

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to address a seemingly straightforward yet complex question: What steps must decision-makers (such as entrepreneurs, managers, consultants, or financial analysts) undertake when evaluating a company's strategy? Strategic analysis is a complex process that cannot be reduced to a single step or a straightforward series of actions. Instead, it involves embarking on a lengthy and intricate journey through unfamiliar and diverse terrain.

In this book, we draw inspiration from the metaphor of an ancient explorer. Just like an explorer venturing into unknown territories, an analyst conducting a strategic analysis benefits greatly from having a map that, although schematic and approximate, provides a representation of the regions to be traversed. This map serves as a guide, enabling the identification of the path to follow and the objects of analysis. It is important to note, however, that the map itself does not grant a complete understanding of the territory – it merely offers a simplified depiction.

In addition to the map, explorers require specific tools to navigate their terrain. In the case of high-mountain exploration, these tools include ropes, cords, snowshoes, crampons, carabiners, and more. Similarly, strategy analysts rely on analytical tools such as Porter frameworks for competitive advantage, the five forces model, SWOT analysis, diagnostic matrices, resource-based view models, sector dynamics analysis tools, strategic innovation models, and business model representation frameworks. However, these strategic analysis tools are not explicitly presented in this volume as they are distinct from the guiding map.

The subsequent Chapters gradually unveil the map, its regions, the path to be followed, and the objects of analysis. Prior to delving into the detailed map description, we provide introductory arguments in Part 1. The tabular representation of the map is presented in Chapter 3 of Part 1, and it is systematically illustrated and analyzed in Part 2. The final Chapter, “Book overview”, offers a comprehensive graphical representation.

To facilitate understanding of the analysis framework, we intersperse

the study with numerous real-world examples from the business domain. These examples enable readers to progress step by step along the path of strategic analysis, supported by concise yet effective case studies. When faced with the need to conduct a strategic analysis, readers will have at their disposal a framework (the map) based on solid doctrinal foundations, accompanied by concrete cases that illustrate how different companies have tackled strategic challenges.

We are confident that this study will provide valuable insights and management philosophy to senior executives and decision-makers within organizations. Our map is founded on fundamental beliefs regarding the significance of strategic management. Throughout the volume, it becomes evident that alongside effectively managing the “today’s firm”, recognizing the inevitability of change and approaching it with methodological rigor are vital. Ultimately, the various “objects of analysis” identified in our study represent crucial elements in the strategic governance of every company.