

LD7-05 Decidiendo adaptarse o cambiar la incertidumbre

1 de marzo de 2007

Estimados suscriptores:

Todas las empresas y organizaciones se desenvuelven en un ambiente cambiante y en gran medida impredecible. Muchas de ellas buscan la manera de adaptarse a los cambios para seguir siendo competitivas y quienes no lo logran (y quienes ni lo intentan) terminan desapareciendo o apenas subsistiendo.

Cuando una empresa u organización tiene gran importancia en su medio y/o tiene la creatividad para tener un impacto mediante nuevas maneras de atender a sus clientes, tiene entonces tiene la alternativa de influir el ambiente cambiante. Estas empresas pueden "cambiar la incertidumbre" o dicho más apropiadamente: emprender acciones para aumentar la probabilidad de los sucesos que desean que ocurren. No, no tienen el control del futuro de su medio empresarial, pero pueden influenciarlo.

Pero una cosa es poder influir el futuro y otra que les convenga hacerlo. Considerando los enormes recursos que esa acción requiere, esta es una importante decisión estratégica.

En el artículo Making the most of uncertainty, escrito por Hugh Courtney para The McKinsey Quarterly y basado en su libro "20/20 Foresight: Crafting Strategy in an Uncertain World" se exploran las ventajas y riesgos tanto de adaptarse al cambio como de tratar de modificarlo. El artículo trata de establecer algunos principios generales, pero concluye que no hay recetas (o algoritmos) aplicables y que se debe hacer un análisis de cada caso (lo que se puede hacer mediante análisis de decisiones).

Les anexo un fragmento de este interesante trabajo. Espero que les sea útil.

Mis mejores deseos.

Roberto Ley Borrás

Making the most of uncertainty

Hugh Courtney

This article is adapted from his book, 20/20 Foresight: Crafting Strategy in an Uncertain World, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2001.

McKinsey Quarterly 2001 Number 4

Shape or adapt? For years, executives have regarded the question as perhaps their most fundamental strategic choice. Is it better for a company's competitive position to try to influence, or even determine, the outcome of crucial and currently uncertain elements of an industry's structure and conduct? Or is the wiser course to scope out defensible positions within an industry's existing structure and then to move with speed and agility to recognize and capture new opportunities when the market changes?

As globalization, digitization, and unfettered capital markets raise levels of uncertainty and rewrite definitions of opportunities and risks, this basic strategic choice has morphed into a more complex and high-stakes dilemma. The right strategic bets can return far higher payoffs, far more quickly; the wrong ones carry a much higher risk of systemic failure. Betting big

today may fundamentally reshape a market on a global scale to the advantage of a company or quickly produce losses that can throw it into bankruptcy. A company may avoid foolhardy mistakes by waiting for uncertainty to diminish, or it may squander the chance to lay claim to first-mover advantages.

The truth is that no dominant solution exists. You might argue that any good strategy should attempt to shape and adapt by specifying actions designed to increase the probability of some outcomes while simultaneously preparing for others. That approach may work in some cases. Yet the actions a company must take to shape the market are often inconsistent with those needed to adapt. ...

THE DIFFERENT SHAPES OF SHAPERS AND ADAPTERS

An essential starting point is understanding your alternatives. Shaping and adapting strategies may take many different forms. Shapers generally attempt to get ahead of uncertainty by driving industry change their way. ...

Adapters, by contrast, take the existing and future industry structure and conduct as given. When a market is stable, adapters try to define defensible positions within the industry's existing structure. When high uncertainty prevails, they attempt to win through speed and agility in recognizing and capturing new opportunities as the market changes.

As strategists make shape-or-adapt choices, uncertainty, perceived first-mover advantages, and the company's capabilities and aspirations play important roles. No algorithm exists to weigh each factor, nor can a one-size-fits-all answer suit all companies in all situations. One thing, however, is certain: strategists who develop a thorough understanding of the level and nature of the residual uncertainty their company faces can develop a richer set of feasible alternatives and make better-informed choices to shape or adapt.

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