

# Short-term Survival Mode Activated

I guess I'm beginning to sound like a broken record, but it was another average rollover for us. We met up and considered our every move, carefully calculated ourselves a pretty little spreadsheet, communicated extensively with each other. Basically I followed up with all my own suggested actions from last weeks reflection but, alas, to no avail. The problem I have decided, is us not actually building ourselves a competitive advantage despite our own best intentions.

So how did this come about? Despite many discussions and plans, we never pulled together our strategy to resemble what I actually wanted it to look like. We always said we'd make the changes that defined it as differentiated when we had more cash, once we'd completed any number of other things, but our cash just ran away with other things. Realising the differentiation was, frankly, under-prioritised: we made plans but didn't carry out actions as is a crucial stage of actually making decisions and seeing positive (hopefully) changes (Mankins and Steele, 2006). The main reason for this is that I was so utterly focused on what everyone else was doing in our industry and trying to keep up with them and their increasingly unsustainable amounts spent on advertising and margins, etc. This essentially meant that we didn't stick to our differentiation strategy which would have set us apart and allowed us to exploit gaping gaps in the market. We essentially displayed divergence from our chosen path and found ourselves in the typically difficult scenario of an unclear strategy (Kim and Mauborgne, 2002). By focusing on what everyone else was doing instead of creating a distinctive competitive advantage for the company, we wasted our cash and effort on futile attempts at success. We lacked consistency between our words and actions and that was ultimately our downfall.

Resolving this is going to be a bit complicated at this point in the game (AKA the eleventh hour). I am unsure whether a push towards strategy realignment will be as fruitful as it could have been in previous weeks since any new R & D efforts will be finished just in time for the game to end. We have the option of remaining outward looking and continuing to rise and fall with our competitors (mostly fall) which has so far pushed a majority of the teams beyond their cost limits, us especially. We could also swap our attention inwards to what we can do internally to improve/ stay in the game for the final rollover. If we stick with the more introspective plan, releasing some product updates to be more granular with our approach and specifically focus on our markets might be a fabulous idea in a profitable situation (Baghai, Smit and Viguerie, 2009) but we're doing pretty poorly and have very little cash to throw around so it's more of a wish than a possibility. Our other introspective option would be to stick to our averagely enacted strategy whilst cutting costs which will hopefully allow us to both save money and hang on by the skin of our toenails.

Attempting to do a bit of "tweaking", as Peter calls it, to cut costs so that we can realise some profit again within our unattractive strategy is the one that I'm leaning towards after the team reviewed all of the information available. Our first step in this sad little plan of action is to fully research all cost cutting options. Over the next couple of years, I can encourage the team to steadily and carefully reduce costs. Hopefully we'll see some positive returns from doing so even if it's nowhere near solving our competitive advantage problems due to the restriction of time. Desperate moments call for desperate measures, and I think that currently the short term focus of survival will be the best option to pull us out of our self-dug ditch.

## REFERENCES

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