



Strategic Marketing

ABE unit code	6USM
Ofqual code	D/615/7497
Unit type	Optional
Level	6
Credits	20
GLH	50
Assessment method	Timed Open Book Exam

In today's increasingly dynamic and complex global environment, strategic marketing is an essential management and leadership competence to guide senior management in making business decisions. This unit will illustrate the scope of marketing strategy and how it fits in with the wider corporate and business strategy of an organisation, including building sustainable competitive advantage and long-term shareholder value.

The purpose of this unit is to evaluate the role of strategic marketing as a function of an organisation, and how it interrelates with other functions, and to determine its impact in terms of how a marketing philosophy can inform corporate strategy. The unit will also focus on how marketing performs an operational role in achieving corporate objectives.

The unit will give you a strategic perspective of marketing management with respect to the analysis, planning, implementation and control of marketing activities, including the use of metrics to measure, monitor and improve performance in addition to their role within strategic decision-making.

Given the global nature of business, this unit will also promote a critical understanding of the marketing challenges faced by firms attempting to develop and grow in international markets and the means by which corporate marketing strategies can be deployed in the search for sustainable competitive advantage.

What you'll learn

The table below shows the learning outcomes of this unit (what you will be able to do or what you will know), along with the assessment criteria (what you will be able to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome).

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>	Weighting
1. Critically evaluate the factors that underpin marketing as a key strategic factor in organisational performance	1.1 Evaluate the ideas underpinning a market orientation approach and the marketing concept 1.2 Appraise the characteristics of market-driven strategies	20%
2. Critically review relevant marketing theories, conceptual models and frameworks in the development of marketing strategies, including international marketing strategy	2.1 Recommend methods to analyse the macro-environment and develop a strategic vision 2.2 Critically evaluate the role of market segmentation and competitive positioning	30%
3. Develop implementation plans and management control mechanisms to support a marketing strategy	3.1 Appraise the nature of control and critically evaluate different approaches to the control process 3.2 Critically evaluate the importance of implementation as part of the overall process of planning and control and assess the problems in implementing marketing plans	15%
4. Justify, using evidence, the application of marketing within an organisational context in relation to the goal of enhancing long-term shareholder value	4.1 Appraise the use of organisational resources in achieving sustainable competitive advantage 4.2 Critically analyse different approaches in implementing the marketing plan	15%
5. Evaluate a range of resources to understand and resolve organisational marketing related problems	5.1 Analyse the implementation challenges present in strategic marketing 5.2 Evaluate future trends and challenges for the future of strategic marketing	20%

Capabilities

Alongside academic learning and development, ABE qualifications have been designed to develop your practical skills and capabilities. These capabilities are highlighted as certain values, knowledge, skills and behaviours that will help you in your professional development.

Below is an overview of the behaviours, skills and attitudes that you will develop through this unit:

Element of learning	Key capabilities developed
Element 1 - Understanding market-led strategic management	Critical understanding of the role of strategic marketing in the achievement of business objectives and organisational success <i>Commercial awareness, cultural awareness, globalisation</i>
Element 2 - Designing market-driven strategies	Ability to analyse the macro environment to support the development of a strategic vision Ability to carry out market segmentation and competitive positioning activities at a strategic level <i>Leadership, managerial capacity, decision-making, communication, project planning, strategy development, objective setting, use and analysis of data</i>
Element 3 - Measuring the impact of marketing strategy	Ability to measure the impact of a marketing strategy based on the implementation of planning and controls <i>Planning and objective setting, milestones, monitoring and control</i>
Element 4 - Creating sustainable competitive advantage	Ability to justify the use of marketing as a strategic activity with the aim of achieving sustainable competitive advantage Ability to analyse and select appropriate approaches to implementing the marketing plan <i>Judgement, ability to synthesise complex data, risk management, persuasion and negotiation</i>
Element 5 - Implementing the strategy	Ability to identify challenges to the implementation of a marketing strategy and to the future of strategic marketing <i>Communicate business solutions and the thinking underlying them, in verbal and written form</i>

Localisation

It is very important when studying for your ABE qualification that you consider your local business environment and try to apply what you are learning to relevant scenarios in your local business context. Doing this will help you to put your learning into practice and use it in your professional day-to-day activities.

