

Adaptive Marketing, Management Strategy, and Technology Innovation in Beverage and Hospitality Markets

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the catalyst for innovative thought within the Sweeter the Juice winery and wine bar. As a result of the pandemic, sales and revenue were reduced by 90%. With this pandemic came a surplus of safety guidelines, shortages in products, and delays on impending shipments. The brief period towards the beginning of the pandemic where both the state and federal governments mandated quarantine and shelter-in-place orders drastically impacted revenue, clientele, and organizational operations. The organization engaged a management consultant to help in the creation of an adaptive technology leadership and marketing strategy. This paper looks at management consulting-driven action research to influence the world of practice through the exploration of real-world organizational interventions focused on the development of electronic entrepreneurial solutions.

KEYWORDS

Adaptive Marketing, Business Strategy, Change Management, E-Marketing, Food and Beverage Marketing, Hospitality Management, Strategic Planning

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual frameworks within strategy formation change unilaterally, bilaterally, or multi-faceted within leadership in a static environment. Organizations are losing a great deal of relevance within the marketplace due to the influx or largely unstable markets because of technology. The global climate has rapidly changed to force organizations to reconsider product development innovation as products and services quickly fall outside of the Product Life Cycle. Capital markets that were once sustained find themselves unable to leverage buyouts or thrive in private industry due to increase of general expenses.

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Some businesses even face forces of economic instability causing stop-loss shortages, corporate shutdowns, and employee downsizing to meet the demand of forced scale. The fundamental changes lead the search in how strategy analysis and formation effect the food and beverage industry. Especially as COVID-19 has forever changed the way consumers interact in public. Many people order food and beverages online for pick-up as opposed to sitting down in local establishments to enjoy the social engagement of like-minded individuals. Beverage businesses such as Drizly, ReserveBar, Wine.com, Tavour, Flaviar, Cellars Wine Club, and many more utilize technological applications to attract consumers. Meanwhile, food service applications such as HelloFresh, Nutrisystem, Shopify, GrubHub, DoorDash, Uber Eats, Seamless, and Instacart have dramatically changed consumer engagement to a point-and-click methodology.

According to current demographics, corporations are doing more to simplify growth outputs by incorporating new innovations. For example, during COVID-19 retail superstores like Wal-Mart and Target allowed consumers to place orders online. Customer associates from these establishment would locate the items and deliver the products to consumers vehicle to alleviate issues of spreading bacteria and other illnesses. The mechanism for its usage opens the door for organizations to expand their business model to incorporate attributes based on four patterns of strategic behavior: (1) seeking concentration, (2) seeking focus, (3) seeking competency, and (4) seeking end game. Bottom line economics establishes important nuance to Michael Porters (1980) Five Forces which establish important constructs for corporate competency in the global marketplace. Adaptation marketing expresses strategic choices that are congruent with structural business outcome and conditions. The results rely on two fundamental turbulence-prone forces: (1) the capital resource base and (2) the competency profile of the organization. Capital resource base is defined as the corporate capital resource responsible for the tangible assets related to an organization's portfolio (El Namaki, 2013). Competency profile focuses on demonstrating exceptional value-added performance driven metrics and measurements (El Namaki, 2013). Measurable increase in the food and beverage industry increase in overall market concentration (El Namaki, 2013). Core competency development and continuation of volatility in spending habits and marketability provide oscillations causing organizations to divest of product or labor.

THE FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH

The focus of this research is to investigate the interaction between strategic analysis and the representation of how the food and beverage industry is affected by COVID-19. Researchers speculate an organizational concentration ratio for the investment banking and securities dealing industry amounted to 51.7 percent in 2007 (El Namaki, 2013). Organizations attribute the inconsistency with their strategic position (El Namaki, 2013). Organizations adopt absolute or partial concentration to understand locus of control in an unpredictable marketplace. The number has grown exponentially as 76.6 percent of organizations experience high levels of concentration. Moreover, de-regulation contributing to investment capital failures in the early 80's during the President Reagan years which saw increased unemployment and financial crisis. A combination of multiple events has contributed to the fluctuation of ratios within the food and beverage industry providing a shift in the elasticity of selling one product for one price and purchasing the same product at a different price. Supply-and-demand economics contribute to the global paradox of the food and beverage marketplace.

