

Play-to-Win Strategy Canvas

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 global leader in life-preserving biopharmaceuticals

! A winning aspiration is a future-oriented statement that focuses outward on winning with your most important customers and against the 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; channels; products/services; 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; convenience; style; unique experience

! The key to winning in a given space is to 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 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; channel relationship-building

! Avoid simply listing all 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; salesforce management; 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 remains stable; channels will upgrade; competitors won't wage turf war

INDUSTRY

what must be true about the structure of our industry?

what must be true about the attractiveness of our segments?

CUSTOMER VALUE

what must be true about what our end customers truly value?

what must be true about what our channels truly value?

RELATIVE POSITION

what must be true about our capabilities vs. our competitors?

what must be true about our costs vs. our competitors?

COMPETITION

what must be true about how our competitors will react?

! Asking "what must be true?" is strategy's magic question. Answering this question in key areas reveals the guesswork to be tested before execution.

NAME

VERSION

DATE

7. Strategic Tests

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

TEST LEVEL:

_____ *Lean*

_____ *Small-scale*

_____ *Definitive*

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

1. CONDITION

what condition are we most worried might not be true?

why is it so worrisome?

2. HYPOTHESIS

what is it that we must learn?

what is our testable belief? (i.e. "if we do X, then Y will happen")

3. EXPERIMENT

how will we test our hypothesis?

what target measure will be the standard of proof?