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# **Strategic Marketing. A literature review on definitions, concepts and boundaries**

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STRATEGIC MARKETING:  
A LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEFINITIONS,  
CONCEPTS AND BOUNDARIES.

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## **Summary**

1. Definitions of strategic marketing
2. Aspects of Strategic Marketing
3. Factors in Strategic Marketing
4. Elements of Marketing Strategy
5. Intersections with others disciplines
  - 5.1. Intersection between Strategic Marketing and Marketing Tactics
  - 5.2. Intersection between Strategic Marketing and Corporate Strategy
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6. Final conclusions of the paper
7. References

## 1. STRATEGIC MARKETING AND ITS DEFINITIONS

Although most authors speak about some parts of Strategic Marketing, here is included a list of definitions of the term. Some authors appear in different years (for example, Jain), It is understand that they have added new comments or redefined the term after the years. The table and the definitions have been ordered by year of publication.

Author	Year	Definition
Drucker	1973	" Strategic marketing as seen as a process consisting of: analyzing environmental, market competitive and business factors affecting the corporation and its business units, identifying market opportunities and threats and forecasting future trends in business areas of interest for the enterprise , and participating in setting objectives and formulating corporate and business unit strategies. Selecting market target strategies for the product-markets in each business unit, establishing marketing objectives as well as developing , implementing and managing the marketing program positioning strategies in order to meet market target needs".
Hart & Stapleton	1977	" a statement in very general terms of how the marketing objective is to be achieved, e.g. acquiring a competitive company, by price reductions, by product improvement, or by intensive advertising.The strategy becomes the basis of the marketing plan"
Lambin	1977	"The role of strategic marketing is to lead the firm towards attractive economic opportunities, that is, opportunities that are adapted to its resources and know how and offer a potential for growth and profitability".
Baker	1984	"the establishment of the goal or purpose of a strategic business unit and the means by which it is to be achieved trough management of the marketing function"
Cravens	1986	"understanding the strategic situation confronting an organization is an essential starting point in developing a marketing strategy"
Hamper &	1990	"Although definitions for the term vary, we define marketing

Baugh		strategy as a consistent, appropriate and feasible set of principles through which a particular company hopes to achieve its long-run customer and profit objectives in a particular competitive environment".
Aramario & Lambin	1991	" although marketing has basically an strategic conception of the selling activity, we use to distinguish between strategic marketing and operational marketing, depending on long term or short term objectives. Strategic marketing starts in thoughts about current situation of the company and situational analysis and possible evolution of the markets and the environment, with the goal of detecting opportunities which can establish objectives"
Schnaars	1991	"There is no unified definition upon which marketers agree. Instead, there are nearly as many definitions of it as there are uses of the term. Clearly, marketing strategy is a commonly used term, but no one is really sure what it means".
Bradley	1991	" the strategic marketing process, therefore implies deciding the marketing strategy based on a set of objectives , target market segments, positioning and policies"
Walker, Boyd, Larrech�	1992	" The primary purpose of a marketing strategy is to effectively allocate and coordinate marketing resources and activities to accomplish the firm's objectives within a specific product-market. Therefore decisions about the scope of a marketing strategy involve specifying the target-market segment(s) to be pursued and the product line to be offered. Then, firms seek a competitive advantage and synergy, planning a well integrated program of marketing mix elements."
Jain	1993	"Marketing strategy is mainly indicated by the marketing