The learning outcomes give you a strategic perspective of marketing management with respect to the analysis, planning, implementation and control of marketing activities within your own local organisations and local business environment.

You should therefore take into account the following when preparing for your assessment:

- The structure and nature of the organisation you work within and how this is changing with emerging business practices
- The influence of local culture and socialisation on business norms
- Local employment rules, regulations and legislation
- The availability of technology and internet speeds to facilitate collaborative working using technology

Indicative Content

1. Critically evaluate the factors that underpin marketing as a key strategic factor in organisational performance

1.1 Evaluate the ideas underpinning a market orientation approach and the marketing concept

- Principles of strategic marketing: definitions of marketing, identifying customer needs, defining target market segments, creating differential advantage, the marketing mix (7Ps)
- Stakeholders and their influence on marketing strategy: understanding internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, marketplace stakeholders, influences on an organisational mission statement and organisation's purpose
- The role of marketing within strategic management and corporate objectives: the management process, defining strategy, strategic analysis, strategic choice, strategic implementation

1.2 Appraise the characteristics of market-driven strategies

- Market-driven strategies: generic strategies; Porter's Generic Strategy - differentiation, focus, cost leadership, strategies for market leaders, strategies for market nichers, strategies for market challengers, strategies for market followers, the 3 C's of marketing strategy
- Organisational capabilities including identifying the organisation's relative strengths and weaknesses, identifying the skills and collective learning within an organisation, organisational processes used to deploy assets in marketplace, evaluating levels of investment available, identifying potential means to best leverage the organisation's capabilities
- Competitors: identifying who the main competitors are, assessing competitor strategies and identifying which strategies are being pursued, evaluating competitor strengths and weaknesses, appraising how competitors might develop over time
- Customers: identifying customer types, evaluating when, where and how they buy, evaluating how current markets are segmented, assessing future segmentation options
- Drivers of competitiveness: Porter's Five Forces (1980), portfolio approaches, global focus

2. Critically review relevant marketing theories, conceptual models and frameworks in the development of marketing strategies, including international marketing strategy

2.1 Recommend methods to analyse the macro-environment and develop a strategic vision

- Developing a strategic vision and marketing objectives: mission statements, the link between vision, strategy and values, vision and defining objectives
- The nature of corporate objectives: business scope, business orientation, business organisation, public responsibility and performance evaluation, recognising competitors' objectives, the link between corporate objectives and marketing objectives
- Marketing objectives: SMART objective criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-based)
- Establishing marketing objectives: Ansoff matrix for growth options
- Key competitor analysis: competitor benchmarking, the dimensions of competitor analysis; assessing competitors current and future objectives, assessing competitor's current strategies, assessing competitors' resources, predicting competitors' future strategies; using Porter's Value Chain (1985) to analyse activities; the idea of 'good' and 'bad' competitors
- Sources of competitor information: media, advertising, technical reports, trade sources, customers
- Phases of competition and business cycle: seed, start-up, growth, established, expansion, decline, exit
- Analysing the macro-environment: PESTLE analysis (political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors), the organisation's marketing environment, the parable of the boiled frog
- International marketing strategies: international competitive environment, world trading environment, social and cultural considerations in international marketing strategy, globalisation and alternative strategic responses
- Global marketing strategy: standardisation vs adaptation, global strategy drivers, regional strategy, 'global' approaches, global strategic brand management

