Technology strategic plan

Strategy is a major component of doing business, if not, the most quintessential element. It typically provides the blueprint that focuses on the long-term direction and sustainability off business. Strategy is employ through a set of interrelated actions to attain the best results and performances from available scare resources, while maintaining competitive advantage in the marketplace (Schilling, 2010, up. 281-304).

As I begin to address the strategic issues mapped up in the terminal course objective, I will be using our family-owned (ASKED Hotel) business in Liberia, West Africa as a case study. To begin with, this paper will provide a comprehensive overview of the scope and nature of the business in Liberia. In 2009 during one of our regular family gatherings in Philadelphia, a few of us envisioned the need to incorporate a family-owned business in our native homeland where socio-economic development and commerce were exemplification of the new paradigm shift after fourteen years of the brutal civil uprising.

As we saw the exponential growth of foreign direct investments and international travels to Liberia, we decided to invest in the hospitality industry by opening two modern, world-class, tools in Kate, Margin County, and Refortified Highway, which is in close proximity of the Roberts International Airport in Liberia.

Each hotel location has almost all the amenities a traveler could ever imagine in a modern hotel including room service, 32″ flat screen TV in every room with international entertainment, news, and wakeup call; international in-room direct dial phones, restaurant, business center, conference's room,

nightclub, centralized Internet service, swimming pool, the gymnasium, foreign exchange services, the shuttle Van, etc. Looking back from an operational and profitability standpoint so far, the business has done well in four years and has the enormous amount of opportunities to improve and expand its operations throughout Liberia and West Africa.

Vision ASKED Hotel strives to promote a safe and caring environment, amenities and economic opportunity to empower our employees to provide our customers the highest service of hospitality excellence for a comfortable stay and memorable experience. Mission ASKED Hotel will collaborate with our foreign partners to ensure the provisions of essential services are equitable, efficient, and effective, in order to improve the laity of service for our customers.

Strategy (TCO F) As we look forward to expanding our hotel chain and making information more readily accessible to local and international travelers (all stakeholders), we anticipate large and incremental investments in technology and marketing over the next five years to get us to the next level. While it is true that our facilities are top-notch in service and accommodation in Africa, we still need to create more awareness of our presence in Liberia and make it easier for business and international travelers to make the reservation and get in touch with us directly.

At this moment, we have our own website hosted by Goddard. Com, where our property and services are mainly, advertised. We pay a minimum amount on a monthly basis for web service, in addition to an annual subscription fee for hosting and maintenance. Part of our short-term

technological plan is to upgrade our website to a more sophisticated user-friendly one, which will enable hotel guests to easily navigate and make reservations from any part of the world.

Secondly, we plan to increase the number of Internet connections per user in the business center to accommodate and reduce the low of customers waiting to use the Internet, while we plan to rolled the wireless system (Wi-If network) throughout our facility. As an additional undertaking in the short-term, management plans to embark on making the hotel, brand more visible on major travel sites through partnership (e. G. , Hotelier, Principle, Expedited, Traceability, Kayak, Delta, United, British Airways, U. S Airways, Lufthansa, Air France, Moroccan Airlines, Nigeria Airways, Kenya Airways, etc. . In addition, direct marketing service, including Yahoo, Google, Hotmail, and social media, sites such as Faceable and You Tube are in consideration. The strategic goal is to increasingly, create the needed buzz and exposure we seek as a company through technology and marketing. Furthermore, while we anticipate that the upgraded version of the company's website will enable guests to make the reservation much easier our technician and engineering team is working diligently to include a toll-free number on our site.

This enable guests to place the direct phone call to the hotel for the reservation and/or any additional inquiries with no expense to the caller from any part of the world. In the medium term, our strategy will be to automate part of our operations and the ay we do business (e. G. , self-check-in kiosks, self-service technologies, automated call service from guest room, laundry equipment, as opposed to portable washing machines, etc.).

Enhance guest security and productivity by installing cameras in and around the hotels for security monitoring, introduce Wi-If service to every room and the premise of the hotel, in-room portable electronic devices, movies on-demand, and digital equipment for the conference room. In the long-run both management and ownership plan to tap into the smart phone industry by investing in research ND development (either through a partnership project or outsourcing) for an app custom-made to allow our hotel closely interact with travelers and other stakeholders (I. E. Investors, businesses, vendors, etc.), who spend half of their time on mobile and other electronic devices. This will afford our company an interactive experience with guests through enterprise-specific mobile solutions to efficiently, run our business. A major advantage of the application or mobile technology will be for people to be on the go while having direct access to our company either by the web or by the direct ill. One potential feature of the mobile application will be the ability to enable and entice guests to accept ongoing offers from the hotel to boost our occupancy.

