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An evaluation of corporate management & strategical planning of global companies

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Abstract
The study undertaken will make reference to management styles and principals of global companies operating in different business sectors world-wide. To implement strategic management in any given company, the corporate structure and management style of that company would have to be defined in detail to all concerned parties (stakeholders). These include the following: management, investors, employees, customers, suppliers and the general public. However; Strategic management is a continuous process of strategic analysis, strategy creation, implementation and monitoring, used by organizations with the purpose to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage. As everything around us changes in time the strategic planning needs to be monitored and changed or aligned as company sails into future to cope with the unexpected. Unlike the old days the cost of doing business is becoming increasingly risky world-wide. This issue is more important than ever before as the globalization forces the countries and companies to think on a broader scale rather than just locally. Second important concern is the E-commerce which has become an important strategic management tool for companies world-wide. The products are sold, and bought, advertised on real time basis by sharing all related information across the world while eliminating intermediaries, inventories and paperwork. E-Commerce minimizes the expense and cumbersomeness of time, distance and space in doing business world-wide. The other important subject is the environmental issues* which people are very much concerned than ever before. The exploitation of the natural environment by groups, organizations or governments are under strict scrutiny.

Keywords: Corporate Management, Strategical Management, Strategy, Environment

Introduction
Strategic Management & Strategic Planning
Definition

"Strategic management can be defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives."[1]

"An integrative management field that combines analysis, formulation, and implementation in the quest for competitive advantage."[2]

"Strategic management includes understanding the strategic position of an organization, making strategic choices for the future and managing strategy in action."[3]

"Strategic management is defined as the process by which managers of the firm analyze the internal and external environments for the purpose of formulating strategies and allocating resources to develop a competitive advantage in an industry that allows for the successful achievement of organizational goals."[4]

What is that strategic management?

Various definitions are used to describe the subject, but few give a full and easy to understand answer. The combination of all 4 definitions used previously gives us a much clearer view of what the subject is:

Strategic management is a continuous process of strategic analysis, strategy creation, implementation and monitoring, used by organizations with the purpose to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage.

The general purpose of doing it is to combine the energy of organization's functional areas into one focused effort to achieve superior performance. It is usually done through the many *steps of the process.*

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In essence, it answers the following 3 questions:
Where the organization is at the moment?
Where does it want to go?
How it will get there?
Strategic management is not about predicting the future, but about preparing for it and knowing what exact steps the company will have to take to implement its strategic plan and achieve a *competitive advantage.* [5]
The difference between strategic management and strategic planning both strategic management and strategic planning terms mean the same! The difference is that the latter one is more used in the business world while the former is used in the academic environment. According to David, [1] strategic planning is sometimes confused with strategy formulation, because strategic plan is constructed in this stage.

Importance of strategic planning
Requirement for sustained competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is what keeps great organizations ahead of their competitors. Rothaermel [2] pointed out that the company, which has a competitive advantage, performs financially much better than other companies in the industry or better than the industry average. Some companies may achieve it without thorough strategic plan but for the most players out there it is vital to plan strategically, i.e. analyze, create, implement and monitor, and do this continuously. It is not guaranteed that companies will ever achieve competitive advantage conducting strategic planning but it is an essential process if the company wants sustain it. Views things from broader perspective.
The other reason why the organizations don't simply rely on their finances, marketing or operations functional areas to create *competitive advantage* is that managers of each area often view things only from their own specific angle [3], which is too narrow view for the whole organization to rely upon. Only the managers (e.g. CEOs or strategic planners) who see the whole picture of the company and its surrounding environments can make the decisions that bring the competitive advantage. Facilitates collaboration. Nowadays, most companies involve middle managers of functional areas into the process of formulating strategic plan. Middle managers are the people who implement the strategies set out in a plan and if they aren't involved in making the plan, then they aren't so committed to support it.
Thus, strategic planning is used to achieve the competitive advantage and to integrate all the functional areas of the company by facilitating the communication between the managers of all levels.