THE AIM OF THIS RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to encapsulate growing issues in leadership within the food and beverage industry. The investigative research seeks to determine factors causing losses in the adaptation of marketing capabilities through sustainment of the organization. Corporate strategy formation in the

interactive multi-faceted technologically driven applications of today provide organizations capital outlays and competency demands as business models change to incorporate the rise of COVID-19. This paper looks at management consulting driven action research to influence the world of practice through the exploration of real-world organizational developmental interventions focused on the development of electronic entrepreneurial solutions.

METHOD

Organizational development action research is a methodical examination approach that purposes to analyze real-world problems, establish evidence, apply established theories, establish evidence, engage in data collection interventions, present reliable results, and develop viable solutions (Krishnan, 2018; Stringer & Genat, 2004). This approach is the core methodology for management and organizational development consultants (Cheung-Judge & Holbeche, 2015; Stringer & Genat, 2004). The ability to marry practical and theoretical frameworks in the study of complex organizations in real-time highlights the worth, value, and importance of organizational development action research as an approach (Stringer & Genat, 2004; Cheung-Judge & Holbeche, 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review to adapt the strategic adaptive marketing activity to international markets effectively organizations must understand long-term success garnered using technology-driven global markets. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, primarily due to COVID-19 advertising spending dropped 39% and over a quarter of Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) participants indicated continuously reduction (Gold, 2020). As a result, corporations are seeking ad impressions growth by 25% a day. The percentage of organizations falling out of the top three rankings in their industry from 2% in 1960 to 14% in 2008 continue a downward shift as organizations continue to scale (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Market leadership proving to be an increasingly undecided prize with a strong correlation between profitability and industry share is now non-existent in some global economic markets Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Furthermore, Gold (2020) postulates 87% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product if they know the organization behind supporting beliefs, norms, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) roots.

According to their calculation, the probability that the market share leader is also the profitability leader declined from 34% in 1950 to just 7% in 2007 (El Namaki, 2013). These sentiments are heightened as consumers live in perilous times when normalities are distant from reality. Marketers need to creatively respect the moment and reflect the current trends, attitudes, and behaviors within the market (Gold, 2020). The literature postulates that multinational corporations must understand the characteristics of the global industry in which businesses commence (Chang, 1995). A framework for developing adaptive marketing strategy is born of Porter's (1986) Five Forces. Michael Porter's Five Forces provide a practical outline for how businesses should adapt to marketing philosophies across countries (Chang, 1995).

The diverse consumer preferences in global markets demonstrate the value of adaptive marketing practices (Chang, 1995). Businesses need to consider where to perform in the value chain and how to perform such activities effectively in global markets. The literature suggests corporations change their adaptive strategy by coping with business environment to achieve better organizational performance (El Namaki, 2013). The formulating of adaptive marketing business begins with adaptive generalization which allows an organization to enhance its adaptive capabilities to design appropriate expanding innovations (Chang, 1995). The international expansion is key to organizational success as global markets are contingent on competitive edge (Chang, 1995).

INNOVATION

Organizations should be prepared to welcome and accept new ideas and diverse concepts. It was proposed that individuals in leadership positions should be fluid when introduced to new ideas rather than being married to their concepts or strategies (Hatch & Zweig, 2001). In 2005, well before the current pandemic, researchers argued that effective leaders should be understanding of the environment and be willing to make adjustments to their strategies as required (Gandz, 2005). Researchers have suggested that “new growth comes from new thinking,” which includes but is not limited to the facilitation of innovative thought that contributes to advances in technology, policy, services and products (Horwatch, 2015). Organizational leadership should facilitate an environment that both welcomes and shapes innovative thought. In addition to maximizing on employee’s transformational thought, leaders should also be adaptive in their ways of thinking. In their 2010 article, researchers suggested that good leaders are proactive and not reactive in times of turmoil (Deans & Kalafatides, 2010). Innovation has been regarded as a proactive measure to the external environment or market. Researchers have proposed forgoing the more classic or traditional ways of doing business and rather, facilitate an environment that welcomes and contributes to one’s creativity. DeGregorio (2019) argued that differences between strategy and tactics are the idea that the former is a more general resource allocation plan whereas the latter specifies steps or tangibles that one may complete in order to reach a goal (DeGregorio, 2019). In order to have longevity in the technology age, organizational leaders must separate themselves from archaic ways of thinking, marketing and running an organization.