Another big technological project we plan to unveil in the long-term is to install sun-power solar panel to reduce our energy usage, while satisfying consumers demand for more CEO-friendly environment. The solar power initiative will help to reduce our energy consumption and improve our overall costs of operation. In addition to employing a solar power system, we plan to unveil a new lighting technology for all our rooms that will be automatically control by the sensor. The way the prototype work, is that the light immediately comes on and off when it detects someone entering and leaving the room or bathroom.

At the nighttime, the occupant can control the light in the room either remotely and/or manually. So far, given the three levels of initiatives above, the short-term will not require a great deal of upfront cash as compared to the medium and long terms. However, as a new and potentially successful business, we want to remain disciplined and highly focused on the goals we have set for ourselves. Core Competencies (TCO C) In any organization or business, core competencies provide a set of unique qualities that distinguish you from other businesses or competitors.

These unique qualities are often noticeable but not necessarily by customers, and these qualities are identifiable by management. It may derive from the company's resources, its human expertise, or even technology (Schilling, 2010 up. 123-181). In the case of our hotel, our core competency lies in our staff and workforce ability (human resource) to render a first class service, thereby, building a customer's relation management yester that personalizes and follow-up with guests after checking out from the hotel.

Our in-house metrics generated from survey and questionnaires of hotel guests indicate that over 90% of guests feel extremely satisfied with the service we offer, including staff interactions and responsiveness to guest needs and questions. In another recent market research conducted by an independent marketing firm, a population sample of ninety-(90) guests were surveyed at the end of March 2014. The number subjects including in the survey were (38 from North America, 21 from Asia, 6 from Europe and 15 from Africa) to see if they would be repeat customers, and hopefully recommend our brand to their friends and family traveling to Liberia.

The results were overwhelmingly favorable to our hotel and operations. One key response that resonated throughout the study was how outstanding and helpful our employees were. As a company, we want to continue building our brand on such reputation since there is so much competition in the industry. As part of our corporate culture, employees are train on a regular basis to anticipate new ways of enhancing our guest stay, including crisis management. Accordingly, before every shift starts work at the hotel, we make it a practice to have a fifteen minutes huddle to discuss work related events and developing issues in the hospitality industry.

This helps to broaden our staff knowledge and educate them about different behavioral patterns and cultures. There is also a monthly " lunch and learn" training program for senior and mid-level managers to improve their managerial and leadership skills. As a company, we strongly believe our truth strength and competency lie in our workforce. We plan to invest more in education and continuous training for our Rockford so that they can be cognizant of changing trends in the industry. This includes the use and management of new technologies the company is acquiring.

Industry Dynamics (TCO A) Nowadays, we know that change is a constant reality and an inevitable factor in the hotel industry. Unlike centuries back when hotels were merely look at as a place to sleep or pass the night, the industry has evolved with ever-increasing demand and challenges from globalization to the development and use of modern technologies (Schilling, 2010, up. 13-37). At the very inception of the hotel industry, hoteliers did ere little or nothing to complement the guest stays. However, this dynamism has taken place rapidly with increased demand from hotel guests and travelers.

Executives and travelers alike are working directly from hotels; business meetings and conferences are taking place in hotels; schools are conducting classes and entertainers are performing live in hotels; weddings and other family functions are now performed in a hotel amongst others. While all these different events are happening in hotels, they sometimes require the use of different technologies that poses a challenge to hoteliers. In anticipation of these different needs and emends, we have two conference rooms and a ballroom at each location to address the guest's needs.

We also have a restaurant bar and a soundproof nightclub adjacent our hotel (linked by a corridor) to meet the needs of customers desirous of these activities. These different facilities are not very common with many of our competitors, but we want to be in the position to provide a one-stop service for our guests. Technology Sourcing & Internal Innovation (TCO D) The question many businesses are facing with in today's business environment is whether to innovate from within (internally) or outsource (externally)? Sometimes it can be difficult to strike the right balance between internal and external efforts at innovation.

Furthermore, as budget becomes tight and financing becomes more expensive, businesses tend to outsource their research and development and the creation of a new product in order to slash costs, speed development time and tap into the talent pool outside the business (Schilling, 2010, up. 167-171). This realism also influences our business as well as we, all know innovation comes with cost and time. For this reason coupled with the fact that our brand is new and mingle constrained by cash flow and capital

concerns, we plan to outsource the development of our phone app (mobile technology) and other technologies mentioned earlier.