Benefits
- Defines a company's vision, mission and future goals.
- Identifies the suitable strategies to achieve the goals.
- Improves awareness of the external and internal environments, and clearly identifies the competitive advantage.
- Increases managers' commitment to achieving the company's objectives.
- Improves coordination of the activities and more efficient allocation of company's resources.
- Better communication between managers of the different levels and functional areas.
- Reduces resistance to change by informing the employees of the changes and the consequences of them.
- Strengthens the firm's performance.
- On average, companies using strategic management are more successful than the companies that don't.
- Strategic planning allows the organization to become more proactive than reactive.

Limitations
- Although strategic management brings many benefits to the company it also has its limitations:
- The costs of engaging in it are huge.
- The process is complex.
- Success is not guaranteed.
- Above are the reasons why small and medium enterprises are usually reluctant to have their own strategic departments.

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Literature Review
Toyota Motor Company
The first organization analyzed is the Toyota Company from the automotive industry
Toyota's giant success over the last 25 years is based on the consistent belief in strong management principles and a clear balance between "hard" and "soft" innovation. None of these management principles however sustain without *continuous strategic alignment*. First the business purpose must be clearly defined, which Toyota clearly has done. Then strategic goals must be set, and translated into a long term strategy. Also here Toyota sets the benchmark, with a clear focus on *harmonious growth* and *enhancement of profitability,* the two main elements of Toyota's business purpose. Then the organization and company culture (= behavior) must be aligned, and this is where Toyota clearly sets the benchmark worldwide. There is hardly any other organization in the world with a more solid company culture, fully in line with its business purpose.
"Toyota is benchmark example of a company with excellent strategic alignment. In spite of its size and complexity Toyota has managed to keep its strategy, organization and people perfectly aligned with its main purpose: *pursuit of harmonious growth* and *enhancement of profitability*. Toyota is driven by this corporate purpose, and the purpose is clearly understood and

internalized by its senior management and employees. At Toyota employees are continuously trained in the 'Toyota Production System' (TPS). A continuous and overall attention for product quality and cost awareness has become an almost religious way of life for everyone in the organization.

TPS enables Toyota to make the planet's best automobiles at the lowest cost and to develop new products faster than anybody else. Not only have Toyota's rivals such as Chrysler, Daimler, Ford, Honda, and *General Motors* developed TPS-like systems, organizations such as hospitals and postal services also have adopted its underlying rules, tools, and conventions to become more efficient. An industry of lean-manufacturing experts have extolled the virtues of TPS so often and with so much conviction that managers believe its role in Toyota's success to be one of the few enduring truths in an otherwise murky world.

In this respect, Toyota developed a formidable way of aligning its organization and most of all its people with its purpose, goals and strategy".
http://www.amazon.com/Toyota-Way-Jeffrey-Liker/dp/0071392319/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_c
http://www.advancebusinessconsulting.com/advance!/strategic-alignment/strategic-alignment-business-cases/the-rise-of-toyota.aspx

Strategic alignment process concerns the areas below….
The people factor - the key to success
Toyota invests heavily in people and organizational capabilities, and it garners ideas from everyone and everywhere.

Long-term planning
Instead of responding to trends, fads, and quarterly numbers, Toyota looks far ahead, and develops products resonating for a long time. Probably the best example is the Toyota Prius hybrid

Studious speediness
Toyota exhaustively researches all its options, then makes sure all the major stakeholders agree on a course of action.

An open mind
Toyota learned many of its early lessons from Americans. Toyota still shows a knack for figuring out what customers want, sometimes predicting American tastes better than the Detroit automakers that supposedly have home-field advantage.

Obsession with waste
Toyota's "continuous improvement" ethos is legendary throughout industry, but the real secret is a profound disdain for inefficiency—whether it's wasted time, excess material, or a scrap of trash on a factory floor.

Humility
Toyota's company culture emphasizes teamwork over individual stars. "*Toyota executives don't see themselves as bigger than the company or the customer or the product.*"
http://www.ukessays.com/essays/marketing/toyota-business-strategy-in-global-environment-marketing-essay.php

The Toyota Way: 14 Management Principles from the World's Greatest Manufacturer by Jeffrey Liker
The Toyota Way to Continuous Improvement: Linking Strategy and Operational Excellence to Achieve Superior Performance May 10, 2011 by Jeffrey Liker and James K. Franz

