**RESPOND TO EACH STUDENT AND WRITE 75 WORDS FOR EACH FOLLOW UP RESPONSE**

* **Use the appropriate APA formatted scholarly reference sources and corresponding in-text citations in all your postings.**
* **Ok to challenge or disagree with the student. Remember to be respectful**

**Learning Activity 1**

During the previous week (Week 4), you identified the generic strategic direction for the company of your choice. It is now time for you to identify specific alternative strategies for implementation. Based on the strategic direction that you identified in Week 4, you are expected:

Requirement 1:

* Reiterate briefly (a) the same company and (b) its generic strategy direction as you have uncovered in your W4 Learning Activity.

Requirement 2:

* Create at least three (3) strategies, that is, specific strategies that the organization should pursue to achieve the identified strategic direction.

Requirement 3:

* Keep in mind that these alternatives MUST fit under the umbrella of the strategic direction that you identified last week.

Requirement 4:

* Explain in full details (1) each alternative strategy, and (2) the reason “why each alternative is a good possibility”.

Requirement 5:

* Support the rationale of each of your explanations.

**Student 1:** Calvin Bowens

Shaw Industries is a global flooring provider. The company designs, manufactures, and distributes carpet supplies, resilient, hardwood, laminate, tile and stone flooring products and synthetic turf to residential and commercial markets worldwide (Shaw, 2017). Porter’s Generic Strategies model identifies three basic options for Shaw to gain a competitive advantage over its competition. While Cost Leadership can benefit Shaw by gaining more of the market share with lowered prices, Shaw isn’t built to lower prices and sustain that concept over a long-term period. Based on the EFE and IFE analysis completed in the previous lesson, Shaw should pursue a Differentiation strategy to win more of the market shares. This generic strategic direction will position the organization to capture more of the market shares of this segment.

As the vision states, “Creating a better future: for our customers, for our people, for our company and for our communities. (Shaw, 2017)” This statement coincides with a differentiation strategy. Shaw Industries can take a number of approaches to accomplish this. First, with an unrivaled brand, Shaw can introduce new products in the same market. This strategy is based on growing the business by selling new products in existing markets. For example, because of Shaw’s strong brand name which is well-recognized and trusted across the entire industry, which is readily transferable to different products. This strategy is a low-risk, high rewards strategy. Customers already know who Shaw Industries are and what they stand for. Thus, it's easier to sell to the customers you have than to acquire new customers (Boykin, 2017).

Second of these strategies would be new market expansion. As discussed in previous posts, Shaw Industries is primed to take on the Asian, African, and Mid-East regions, thanks largely, to the brand being globally recognized. This strategy is appropriate when the existing market or customer base is saturated and you've maxed-out in terms of growth potential. Strong regional brands often expand into other regions of the country, or go international, because they've exhausted growth potential in their home markets. This strategy may also be appropriate when you've exhausted potential with a certain class of trade, such as supermarkets, but don't do any business with, say, convenience stores (Boykin, 2017).

A third and final approach would be to seize more of the market. Simply put, take market shares from competitors in the existing markets using the top notch brand of Shaw. There should be an all-out marketing assault on the smaller businesses. Plastering the brand in every corner of the market ensuring everyone knows Shaw Industries and the plethora of flooring options they provide. Now, typically, this approach is reserved for “zero-sum game” in which the industry is flat and no one is experiencing much growth. In this case, Shaw will have the opportunity to deter new entrants, introduce their products with a new spin (same flavor…different label), and build the brand.

**References**

Boykin, G. (2017). *How to identify alternative plans in strategic marketing plan.* Retrieved from The Houston Chronicle - Chron : http://smallbusiness.chron.com/identify-alternative-plans-strategic-marketing-plan-75324.html

Shaw. (2017). *Company profile*. Retrieved from Shaw Industries Group, Inc: https://shawinc.com/Company-Profile

**Student 2**: Kevin Mutter posted

The company that was discussed in my week three and four discussions was Mohawk Industries. The company revolves around producing flooring materials for the construction and remodeling industries for both homes and businesses. The generic strategy that Mohawk appears to be operating under is differentiation. This concept means that the products it offers is different in some aspect from their competitors and pricing is not a deep concern. Customer loyalty is more of the focus behind this concept.  The two concentration strategies that would apply to this concept would be market penetration and product development. Also, as a more specific strategy horizontal integration would continue to allow the company to continue to keep its differentiation.

Market penetration is about a company relying “on advertising to attract new customers with existing markets” (Mastering Strategic Management, 2014, p.241). There is always room for a company to continue to market in its current markets because of the vast amount of options that are available for flooring. The key is for the company’s marketing to be able to sway new consumers.

Product development is also a key to maintaining differentiation. “Product development involves creating new products to serve existing markets” (Mastering Strategic Management, 2014, p.243). As mentioned above there are a number of options in the market for consumers to choose from. Mohawk will need to continue to develop their products to stay ahead of the competition and to be able to offer products that are different than its competition.

Lastly, horizontal integration of mergers and acquisitions needs to continue to be a part of Mohawk. The company has been acquiring various companies in the flooring industry to strengthen its place among its competitors. If Mohawk were to only be in the carpet industry then it is greatly reducing its chances to grow and be diverse. Mohawk could have only revolved its business around carpet, but it would have severely limited its growth potential.

References:

Mastering Strategic Management(2014).Washington, D.C.: The Saylor Foundation