SWEETER THE JUICE LUXURY WINERY AND WINE BAR

Over the year past two decades, Sweeter the juice has transcended from being a small brick and mortar wine bar to a luxury winery and wine bar. This luxury winery has locations in five major cities, Las Vegas, Manhattan, Los Angeles, Miami and Houston which attracts wine aficionados from across the globe. Their upscale wineries offer their consumers wine tasting tours, wine making classes, sommelier certificate courses, memberships and group discounts. Their wineries have also been the location for a multitude of events including but not limited to, brunches, birthday parties, weddings, receptions and conferences. Their wine bar offers a vast array of both domestic and international wines, which can all be purchased online by all individuals of legal drinking age.

In February of 2020 the United States declared the coronavirus outbreak as a public health emergency. By March, the coronavirus outbreak was declared a national emergency and subsequently, all of their locations were closed with no idea as to when we would be able to reopen. A few weeks after closing their doors, we were forced to begin to lay off non-essential staff such as bartenders, waiters, busboys and housekeeping. We were thoroughly unprepared for these circumstances. With no idea as to when we would be enabled to reopen their doors coupled with the fact that we were losing tens of thousands of dollars per day, organizational leaders held a meeting to brainstorm ideas that would boost revenue and reassure stakeholders that Sweeter the juice is here to stay.

The meeting taking place in April was conducted via Zoom and consisted of organizational consultants, managers, accountants and investors, in hopes of stabilizing their then failing winery. The financial team had projected that if the organization remained as is, we could possibly be facing bankruptcy by the start of the summer.

GROWTH STRATEGIES

Researchers have proposed that the identification of a consumer’s unmet needs is strategically important due to the fact that meeting the aforementioned unmet needs enables organizations to increase market share, enter a new market and/or create a new market (Aaker, 2001). In an effort to assess the unmet needs of Sweeter the juice’ patrons, consultants proposed conducting market research,

questioning consumers on what they believe would be an area of improvement for the company, in an effort to better satisfy their needs. Data yielded upon the completion of market research may enable organizational leaders to tap into potential markets. Specifically, it was argued that Sweeter the juice could possibly increase their current market by attracting new user groups or encouraging more frequent usage (or purchases) (Aaker, 2001). It was recommended that in order to increase market share, Sweeter the juice should at least consider revamping their marketing, instead of targeting those who fancy exquisite, international and rare wines, they should market to all, attracting new customers. This recommendation may resemble marketing that makes their wine desirable to all, from the everyday novice to the most experienced sommelier. COVID Era marketing may draw the attention of all through the use of “catchy names,” offering wines such as Pandemic Pinot, Covid Cabernet & Restricted Reds. Sweeter the juice may also consider marketing to individuals who tend to be beer drinkers, appealing to a larger demographic may increase profit and market share.

Consultants recommended Sweeter the juice a multitude of growth strategies that may be beneficial to their organization. The first of which being the position for regular or frequent use of products or services. Offering services such as deals on the Wine of the Week or Wine of the Month may encourage the most infrequent consumers to make a purchase at least once per month. Marketing such as “Happy Hour, Any Hour,” may encourage consumers to make wine purchases more frequently. Additionally, consultants suggested increasing market growth through the use of reminder communications. More specifically, Sweeter the juice should implement the distribution of email and postal mail reminders to their consumers. This line one-way line of communication will both inform and remind consumers of impending sales, deals, new products/ services and offer them an opportunity to receive coupons. Sweeter the juice may also stay in contact with loyal members by sending them happy birthday/ membership anniversary emails, thus providing frequent buyers with added incentives.

ENVIRONMENTAL SHOCKS

Changes in the environment and technology may disrupt an organization’s planning process (Aaker, 2001). When considering the current pandemic, organizational leadership must plan proactively in response to the likelihood of increases in COVID cases, the reimplementation of shelter in place orders and prospective closing of all non-essential businesses in the hopes of *flattening the curve*. In a recent article, researchers suggested that as a result of the current pandemic, many restaurants/ bars have been unable to pay staff and bills whilst simultaneously struggling to keep their staff/ customers safe and adapt to challenges set forth by inflation (Moessner, 2020). In response to the turbulent market as a result of the onset of the coronavirus, restaurants have been forced to make adaptations to ensure their survival. Market data has yielded data that would suggest that many organizations have scaled down their menu to make products more appropriate for online ordering, increased engagement with consumers via social media, relied on third party services to deliver products to consumers and created wine subscriptions (Moessner, 2020).