		<p>objectives, customer and competitive perspectives and product/market momentum ( i.e. extrapolation of past performance to the future), form the basis of marketing strategy"..... "Marketing strategy is developed at the business unit level. Within a given environment, marketing strategy deals essentially with the interplay of three forces known as the strategic 3 C's: the Customer, the Competition and the Corporation.</p> <p>A good marketing strategy should be characterized by a) clear market definition, b) a good match between corporate strengths and the needs of the market and c) superior performance, relative to the competition, in the key success factors of the business.</p> <p>Marketing strategy, in terms of these key constituents, must be defined as a n endeavour by a corporation to differentiate itself positively from its competitors, using its relative corporate strengths to better satisfy customer needs in a given environmental setting.</p> <p>Based on the interplay of the strategic three C's, formation of marketing strategy requires the following 4 decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where to compete. (definition of the market). One or various segments...</li> <li>2. How to compete, that is, it requires a means for competing .</li> <li>3. When to compete, that is, it requires timing of market entry.</li> </ol> <p>..... "In its strategic role, marketing focuses on a business's intentions in a market and the means and timing of realizing those intentions. The strategic role of marketing is quite different from marketing management which deals with developing, implementing and directing programs to achieve designated intentions. To clearly differentiate between marketing management and marketing in its new role , a term -strategic marketing.- has been coined to represent the latter".</p>
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Camara	1995	<p>"Strategy which defines the general principles for reaching objectives related to the specific SBU's and target markets. It contains the main directives of the marketing expenditure, marketing actions, and resource allocation in this area. It includes decisions like: segmentation strategies, positioning, communication. The definition of marketing strategies referring to the marketing plan : it is one of the sections which integrate the marketing plan and its own objective is to present an action plan which will be utilised to reach the marketing plan objectives."</p>
Bennet	1995	<p>" the process of planning and executing the conception , pricing , promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals."</p>
Sudharsan	1995	<p>"Marketing strategy creates pathways to a desirable future. The output form such marketing strategy analysis and choice ( or strategic marketing decision ) is a marketing strategy statement".</p>
Kotler	1997	<p>"the selection of target markets, the marketing mix and the marketing expenditure levels"..... "The marketing strategy is the way in which the marketing function organises its activities to achieve a profitable growth in sales at a marketing mix level" ..... "A marketing strategy may be defined as a plan ( usually long term) to achieve the organisation's objectives as follows..."</p> <p>a) By specifying what resources should be allocated to marketing.</p> <p>b) By specifying how these resources should be used to take advantage of opportunities which are expected to arise in the future.</p> <p>"a marketing strategy would consist of the following:</p> <p>a. Identifying markets and customers needs in those</p>

		<p>markets.</p> <p>b. Planning products which will satisfy the needs of these markets.</p> <p>c. Organising marketing resources , so as to match products with customers in the most efficient and effective way possible, ie, so as to maximise customer satisfaction and the organisations profits or sales revenue. (or whatever its objectives are !) at the same time”.</p>
Munuera & Rodriguez	1998	“ A methodology of analysis which pretends the knowledge of customers needs and the forecast of potential options ( ours and competitors) in order to gain competitive advantage in a long term ( sustainable ) and defendable”.
McDonald	1999	“the term “marketing strategy” reflects the company’s best opinion as to how it can most profitably apply its skills and resources to the marketplace. It is inevitable broad in scope. Marketing strategies are the means by which a company achieves its marketing objectives and are usually concerned with the 4 p’s”.
Jain	2000	“Strategic marketing means looking at the whole of a company’s portfolio of products and markets, and managing the portfolio to achieve the company’s overall goals”
Bradley	2003	A marketing strategy consists of an internationally integrated but externally focused set of choices about the organisation addresses its customers in the context of a competitive environment.

Keeping in mind all the definitions founded, I specially find interesting the one offered by *Hamper and Baugh in 1990*, which says: "although the definitions of the term vary (that is to say, its assumed that a certain flexibility exists in the term), this it is a consistent term (it should be based on generating future strategic solid



plans), appropriate group of principles through those that a company hopes (the term implies the uncertainty and the risk implicitly) to reach objectives long term related with the clients (the client becomes a strategic factor to keep in mind, although was not this way in the years 1960 or 1970's) and the objectives of profitability (profitability is also strategically important) , in a competitive environment in particular" (that is to say, it's assumed that each case should be analyzed under specific circumstances, being able to create general and model rules, which will have generic applications but non in particular).

After analyzing the definitions of the most well known authors, it is necessary to say that they could be grouped in two generic groups since all do not agree in the terms of the definitions, or approaches.

This classification includes a first group denominated "**classic**" approach, formed by those theoreticians who maintain a clear homogenization on the term, its definition and its characteristics. (*Druker 1973, Bradley 1991, Bennet 1995, Camara, 1995, Baker 1984, Walker, Boyd and Larrech  1992, Harper and Baugh 1990, Lambin 1977, Jain 2000, Kotler 1997, Aramario and Lambin 1991, Bradley 1991.*) It seems to be that this group agrees in its definitions existing only some simple adaptations over the time.

On the other hand the rest of authors diverge in their definitions although they differ not clearly with the previous ones, we could say that they are a little daring at the time of raising definitions relative to strategic marketing. This classification can be called as "**alternative**" since it is not in the same line that the previous one.

