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CURRENT TIMES IN DEFINING A STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

The first theoretical treatment of the concept of strategic dates back about 2400 years ago, with the appearance of the writings elaborated by Dom Tzu, synthesized in the book "The Art of War".

However, the concept of strategy only materialized from the 50s of the last century and strategic management came to be considered as an autonomous discipline of academics.

The first phase of strategic thinking is characterized by the search for the best way to plan the development of large companies. It was the so-called classic phase, in which the formal aspects took on relevant aspects.

A second phase of evolution coincides with the appearance of the so-called BCG matrix and other matrices developed by consulting firms, around the 70s, in which an approach based on the management of business portfolios is proposed. In general, these methodologies seek to support managers in their resource allocation decisions between the various businesses.

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This is followed by a third phase of disenchantment with the work carried out by the central strategic planning departments and with the questioning of the diversification strategies undertaken. At this stage, we can see the emergence of the concept of business unit (SBU) which consists of a distinctive business, with a specific set of customers and competitors and which can be managed relatively independently from the other businesses.

A fourth moment comes with the appearance of Mintzberg's proposal with the adoption of a more behavioral approach to the strategy formulation and implementation process, based on a more intuitive, adaptive and creative concept.

A fifth moment comes with the appearance of Michael Porter, who presents an industry analysis model based on the five factors that determine profitability (customer bargaining power, suppliers bargaining power, threat of substitute products, threat of new entries and rivalry between competitors). Porter argues that the indispensable condition for an above-average performance, in the long term, is the creation of sustainable competitive advantages.

The current phase (the sixth) is characterized by the diversity and wealth of theories, approaches, instruments and tools used. As in previous phases, management theories have sought to respond to the new challenges that markets impose, with special mention to the phenomenon of globalization, ensuring the survival and competitiveness of companies. Thus, approaches such as: Learning Organizations, Total Quality Management and Balanced Scorecard appeared.

Currently, the essential aspect has been to maximize the company's value for its stakeholders, understood in a broader sense than the holders of shareholdings.

We are witnessing an increased concern with the execution of the strategy and with the need for its approach to the market, in order to ensure a better adaptation of the former to the constant changes of the latter. Quick decision-making has become critical. In this sense, the contingent and adaptive implementation of the strategy is fundamental. The strategy actually carried out does not result from the formalism and methodology underlying its formulation and implementation (as it happened until the beginning of the century), but rather from the combination of elements of the deliberate strategy with supervening elements, which emerge from the strategic reflection of all members of the organization, during its formulation and execution.

The current vision of strategic management must face the process itself as an open system that must reflect, at all times, changes in the environment and, at the same time, the evolution of the strategic reflection of the company's members.

Thus, one must move towards a less bureaucratic and less hierarchical company, with flatter, horizontalized and more flexible structures, related to each other through complex networks of partnership relationships, based on more or less formal alliances between companies. This opening must be open to the contributions of each approach, without having perfect solutions.

As mentioned, each approach adds value to the previous ones. It cannot be said that they are in contradiction, but they are different perspectives of facing reality.

In this way, each approach is nothing more than an instrument. It is impossible to have the zeal that they are able to give prompt and systematic answers to the questions that are raised by company directors. Its purpose is to concentrate strategic reflection in a rigorous framework, facilitating the competitive analysis of activities and favoring selective choices in the distribution of resources.

From this perspective, it is interesting to cross the contributions of each one. Thus, it is possible to link the strategies at the business level or competitive strategies, proposed by Porter, with the evolutionary vectors of the strategies, and finally use the contributions of Ansoff, product-market matrix, at the company level.

For example, you can bet on a cost leadership strategy, from a growth perspective with a view to market penetration. Other combinations can be made, depending on the context and interest of the company and its stakeholders.

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