In a separate yet related article, researchers argued that organizations who do not “have the ability to shift quickly to carryout or delivery are in a particularly precarious position” (Kelso, 2020). Due to the resurgence of coronavirus cases, many states will be forcing restaurants and bars to shut down their operations, specifically the National Restaurant Association proposed that both restaurants and bars have endured increasingly high closing rates. In contrast, it has been reported that users on Yelp have shown increases in interest in “alcohol related experiences with breweries up 24% and wineries up 51%” (ABC News, 2020). Considering these statistics, consultants have suggested that Sweeter the juice create Yelp pages and ensure that interested parties know that they are both open and offering delivery options. Researchers have also reported increases in user interest in Black – owned business, suggesting that searchers for the aforementioned category have surged up to 2,508% in recent months

(ABC News, 2020). Consultants have suggested that Sweeter the juice ensure that all of their social media platforms, including Yelp, highlight the fact that they are a Black and Veteran owned business.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Organizational consultants recommended performing a SWOT analysis to highlight the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and possible threats. The organizational consultants hired by Sweeter the juice in the hopes of identifying current problems within the organization and rectifying them, suggested using a SWOT analysis to get a clearer picture of the current state of the company in the hopes of creating a new and improved strategic plan. The data yielded from the SWOT analysis was listed as shown in Table 1.

Throughout the duration of the stakeholder meetings, organizational consultants also proposed the idea of conducting a PEST analysis (see Table 2). A PEST analysis offers organizational leaders an avenue for which they may both strategically and systematically evaluate Sweeter the juice prospects, risks and opportunities. PEST analysis highlights political, economic, social and technological factors that may possibly influence organizational operation. With the information gathered from both the SWOT and PEST analyses, the organizational consultants, along with assistance from key stakeholders, were able to begin to development pandemic contingency plans that would both effectively and efficiently increase revenue for Sweeter the juice.

Table 1. SWOT analysis data

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Some states permitted outside dining/ bars	Unable to Sell Wine	Sell Wine Online	Spikes in COVID
	No in Person Events	Virtual Wine Tasting	Inflation in Wine distribution cost
Purchase Wine from Local Micro Wineries	Increasing Operational Cost	Virtual Wine Course	Global Wine Shortage
Rare/ International Wines	Loss of Distributors	Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet	Liquor Stores
Send In – Home Wine Recipes / Pairings	Shelter in Place Orders	Same Day Wine Delivery	Extended Quarantine
	Shortness in Staff	Wine Club Member	
Social Media (hashtags/ giveaways)	Decreased Hours of Operation	Curbside/Carry Out Services	
		Parking Lot Paint & Sip Event	

Table 2. PEST analysis data

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
Global Health Emergency	CARES Act	Social Distancing	Virtual Meetings
Shelter in Place Order	Stimulus Package	COVID Testing Delays	
Travel Ban	Stock Market Failing	Black Lives Matter	Advances in Virology
Growth Strategies Extended Quarantine	Labor Cost	Remote Work	
Travel Restrictions – International Goods	Lack of Workers	Panic	

ADDRESSING THE MAJOR PROBLEMS

Shelter in Place Orders: Virtual Events, Same Day Delivery, Curb Side

Many states have declared a state of emergency and have urged their residents to shelter in place, only permitting travel for essential workers and to pick up essential items. Organizations such as bars and restaurants were closed until further notice due to the fact that they were not deemed essential. Having the doors to Sweeter the juice closed for weeks at a time resulted in major decreases in revenue. After a month or so, many states allowed for organizations to reopen yet did not permit inside dining. The brainstorming sessions yielded a few recommendations to circumvent the shelter in place orders. Organizational consultants recommending offering services such as Curb Side Wine Delivery, Same Day Local Delivery & Global Wine Shipping. Offering these features will afford wine connoisseurs the opportunity to purchase luxury domestic and international wines, with very little contact, ensuring their safety. Consumers will be able to purchase their wine online and either pick up in person, receive same day delivery for those who live within 20 miles of their physical locations or have wine shipped to their front door with standard shipping.

Social Distancing: Outside Dining, Virtual Meetings, Social Media

In an effort to comply with social distance guidelines set forth by the CDC, organizational consultants recommend having outside dining areas (in states that they are permitted). Outside dining will consist of tables spaced at least six feet apart and patrons will be able to enjoy their wine outdoors. Organizational consultants have also recommended taking advantage of social media and virtual learning. Specifically, it was proposed that Sweeter the juice could host virtual Sommelier courses and virtual wine tasting events which would drive interested parties to purchase their wines and for a small fee, join in for a well-informed wine tasting. Virtual wine tasting will inform patrons of the specificities of the wine and offer suggestions as to what they maybe best paired with. Using social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram and Tumbler will help to keep the organization connected with their consumers. The use of hashtags will encourage their customers to purchase their wines, post a selfie online and share their thoughts.