Considering these differences I have decided to separate two groups of thought in the area of strategic marketing, the one of "classic" and the other called the "alternative ones".

### **The classic line of thought:**

The classic line part of premises such as that strategic marketing is associated to processes (*Druker, 1973, Bradley 1991*) relative to the planning and the execution of the plans looking for, as a primary target, satisfying the needs of the individuals and the organizations clients (*Bennet 1995*). Strategic marketing has direct

relationship with the management of Strategic Business Units or SBU' s, (*Baker, 1984*), that is to say, that is managed at a level of business, ( non-corporate) and it communicates directly with the functional strategy of marketing, being defined by a set of basic principles which explain the main decisions and directives of performance of the company, it manages the cost level and budgets for marketing actions and its in charge to allocate resources on the basis of needs, as well as to integrate the strategy of marketing within the set of the marketing plan (*Camera, 1995*). Strategic Marketing also should define subjects related to the coordination of the marketing resources, as well as to the allocation of such referring to the importance of the competitive advantage (*Walter, Boyd and Larrech , 1992*). The term includes a set of principles which would have to be appropriate and to be oriented to the long term (*Harper & Baugh, 1990*), in this "appropriate" case is understood to make decisions guessed "right and coherent" for the attainment of given marketing objectives. This classic approach also makes reference to the "opportunities" (*Lambin, 1977*), these opportunities are those potential possibilities at which the company arrives at through an external analysis. Strategic Marketing should be centred in the integral management of products and markets with the aim to reach the objectives previously set (*Jain 2000*). The selection of the objective markets as well as a plan (generally in the long term) to arrive at the corporative objectives, allocating resources efficiently, without forgetting to consider detecting business opportunities and satisfying the customer needs (*Kotler, 1997*). Once again this approach presents a clear direction towards the planning systems. Strategic marketing separates and differentiates mainly from operative marketing in the related management with "time", since the strategic one is oriented to the attainment of long term objectives, the possible evolution of the markets and oriented to detected opportunities (*Aramario & Lambin, 1991*). The term is also clearly associated to the "objectives", related to the processes of strategic marketing (*Bradley, 1991*).

This type of thought is clearly focused to converge in a base of subjects such as:

- The objectives: Most of definitions contain this term. Sometimes they use the similar or substitute terms like "future", "goal", "path", "intentions" or "evolution". Strategic Marketing includes a high interest to know which the future will be, although it leaves from a base of logical uncertainty. It is

impossible to control all the elements and variables that influence in the discipline. It seems that the authors and the discipline is more comfortable determining or visualizing the road mentally toward which the company must go in a long term. So, we can determine that objectives and goals are key factors in Strategic Marketing. (Aaker & A., 2004; Cravens & W., 2000; Kotler et al., 1987; Lambin & Jean-Jacques, 1993; Wilson, S., Gilligan, & Colin, 1997)

- The profitability.

This it is an element which crowns the previously mentioned objectives, as well as the use of Strategic Analysis Techniques. The profitability, which is a purpose of the company (*Ansoff 1985*) appears in a systematic way in the the definitions. It is important to mention that from a Strategic Marketing point of view, the profitability not only has to be kept in mind but rather also other such factors as the market share, stability, the company, the coherence of the products etc. should be kept in mind. The profitability will show if strategic plans of marketing are aligned with the financial policies of the company.

- Analysis.

The analyzing activity seems also important in the the definitions of Strategic Marketing. (Boyd et al., 1998; Walker & C., 2003). It is vital as a first step be able to read, to evaluate, to gather data, to generate systems of information of marketing intelligence, which allow the marketing manager to decide the markets and the most attractive products for the company in the future. Without a good analysis of the marketing plan it doesn't exist the Strategic Marketing Plan Sturdiness(Lambin & Jean-Jacques, 2000), and then is not easy to build on it. The robustness of the Strategic Marketing Plans is determined by seven following aspects wich are: the opportunity, the validity, the feasibility, the coherence, the vulnerability, the flexibility, and the profitability. (*Day 1986*).

- The planning process.

Under a general rule, the word "planning"(Wilson et al., 1997) also appears continuously in the definitions. Authors talk about planning keeping in mind aspects like analysis and decisions and the actions which should be kept in mind to determine future products and markets, as well as attractiveness, market opportunities, etc. Some authors have developed investigations related to the

barriers in the marketing planning, ( *McDonald 1999*)., and consequently to the planning of Strategic Marketing.

