

Skype: strategic management and sara lee



CASE PRESENTATION 1 APPLE

1. What are the chief elements of Apple's overall competitive strategy? How well do the pieces fit together? Is the strategy evolving? 2. What are the key elements of Apple's strategy in computers, personal media players, and smartphones? Have its strategies in its core businesses yielded success? Explain. 3. What does a competitive strength assessment reveal about Apple's computer business, as compared to the leaders in the personal computer industry? Use the methodology in Table 4. 2 to support your answer. Does it appear that the company's competitive positions in personal media players and smartphones or stronger or weaker than its position in computers?

4. Does it make good strategic sense for Apple to be a competitor in the computer, personal media player, smartphone, and tablet computer industries? Are the value chain activities that Apple performs in computers, personal media players, tablet computers and smartphones very similar and "compatible" or are there very important differences from product to product? Which of the four products lines—computers, tablet computers, personal media players, or smartphones—do you think is most important to Apple's future growth and profitability? Why? 5. What is your assessment of Apple Computer's financial performance the past three years? (Use the financial ratios in Table 4. 1 on pages 94-96 of the text as a guide in doing your financial analysis.) 6. What recommendations would you make to allow Apple to strengthen its position in its most important markets? What steps should it take to ensure that the iPad becomes a success in the marketplace and a major contributor to the company's overall performance?

CASE PRESENTATION 2 GAP

1. What does a five-forces analysis reveal about the strength of competition in the U. S. family clothing stores industry? 2. What factors are critical to success in the U. S. family clothing stores industry? 3. Develop a competitive strength assessment of the four major competitors in the U. S. family clothing stores industry using the methodology presented in Chapter 4. Based on the results, who is in the strongest overall competitive position? Who is in the weakest position? 4. What is Gap Inc.'s strategy? Which of the five generic competitive strategies discussed in Chapter 5 most closely fit the competitive approach that Gap is taking? What type of competitive advantage is Gap trying to achieve? 5. What does a SWOT analysis of Gap reveal about the overall attractiveness of its situation? 6. What is your overall appraisal of Gap's financial performance? (Use the financial ratios in Table 4.1 on pages 94-96 of the text as a guide in doing your financial analysis.) 7. What recommendations would you make to Gap senior management to improve upon its turnaround strategy? What actions are necessary to restore the competitiveness of its core Gap, Banana Republic, and Old Navy brands?

CASE PRESENTATION 3. GOOGLE

1. Discuss competition in the search industry. Which of the five competitive forces seem strongest? weakest? What is your assessment of overall industry attractiveness? 2. How is the search industry changing? What forces seem most likely to bring about major change to the industry within the next three to five years? 3. What are the key factors that define success in the industry? What are the key competencies, capabilities, and resources of successful

search engine companies? 4. Describe Google's customer value proposition and profit formula linked to its business model. What strategies has Google relied upon to build competitive advantage in the industry? 5. Have Google's business model and strategy proven to be successful? Should investors be impressed with the company's financial performance? How does the company's financial performance compare to that of Microsoft and Yahoo? Please conduct a financial analysis to support your position—you may wish to use the financial ratios presented in the Table 4. 1 of the text as a guide in doing your financial analysis of the company. 6. What are the company's key resources and competitive capabilities? What competitive liabilities and resource weaknesses does it have? What opportunities exist? What threats to its continued success are present? 7. What recommendations would you make to Google's top-management team to sustain its competitive advantage in the search industry? How should it best capitalize on its strategic initiatives in mobile phones, cloud computing, emerging markets, and other ventures?

CASE PRESENTATION 4: SKYPE

1. What are the dominant economic characteristics of the VoIP Industry? 2. What does the five forces analysis reveal about the chances for profitability in the VoIP industry? 3. What are the Driving Forces of this industry? 4. What are the Key Success Factors for this industry? 5. What is Skype's current strategy and what type of corporate strategy are they employing? 6. What main issues do you think Skype must focus on short term and long term?

CASE PRESENTATION 5: SARA LEE

1. What is Sara Lee's corporate strategy? How has its retrenchment strategy changed the nature of its business lineup? 2. What is your assessment of the long-term attractiveness of the industries represented in Sara Lee Corp.'s business portfolio? 3. What is your assessment of the competitive strength of Sara Lee Corp.'s different business units? 4. What does a 9-cell industry attractiveness/business strength matrix displaying Sara Lee's business units look like? 5. Does Sara Lee's portfolio exhibit good strategic fit? What value-chain match-ups do you see? What opportunities for skills transfer, cost sharing, or brand sharing do you see? 6. What is your assessment of Sara Lee's financial and operating performance in fiscal years 2008-2010, the period following the divestitures that were the core of Sara Lee's retrenchment strategy? 7. What is your overall evaluation of Sara Lee's retrenchment plan? What evidence and/or reasons support a conclusion that Sara Lee's shareholders have or have not benefitted from the company's retrenchment strategy? 8. What actions do you recommend that Sara Lee management take to improve the company's performance and boost shareholder value? Your recommended actions must be supported with convincing, analysis-based arguments.

CASE PRESENTATION 6: STARBUCKS 1. What was Howard Schultz's original strategic vision for Starbucks? Is his 2010 strategic vision for Starbucks different from the one he had in the 1980s? How many times has his strategic vision changed? Is his present strategic vision likely to undergo further evolution? 2. Has Starbuck's strategy evolved as the strategic vision has evolved? 3. Which one of the five generic competitive strategies

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discussed in Chapter 5 most closely approximates the competitive approach that Starbucks is employing? 4. What are the key policies, practices, business principles, and procedures that underlie how Howard Schultz and Starbucks' management have implemented and executed the company's strategy? 5. What "values" does Starbucks have? How well do they connect to the strategy and to the manner in which the company conducts its business? 6. What is your evaluation of Starbucks social responsibility strategy? Is it sincere or just something the company does and talks about to create a good public image? 7. What is your assessment of Starbucks' financial performance during fiscal years 2005-2009? 8. What is your evaluation of Howard Schultz's transformation agenda for Starbucks during 2008-2010 (see pages C-362 and C-363)? Has Schultz done a good job since his return as Starbucks' CEO? Why or why not? 9. What issues confront the company as of mid-2010? What should Starbucks' management be worried about? 10. What recommendations would you make to Howard Schultz to sustain the company's growth and support continued strong financial performance in the years ahead?

CASE PRESENTATION 7: SWA

1. Is there anything that you find particularly impressive about Southwest Airlines? 2. What grade would you give Southwest management for the job it has done in crafting the company's strategy? What is it that you like or dislike about the strategy? Does Southwest have a winning strategy? 3. What are the key policies, procedures, operating practices, and core values underlying Southwest's efforts to implement and execute its low-cost/no frills strategy? 4. What are the key elements of Southwest's culture? Is Southwest

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a strong culture company? Why or why not? What problems do you foresee that Gary Kelly has in sustaining the culture now that Herb Kelleher, the company's spiritual leader, has departed? 5. What grade would you give Southwest management for the job it has done in implementing and executing the company's strategy? Which of Southwest's strategy execution approaches and operating practices do you believe have been most crucial in accounting for the success that Southwest has enjoyed in executing its strategy? Are there any policies, procedures, and operating approaches at Southwest that you disapprove of or that are not working well? 6. What weaknesses or problems do you see at Southwest Airlines as of mid-2010?