Shangri-La Hotels
The second organization analyzed is the Shangri-La Hotel group from the hospitality industry.
"Shangri-La has positioned itself to achieve very high standards of guest satisfaction as well as protecting the environment along the way. Combining these high service standards for its guests as well as the well-being of nature has created a niche for the company. This behavior is closely related to the nature of the company culture. Shangri-La believes that with this attitude it will be delivering a much stronger business by being a role model in the industry. The company has introduced two important projects; namely Care for people project & Care for nature projects. Through these important projects the company upholds moral conducts and ethics while doing business. Shangri-La has devised an action plan through the involvement of all employees, suppliers and business partners in many of its resort facilities which are located on the unspoiled islands of the world where the habitat must be protected. The company has adopted this philosophy and has differentiated itself strategically over its competitors".
September 2007 - Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Asia Pacific's leading luxury hotel group, has launched a two-year development strategy to enhance its corporate social responsibility activities. A corporate CSR Committee, spearheaded by the group's chief operating officer, has been established to continue to fulfill the group's responsibilities in five key areas: *the environment; employees and the community; health and safety; supply chain management; and stakeholder relations.*
In the area of environmental sustainability, the group's focus is primarily in five areas: *climate change; ozone depletion; water use management; waste disposal management; and indoor air quality.* Shangri-La is ramping up energy conservation initiatives so that it will reduce 2006 group wide energy consumption figures by 12 per cent by the end of 2008. Currently, the group practices a wide array of environmentally friendly measures including, for example, fitting all guestrooms with water saving devices in taps and showers as well as using energy-saving lamps in more than half the group's guestrooms.
http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2007_3rd/Sept07_ShangriLaStrategy.html

Hospitality from the heart (Culture)
Through the years, company philosophy has been "Shangri-La Hospitality from a caring family." Shangri-La has always believed in the unique characteristics encapsulated by Asian hospitality.

Heartfelt hospitality & experiences (Mission & Vision)
Our Vision
To be the first choice for guests, colleagues, shareholders and business partners.

Our Mission
To delight our guests every time by creating engaging experiences straight from our heart.

Management; Passion for excellence
We recognize that an ethos of excellence cascades from the upper levels of an organization. This is why the executive team of Shangri-La has been selected with care. Shangri-La's leadership is composed of some of the most talented professionals in the hospitality industry. Most have more than 20 years in the field and many have moved up the ranks in Shangri-La over the last 10 years.

Shangri-La's care for people project
Embrace, Shangri-La's Care for People Project, was launched in September 2009. The project committed each hotel to a 10 to 15-year partnership with a chosen beneficiary working on children's health or education programs.
Whether it is a school, health center or orphanage, the entity must require resources that the hotel can very ably deliver on. These include infrastructure support, fundraising, life skills training and even hotel apprenticeships.
Our Performance as of 2012:
60,174 volunteer hours rendered by hotel colleagues in 2012, up from 16,000 in 2011
73 identified beneficiaries in each city working on health and education programs
72% of the hotels met and exceeded their 2012 targets in skills training and medical support

Shangri-La's Care for Nature Project
Sanctuary, Shangri-La's Care for Nature project was launched in 2010 with the aim of making a concerted effort towards biodiversity conservation and habitat protection. Hotels work on individualized projects which are developed, tracked and monitored after a biodiversity assessment takes place. To date, there are a total of 19 Sanctuary projects in place engaging stakeholders worldwide. In 2012, Sanctuary, Shangri-La's Care for Nature Projects were launched in city hotels in China 0in order to encourage the protection of local habitats and even wetlands.

One with Nature
Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts bring you luxury that you deserve, without compromising our natural resources. We are committed to serving as good stewards of the environment. We ensure that every property respects local traditions and culture, restores natural habitats, conserves biodiversity and manages waste, water and energy. Shangri-La mitigates impacts on the environment by ensuring that our day-to-day operations promote and implement responsible environmental practices and continual improvement.
The Group participates in the Carbon Disclosure Project with yearly submissions since 2011 to demonstrate the importance given by senior management to the risks and opportunities that climate change presents to the organization. Many of its hotels are certified under ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems. Hotels also have the capacity to address local resource management issues through innovative solutions such as glass water bottling, rainwater harvesting, use of solar energy and the incorporation of composting and herb gardens to manage food waste.
50 hotels are ISO 14001 Certified Hotels
16% reduction of co2e per guest night vs. 20% 2015 target
20% reduction of potable water per guest night vs. 15% 2015 target