- The concept relates to markets and products.

The strategic analysis of marketing makes reference to the future situation of products and markets, (Prahalad, K., Ramaswamy, & Venkat, 2004), that is to say that tries to guide the company by the correct path and where the company should be in the future. It is necessary to make reference to the work carried out by such authors as a *C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel ( 1993)* where they have contributed from a significant way to clarify the orientations of marketing managers. It is also important to define clearly what should be interpreted for product and for markets and this is important because marketing strategies are open to interpretations.(Piercy & Nigel, 2000). Traditional definitions can be broken by new variables that contribute to redefine markets and products. These variables can be technology, Internet, changing consumers attitudes, social changes, etc..

- Resource allocation.

Strategic Marketing explores and gives relevance to the importance of negotiating resources of any type. (Gale, T., Branch, & Ben, 1980). Financial, human, production, marketing budgets, etc. Such factors as the launch of new products, the selection of guarantees, the divestment or the diversification are directly related with the term Strategic Marketing. For the marketing manager it will be he very important to know and manage the economic flows and financial statments.

### **The "Alternative" line of thought**

The alternative line of thought is based on the analysis of the definitions founded. This approach tries to place strategic marketing also in other variables. Strategic marketing is related to knowing as it is the best opinion of the company to know, how to apply to the abilities and the resources in a given market, relating this to 4p' s of marketing mix and interrelating it with the attainment of objectives (*McDonald, 1999*). Other approaches talk about methodologies of analysis which are used to be able to anticipate future potentialities, (Prahalad et al., 2004) as much in our company as well as in our competitors with the purpose of gaining a

competitive advantage which is defensible in the long term (*Munuera & Rodriguez, 1998*). Other talk about a "Statement" and the importance to clarify systems to reach goals, being strategic marketing the base of the marketing plan, that is to say, of the planning of the marketing activities (*Hart & Stapleton, 1977*). The term is associated to new and innovating concepts such as the approach of 3 c' s (*Jain, 1993*) since they affect consumers, corporations and competition. The management of strategic marketing requires and forces managers to make decisions on the basis of:

1. Where to compete (that is to say, markets, following different criteria from classification such as territories, segments, styles of life, etc.)
2. How to compete, where a clear link to the actions of marketing (or operative marketing) and integrating this with the marketing strategy, and
3. When to compete, giving to understand that the moment also must be analyzed, being key at the time of obtaining the best results in the attainment of objectives related to 3 Cs' s. (*Jain, 1993*)

In this line of thought also the possibility (although usually it is not very common) which considers that strategic marketing does not have a unified definition (*Schnaars, 1991*) neither authors nor the professional community, since to a great extent of the cases the words can not agree with the uses that occur them in professional approaches. Strategic Marketing helps the company to orient itself thinking about "ways that lead us to a wished future" (*Sudharsan, 1995*).

### **Conclusions on both lines of thought:**

The "Classic" school of thought tends to unify and helps to clarify the understanding of the term. The important thing of this approach is to make the borders clear, for example, what is strategic marketing and what it is not, and this is what the classic line does. Also this approach helps to say where the matter begins and where it finishes, and to orient the marketing directors. The "classic ones", analyse what type of strategic marketing must lay the foundations, being very clear in the direction and use of the economic resources and in the scope of performance, which is circumscribed to the Strategic Business Units, (SBU's). This line clarifies the term and aids very well to establish clearer lines of work in the field of strategic marketing.

On the other hand the "alternative school" seems to be more manageable for the directors and professionals of marketing, since it incorporates new approaches and contributing with flexibility and dynamism to the term. The changing reality of the companies, as well as the less "pure" approach of the professionals at the time of defining this term causes that the "alternative" approach can get to enjoy great popularity.

The main conclusion is that both lines of definitions are clearly valid although this investigation will take as it bases first ( the "classic one") , to consider that it offers a greater solidity in his bases, as well as of a greater academic endorsement and a greater experience in the time.