The Wi-If network system we plan to introduce will be outsourced partly, while we maintain a team of technicians and engineers to troubleshoot the system and help with other technical issues. On the deployment of other technologies in the company (I. E. , copiers, printers, the fax machine, software, etc.), we plan to lease or subscribe versus outright buying. The benefit of leasing and/or subscribing to these technologies (hardware or software) potentially shifts service ND maintenance costs of to the leaser or provider of the service.

Over time as we become more solvent and profitable, we may consider undertaking some innovation projects. Product Development Strategy (TCO E) Product development is a critical stage in the life and sustenance of any business. Having a thorough understanding of the customer's choices for new market offerings plays an important role in product or service development (Schilling, 2010, 235-257). In the hospitality industry product needs to satisfy the customer's needs on several fronts not Just the convenience or suitability of rooms (e. . Shopping centers, banks, restaurants/cafe, parks or the beach, entertainment centers, land & air transportation, tour clubs & operators, travel agencies, theaters, recreational activities, signposting, less crime, etc.). These additional facilities or knowledge adds significant value to the hotel product by misconceiving customers to stay over for the night. Our two locations in Liberia provide some of these facilities – beach, air and land transportation, restaurants, nightclub and local banks with ties to Master Card and Visa.

Furthermore, it is critical to have an insight or predictable view of the true to help in determining what, where and when a product ought to be developed (e. G. , hotel facility, service, etc.). In our case, we realize the Librarian economy will begin to boom very soon with the discovery of oil and imminent development and drilling process, coupled with other natural resources such as iron ore, gold, diamond, logs & timbers, bauxite's, rubber & latex, etc. Given the aforementioned, we decided to invest now in order to take advantage of the ensuing economic boom of our country.

This is what necessitated the building of properties (hotels) we have now, which will pay off incredibly well in five to ten years, when Liberia becomes the center of attraction for international investors. In fact, we have begun to see appreciable returns on our initial investments and we are reinvesting more hoping for better returns. In terms of domestic expansion, we have strategically acquired a couple of new land in the port cities of Buchanan and Cape Mount, where our American and Chinese counterparts are largely directing foreign investments.

Strategy to Protect Innovation (TCO B) The most difficult issue associated with innovation in this digital age is not the invention of great ideas or the product or services that derive from them, but the retention and management of those ideas and engineering (intellectual property) from falling in the hands of unauthorized individuals or competitors (Schilling, 2010, up. 183-205). Regardless of business size or industry, the main objective of investing in research & development is to help business succeed and realize its goals.

Businesses can protect their innovation in several ways. First, employers must know who their employees are; second, businesses must avoid talking publicly about innovative ideas they have not protected or transformed into tangible asset; and hire, all innovations (P) need to be legally protected by means of patents, copyrights, registered designs, confidentiality trade secret agreements, and circuit layout rights, One key ingredient some employers adequately fail to address in the innovation business is to know and understand their employees.

This is very critical because some employees with a great deal of knowledge and technical expertise could walk out on the Job with the great amount of trade secrets. It is therefore, important for employers to be sensitive to changes in their life circumstances and he career that could prompt them do things that are completely disloyal to the company. In addition to knowing who your employees are, most high-tech and innovative businesses are now binding their employees through confidentiality agreements from divulging trade secrets in whatever manner after they get terminated from their employment.

However, the most effective way of protecting intellectual property (P) is to ensure that it is legally register through patent rights, copyrights, or as registered designs. In each of these circumstances, your IP will be legally protected within certain territorial bounds, if not globally. When you conceptualize these different protection mechanisms from our own business (hotel) standpoint, it is clear that we have not invested aggressively in research and development or our own technology to be overly concerned with protecting innovation.

However, we have done a couple of things that have the semblance of the subject matter under discussion. Legally we have copyrighted our hotel logo, which no one cannot replicate or infringe upon. Secondly, due to our ongoing investment in training and education of our workers (especially mid-level and senior management), we incorporated a confidentiality clause in our management policy.

In addition, agreed to in writing by mid-level and senior managers that if at any point in time they leave our chain, they cannot work or do any business with our competitors or operate in similar fashion for at least five (5) years. Additionally, they cannot disclose or share any trade secrets or corporate culture practices at our hotel within the same timeline. These are protection mechanisms management implements in order to safeguard our core competencies and the way we do business.