Programs
Shangri-La's Reef Care Project
Shangri-La's Care for Nature Project
Shangri-La's Turtle Care Project
Shangri-La's Orangutan Care Project
Shangri-La's Care for Panda Project
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Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
The third organization analyzed is the Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., from the Retail industry.
Wal-Mart's service strategy, customer satisfaction is the most important strategy. Customer satisfaction strategy is simple and that is the need to stand in the position of consumer users, rather than stand on the position of producers and consumers to consider and deal with problems. And this customer first, always put the customer first philosophy at the Wal-Mart from procurement to final sales of goods as a whole.
For after-sales service, Wal-Mart has also done very well. In the Wal-Mart store, a shopping more than a certain limit, you can enjoy the delivery service. Wal-Mart customers in any store to buy any commodity that can be returned to stores within a month, and take back all the money. In comparison, for large retail stores with Carrefour in Return the score is far lower than Wal-Mart. Carrefour often adorned the walls of "promotional goods will not be refunded," the interests of consumers, which do not comply with provisions of the law, even if it is normal product's return, in the Carrefour also need a number of persons signature.
Wal-Mart to provide customers with "high-quality services" and "unconditional refund" commitment is by no means nice slogan.
In addition to the customer care; Wal-Mart's strategic planning and positioning involves three major areas.

Logistic Management System: Wal-Mart is the leader of the retail distribution revolution. Its unique distribution system can greatly reduce costs and accelerated inventory turnover. Its non-stop delivery system comprises of an efficient distribution center and a rapid transport system. Wal-Mart distribution center with highly modern mechanical facilities, where 85 percent of goods sent are being mechanically processed, which greatly reduces the cost of manual processing of goods. Wal-Mart's motor fleet

is its delivery system to another incomparable advantages. Wal-Mart store shelves can guarantee an average of twice a week fill. Fast delivery, so that all Wal-Mart stores, even if only to maintain minimal inventories can maintain normal sales, resulting in substantial savings in storage

Information technology: One of the most important logistic supports is its information technology support. It's advanced satellite communications network - Wal-Mart heavily in building a satellite communications network to supply the system more perfect.

Human Resources Management: Wal-Mart employees in the establishment of equal partnership, this is only the beginning of innovation. Soon each employee for Wal-Mart began to implement its "profit-sharing plan," while implementation were "buy stock plans," "Employee Discount provides," "Scholarship Program". In addition to these, staff also enjoy some of the basic treatment, including paid vacation, holidays, and grants, medical, personal and housing insurance. Some of these plans reflect the economic partnership, plans." Wal-Mart relationship with employees is a real sense of partnership, peer relationships. This is the company's outstanding performance in the face of competition can be one of the reasons.

Through this strategical positioning Wal-Mart became an industry leader in supplying goods to its stores, keeping goods available on shelfs, maintaining the lowest prices on the market available and caring for its customers from beginning to the end.

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Sam Walton: Made In AmericaJun 1, 1993 by Sam Walton and John Huey

Microsoft Corporation

The fourth organization analyzed is the Microsoft Corporation, from the Software industry.

Microsoft Commitment to Accessibility

"Our vision is to create innovative technology that is accessible to everyone and that adapts to each person's needs. Accessible technology eliminates barriers for people with disabilities and it enables individuals to take full advantage of their capabilities." Bill Gates, Chairman, Microsoft Corporation

Microsoft Accessibility

Accessibility makes it easier for everyone to see, hear, and use technology, and to personalize their computers to meet their own needs and preferences. For many people with impairments, accessibility is what makes computer use possible.

Mission

At Microsoft, our mission is to enable people and businesses throughout the world to realize their full potential. We consider our mission statement a commitment to our customers. We deliver on that

commitment by striving to create technology that is accessible to everyone—of all ages and abilities. Microsoft is one of the industry leaders in accessibility innovation and in building products that are safer and easier to use.

About Accessible Technology

Accessible technology enables individuals to personalize their technology to make it easier to see, hear, and use. Accessibility and accessible technology are helpful for individuals who experience visual difficulties, pain in the hands or arms, hearing loss, speech or cognitive challenges; and individuals seeking to customize their computing experience to meet their situational needs and preferences. Accessibility includes:

Accessibility options let you personalize the user experience through the display, mouse, keyboard, sound, and speech options in Windows and other Microsoft products.

