

Competing for the future by gary hamel and c k pralahad



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The book, "Competing for the future" brings into fore the discussion of effective strategic management as a path towards the establishment of efficient organizations and companies for the future. Moreover, the book's objective is to create ways in which leaders, specifically managers, can help lead the path towards the creation and development of an effective strategy plan for the organization. The path towards the future, however, should not be misconstrued as a 'race' in which organizations or companies must participate in. What Hamel and Prahalad brought into focus is the nature of the race towards the future, and this was aptly stated in the book (25):

There is not one future but hundreds. There is no law that says most companies must be followers. Getting to the future first is not just about outrunning competitors bent on reaching the same prize. It is also about having one's own view of what the prize is. There can be as many prizes as runners... In business... what distinguishes leaders from laggards, and greatness from mediocrity, is the ability to uniquely imagine what could be.

Given this thesis of the book, the authors began their discussion by making it clear that in strategic planning, members of the organization must have a 'vision,' the ability to imagine things beyond the scope of reality. That is, organizations and companies must also 'dream,' create ambitions that have not been always considered "realistic," yet feasible enough to be accomplished provided the strategy is well-thought out and effectively implemented (145).

Of course, it is vital to consider that the process towards the establishment of an effective strategic plan is to bring together all members of the

organization, because to delegate the task to a specific group would mean foresightedness in the part of the manager. The authors recommend that for full participation among members in the organization become possible, managers should plan to make each member educated about the whole process in which the organization/company operates (146). Re-educating members/employees ensures that they are able to understand how the organization/company works, and can provide suggestions or recommendations that can be beneficial not only to one department or sector of the organization, but also to the whole organization.

The process described above illustrates the authors' view of what "resource leverage" should be: an acknowledgment of the organization's existing resources, and what can be generated as new resources from these existing ones. Thus, putting leverage on resources may be accomplished through converging, targeting, mining, blending, balancing, recycling, co-opting, and protecting these resources (160-173).

Central also to the discussion of strategic management is establishing an organizations 'core competencies.' The authors define core competencies as those activities that are an "integral part of the process of general management" (225). This does not only include specific products and/or activities, but all activities and products must be considered as potential core competency. The bigger and more difficult task is in identifying an organization's core competencies; surely there would be activities that specific members of the organization may consider as core, but the authors clarify that these activities becomes a core competency when it is an

inevitable and essential part of the organization's daily activities and operations (226).

Integrating together the authors' recommendations, "Competing for the future" brings into light how managers have the foremost goal of creating strategies that integrates the thoughts expressed in the book. This includes creating the "big dream," opening up to the possibility that ambitious goals propels companies and organization towards the front race to the future, re-educating employees/members about the organization's daily operations, and identifying core competencies in preparation to the creation of a core competence agenda.