Safety: Safeguards for Customers and Employees, Hand Sanitizers, Wipe Down Crews, Testing, Wine Masks

In the article entitled, “How to Govern, Manage and Work Amid COVID-19,” researchers proposed seven actions that organizational leaders could take in the effort of ensuring safety for employees (Watson, 2020). These proposed actions highlight an overarching idea which suggests that an organization cannot run without healthy employees, thus emphasizing the importance of organizational safety standards. To minimize the spread of the virus, protecting their customers, suppliers and employees, Sweeter the juice will implement a multitude of safety measures. It was recommended that all individuals hoping to enter the establishment will have their temperatures taken and will have to provide contact information, just in case there are reports of an outbreak stemming from Sweeter the juice. Sweeter the juice will provide employees with access to hand sanitizer, masks, gloves and a variety of cleaning/ sanitizing products. Sweeter the juice will not permit entrance to anyone refusing to wear a mask. Masks are required. Each table will be sanitized thoroughly prior to the seating of guests and hand sanitizer will be readily accessible at every table.

Distribution: Travel Ban, Delays in Shipment, Support Local Wineries

With the pandemic came delays in shipments, wine shortages and increases in shipping/distribution costs. Delays on impending shipments suggesting that wine would not be able to be delivered for 30 to 60 days, drove organizational consultants to recommend purchasing wine from more local vineyards. Local vineyards have been suffering at the expense of the current pandemic so Sweeter the juice will be able to purchase a host of local wines at a great rate. Travel bans implemented by many countries

have drastically hindered Sweeter the juice ability to purchase international wines at a retail price. For this reason, it was suggested that the current price of luxury and international wines in Sweeter the juice' cellar will be inflated, supply and demand.

CONCLUSION

Coyne (2020) studied wineries' radical shift in revenue streams away from tasting rooms and restaurants towards online and retail store sales. Focusing on Three Sticks Wines, Coyne (2020) documented how the loss of traditional distribution channels pushed wine producers to drastically increase their focus on digital marketing, including converting their hospitality operations to digital platforms.

The decline in wine producers' sales had a rippling effect on the income of other sectors in the wine industry, including non-profit organizations and industry associations. All this uncertainty poses a tremendous challenge for strategy-making that often leads to the introduction of emerging technologies and innovations.

Disruptive technologies is defined as emerging technologies that result in a step change in the cost or access to products or services or that dramatically change how organizations gather information, make products, sale products or interact. The use of new marketing and organizational strategies increasingly have been altering the development paths of emerging markets and of businesses that operate in emerging markets. Examples of disruptive technologies include artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, robotics, and 3D printing. Disruptive technologies are far broader than digital services but often change traditional approaches to marketing, advertising, lead generation, client engagement, customer acquisition, logistics management, supply chain management, sales, and product life cycle development stages.

Traditional approach to strategy – though often seen as the answer to change and uncertainty – assume a relatively stable and predictable world (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). The goal of most strategies is to build enduring competitive advantage by establishing clever market positioning in a dominant scale or an attractive niche or assembling the right capabilities for making or delivering an offering (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Organizations seek sustainability through adaptive marketing processes and need direction to maintain their position within the marketplace. These facets demonstrate static organizational capabilities. Building up skills in managing complex multistakeholder systems in an increasingly fundamental strategic shift. Organizations must obtain operations around scaling and efficiency to continuously gain a competitive advantage in an unstable environment. Organizations signal leveraging capabilities by offering customize offerings within the Product Life Cycle. Product Life Cycle demands often provide warnings early on through the growth stage of development shifts in the market. Customer behavior indicates in each state of marketing adaptation, while adaptive generalization improves the survival potential of the organization (Dunn, 1971).

Harvard Business Review (2011) identifies specific questions asked by organizations:

1. How can we apply frameworks to scale or position market leaders?
2. How do organizations measure position within the Product Life Cycle (PLC) decline stage as products enter and leave industry?
3. How does vertical integration change information from one leader to the next?
4. When change is rapid – how can organizations strategically plan to stay relevant?

Adaptive marketing is an ongoing process in which international marketing managers specify the major decisions which will maintain the organization's marketing activities effectively in keeping with its environment. Organizations undertake periodic strategy reviews and set direction and organizational structure based on an analysis of the current global industry. Adaptive specialization is the process of improving levels of uncertainty (Reeves & Deimler, 2011).

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