Assistive technology products are specialty software and hardware products (such as screen readers and specialty keyboards), that provide essential computer access to individuals with significant vision, hearing, dexterity, language, or learning needs. Interoperability among assistive technology products, the operating system, and applications is critical to enabling a world of devices accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Strategy

Accessibility, as part of overall usability, is a fundamental consideration for Microsoft during product design, development, evaluation, and release. Microsoft endeavors to integrate accessibility into planning, design, research, development, testing, and documentation.

Microsoft addresses accessibility by:

Continuing our longstanding *commitment* and leadership in developing innovative accessibility solutions.

Making the computer easier to see, hear, and use by building *accessibility into Microsoft products and services.* Promoting innovation of accessibility in the development community and working with industry organizations to encourage innovation; and, Building collaborative relationships with a wide range of organizations to raise awareness of the importance of accessibility in meeting the technology needs of people with disabilities.

https://www.microsoft.com/enable/microsoft/mission.aspx
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"Through this strategical positioning Microsoft intends to continue its leadership position within the industry by being innovative and provide essential computer access to individuals with significant vision, hearing, dexterity, language, or learning needs. Relevant to the examples of strategic planning of other companies; Microsoft's business has a greater mission to accomplish in order bring profits".

Environmental Issues

The Exxon Valdez incident in the late 1980's;

Twenty-six years ago on March 24, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez slammed into Bligh Reef and spilled more than 11 million gallons of crude oil into the cold, clear waters of Alaska's Prince William Sound -- one of the "last best places" on Earth. The oil charged through Prince William Sound and out into the Gulf of Alaska, damaging more than 1,300 miles of some of the most remote, wild shoreline in this country.
http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/23/opinion/holleman-exxon-valdez-anniversary/

World-wide threat of deforestation,

What is deforestation? Unless you're an ecologist, you probably don't spend a lot of time worrying about the fate of the world's forests, but you probably also don't realize just how fast the forests on Earth are disappearing.
The rate at which trees are being felled for agriculture, manufacturing, and other reasons is quite astounding. The effects of deforestation are massive, adversely impacting biodiversity, the climate, and human life.
http://www.curiosityaroused.com/environment/10-scary-deforestation-facts-we-should-all-be-concerned-about/
Uncontrolled mining and toxic waste issues are just a few other example's on this subject.
Effects of Mining Activities on Heavy Metal Concentrations in Water, Sediment, and Macroinvertebrates in Different Reaches of the Pilcomayo River, South America. Journal-Archives of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology, Volume 44, Issue 3, pp 0314-0323
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Conclusion

"**Toyota** is benchmark example of a company with excellent strategic alignment. In spite of its size and complexity Toyota has managed to keep its strategy, organization and people perfectly aligned with its main purpose: *pursuit of harmonious growth* and *enhancement of profitability*". Toyota sets its business purpose by aligning the organization and company culture (= behavior) as one. This is where Toyota clearly sets the benchmark worldwide. There is hardly any other organization in the world with a more solid company culture, fully in line with its business purpose.

"**Shangri-La** has positioned itself to achieve very high standards of guest satisfaction as well as protecting the environment along the way. Combining these high service standards for its guests as well as the well-being of nature has created a niche for the company. This behavior is closely related to the nature of the company culture. Shangri-La believes that with this attitude the company will deliver much stronger business and prosper by being a role model in the industry".

Wal-Mart's service strategy, customer satisfaction is the most important strategy. Customer satisfaction strategy is simple and that is the need to stand in the position of consumer users, rather than stand on the position of producers and consumers to consider and deal with problems. Aligning this strategy with efficient Logistic Management System, up to date Information technology and trained-motivated Human Resources Management system the company became an industry leader and one of the biggest organizations in the world.

Microsoft's implementation of Accessibility, as part of overall usability, is a fundamental consideration for product design, development, evaluation, and release. Microsoft endeavors to integrate accessibility into planning, design, research, development, testing, and documentation. This niche area has inspired the company's management and employees to achieve an objective which can serve mankind through the use of technology.

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