increases Starbucks product premium capacity which customer can accept, improved Starbucks profits.
- Improve customers loyalty.

It can also bring some limitation for Starbucks, such as:

- High-quality products and good service have raised Starbucks operating costs.
- The risk of brain drain.
- Successful differentiation strategy give competitors more opportunities to imitate.

5.0 Recommendation

- Focus on a point in the difference painting strategy and do it best.
- Strictly require the brand stores comply with differentiation strategies, such as product and service quality.
- Under the premise of not affecting quality of products and services , expanding store size.
- Under the premise of not affecting quality of products and services, reducing operating costs as much as possible to compete with the competitors price war.

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