2.2 Critically evaluate the role of market segmentation and competitive positioning

- Markets and contemporary marketing strategies: key dimensions of marketing strategy; bases of competitive advantage, target markets, product and service offering
- Marketing strategies and different strategic models: approaches to strategy formulation; the classical approach, the evolutionary approach, the processual approach, the systemic approach; different strategic options; generic strategies, overall cost leadership, differentiation, focus; competitive strategies; build strategies, defensive strategies, divestment, harvesting strategies, holding strategies, niche strategies and offensive strategies
- Competitive advantage: the concept of value and utilising the value chain concept to develop sustainable competitive advantage
- Service and competitive advantage: SERVQUAL dimensions
- Market segmentation: the nature and purpose of segmentation: demographic segmentation, geographic segmentation, behavioural segmentation, psychographic segmentation
- Competitive positioning: product positioning
- Strategic branding: identifying the brand's competitive advantages and implementing the positioning concept
- Repositioning strategies: gradual repositioning, radical repositioning, innovative repositioning, zero positioning

3. Develop implementation plans and management control mechanisms to support a marketing strategy

3.1 Appraise the nature of control and critically evaluate different approaches to the control process

- Management of risk: definitions of control, control concepts; open-loop control, closed-loop control, feedback control
- Managing the process and marketing information systems (MIS): information and reporting, operational systems and processes, technical facilities and organisational capabilities for evaluation
- Evaluation and control: approaches to control, e.g. Anthony's approach to control (1988), Merchant's approach to control (1998), results controls, action controls, financial controls, behavioural factors (e.g. short-termism)
- Performance assessment: criteria and metrics, audits, gaps and opportunities

3.2 Critically evaluate the importance of implementation as part of the overall process of planning and control and assess the problems in implementing marketing plans

- Implementation processes: the importance of internal marketing
- Internal fit: function, structure and strategy
- Improving implementation: reasons for weak implementation, implementation capabilities, strategic 'drift', strategic 'dilution', stakeholder commitment, monitoring skills/competencies required for implementation

4. Justify, using evidence, the application of marketing within an organisational context in relation to the goal of enhancing long-term shareholder value

4.1 Appraise the use of organisational resources in achieving sustainable competitive advantage

- Allocation of organisational resources
- Routes to achieving competitive advantage: creating customer value, uniqueness or scarcity, inimitability, economies of scale, learning and experience effects, integration
- Differentiation: product differentiation, promotional differentiation, pricing differentiation, brand differentiation
- Competitive strategies: market expansion, market share gain, market maintenance, market niche strategies and focusing effort
- Value-chain analysis

4.2 Critically analyse different approaches in implementing the marketing plan

- Marketing mix: 4Ps (price, product, promotion, place)
- Product: product life cycle, diffusion of innovation
- Place: distribution channels, the role of the internet on distribution strategies and the role of 'place'
- Promotion: communication tools, advertising, public relations, interactive and direct marketing, e-marketing, sales promotion
- Pricing strategies: promotional pricing, loss leaders, perceived value pricing, competitor price levels, going rate pricing
- People, processes, physical evidence: the extended marketing mix.

5. Evaluate a range of resources to understand and resolve organisational marketing related problems

5.1 Analyse the implementation challenges present in strategic marketing

- Marketing metrics including: loyalty/retention, customer numbers, customer satisfaction, market share, esteem, complaints, awareness
- Performance gaps: the marketing organisation audit and marketing strategy audit; assessing the structural capability of the organisation to implement the strategy to a developing environment; an evaluation of the organisation's marketing objectives and strategy to determine their suitability to the current and forecasted marketing environment
- Cost problems: the marketing productivity audit; the cost effectiveness of various levels of marketing expenditure; the profitability of different aspects of the marketing programme
- Lack of adequate information: the role of marketing information systems; marketing systems audit; the quality of the organisation's systems for analysis, planning and control

5.2 Evaluate future trends and challenges for the future of strategic marketing

- Trends in technology including breakthrough technologies, e-commerce, viral marketing, social media, CRM databases, intelligent systems, and the era of 'big data'
- Marketing strategy and new social values (corporate social responsibility)
- Changes in the business environment: the international context, globalisation, increasing pace of economic change, increasing competitive pressures
- Organisational challenges and changes: new organisational structures, mergers, strategic alliances and partnerships
- Customised positioning (one-to-one marketing)