

# Play-to-Win Strategy Canvas

## STRATEGIC ISSUE

Why do we need a new strategy?

### EXAMPLES

Waning brand relevance  
Declining revenue growth  
New competitive threat

## 1. Winning Aspiration

What bold and measurable outcomes define our strategic ambition?  
What defines winning with customers? Against top competitors?

### EXAMPLES

Lead U.S. airline industry in customer satisfaction and profitability  
Become the leading social media platform for business professionals

**!** A winning aspiration is a future-oriented statement that focuses outward on winning with your most important customers and against your very best competitors. Avoid playing to play, e.g. "improve sales 10%."

## 2. Where To Play

What should be our playing field? In what spaces will we compete?  
What current spaces should be changed? Where will we NOT focus?

### EXAMPLES

Geographies: customer segments; products/services; distribution channels; production stages

**!** Choosing where to play requires choosing where not to play. Do not attempt to be everything to everyone, everywhere. Strategy is about focusing resources.

## 3. How To Win

What are the sources of our sustainable competitive advantage?  
What key offerings differentiate us and provide superior value?

### EXAMPLES

Quality; price; speed; ease of use; design; durability; convenience; technology; style; unique experience

**!** To win you must consistently offer a better value equation than everyone else. The two basic ways are low cost, or differentiation. NOT both.

## 4. Capabilities Needed

What critical skills and core activities must consistently be performed at the highest level in order to achieve the advantage in each of our chosen spaces?

### EXAMPLES

Brand building; deep customer understanding; R&D prowess; channel relationship; building

**!** Avoid simply listing all your current strengths. List only those that produce a competitive advantage in chosen spaces and that are relevant to customers.

## 5. Systems Required

What key management systems, processes, and structures must we have in order to sustain our competitive capabilities and support our strategic choices?

### EXAMPLES

CRM system; leadership development process; salesforce management system; performance reviews

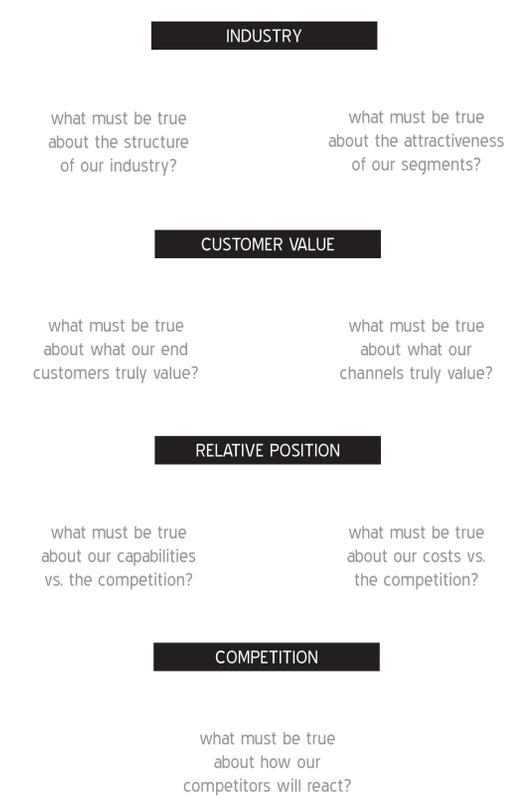
**!** List only the critical management systems that will be needed to operate, monitor, measure, support and sustain the unique set of core capabilities listed above.

## 6. Reverse Engineering

What must be true in order for this strategy to be a set of winning choices?  
What conditions must be met? What are the potential barriers to success?

### EXAMPLES

Industry structure remains stable; channels will pay a premium; competitors won't wage turf war



**!** Asking "what must be true?" is strategy's magic question. Answering this question in key areas reveals potential barriers to success in the future.

## 7. Strategic Tests

How will we test our "what must be true" conditions?

TEST LEVEL:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Small-scale
- \_\_\_\_\_ Definitive

1. CONDITION	2. HYPOTHESIS	3. EXPERIMENT
what condition are we most worried might not be true?	what is it that we must learn?	how will we test our hypothesis?
why is it so worrisome?	what is our testable belief? (i.e. "if we do X, Y will happen")	what target measure will be our standard of proof?

**!** Start with the most worrisome assumption and run a simple, fast and frugal test.

TEAM

VERSION

DATE