## **2. INITIAL ASPECTS OF STRATEGIC MARKETING**

This section covers the aspects to take into account when analysing strategic marketing. Is really important to follow some key aspects or elements expressed like having a deep understanding of the market and its environment. (Drummond, Graeme, Ensor, John, & Marketing., 2001). In this case, the marketing manager will have to delimitate the relevant market, to develop market segmentation, to evaluate segments: size, growth of demand, and to develop a competition analysis based in the competitive positioning.

Also is important in strategic marketing to follow a deep internal analysis in order to see tangibles and intangible factors and resources. (Accountants., McShane, P., & Accountants., 1988). Both resources are really important to take into account in marketing strategies, some aspects are related to evaluating the importance of the intellectual capital, for example. The distinctive capacities and skills and organization routines (Prahalad et al., 2004) are also crucial in order to determine future strengths ( key term in marketing strategy) or weaknesses ( very widely used term too) and their impact on future business success. (Kotler 2000) The formulation of objectives and strategies oriented to market ( thinking in customers and competitors instead in manufacturing capacities, or in what the company can do) are also important and are help to define competitive advantage.

Strategic marketing holds different perspectives from those of marketing management. ( Jain 1993) Its salient features are described in the paragraphs that follow.

- Emphasis on Long Term implications. Strategic marketing decisions usually have far-reaching implications. In the words of one marketing strategist, strategic marketing is a commitment, not an act. These long term implications affect to the balance and the account of operation of the company of important way since they are connected to decisions key. For example, a company must decide where it will be in a term of 3 or 5 years. (Lambin et al., 1993)
- Corporate inputs. Strategic marketing decisions require inputs from 3 corporate aspects: corporate culture, corporate publics, and corporate resources. Corporate culture refers to the style, whims, fancies, traits, taboos, customs and rituals of top management that over time have to come to be accepted as intrinsic to the corporation. ( Strategies and marketing actions are affected directly by this factor). Corporate publics are the various stakeholders with an interest in the organization. For example, stakeholders, shareholders, employees, etc.. ( they impact directly or indirectly in the marketing strategy) and corporate resources which include the human, financial, physical and technological assets/ experience of the company, also key in the process of analysing possible weaknesses and strenghts. Corporate inputs set the degree of freedom a marketing strategist has in deciding which market to enter, which business to divest, which business to invest in , etc.... "The use of corporate wide inputs in formulating marketing strategy also helps to maximize overall benefits for the organization" ( Jain 1993).
- Varying roles for different Products / Markets. Strategic marketing starts from the premise that different products have varying roles in the company. For example product life cycle, each position in the life cycle requires a different strategy and affords different expectations. The lead in this regard was provided by the *Boston Consulting Group* , which developed a portfolio matrix in which products are positioned on a two-dimensional matrix of market share and growth share, both measured on a continuous scale from high to low. The portfolio matrix essentially has 2 properties: a) it ranks diverse business according to uniform criteria b) it provides a tool to balance company's resources by showing which businesses are likely be resource providers and which are resource users.

- Organizational level. Strategic marketing is conducted primarily at the business unit level in the organization. (Lambin et al., 1993; Larrâechâe & Jean-Claude, 1998)
- Relationship to finance. Strategic marketing decisions is closely related to the finance function. The importance of maintaining a close relationship between marketing and finance and for, that matter with other functional areas of a business is nothing new. ( Jain 1993)

### **3. FACTORS IN MARKETING STRATEGY**

Whatever strategy you ultimately choose must take into account several factors like:

The company's position in the market.

Factors like market share or sales volumen should be analysed , that is to say , every aspect which can contribuye to determine the level of of strenght of the company respecting customers and competitors. It is also to take into account the following factors:

The company's mission, policies, objectives and resources.

This shows the importance of the values in the foundation of the company, reason why it will center bound aspects to products and services as well as to marks and marketing strategies.(Abell, F., Hammond, & S., 1979; Mercer, David, & team., 1998)

Your competitors marketing strategies.

We should not only "know our company" but also the behavior of the "competitors' potential and the capacity to add and remove it in products, segments, markets, distribution channels, etc.. From my point of view one of the clearest indicators that a company thinks, and it acts with mentality of strategic marketing it is the level of depth that makes of its competitors. " Victorious warriors win the battle first and then they go fight... " (Jason, Macdonald, Kent, & Neupert, 2005). To get knowledge about the purchasing behaviours , motivations and perceptions of those who are the direct responsible of our products it will also be key when making



strategic decisions in marketing. They exist multitude of failures in marketing and more concretely in the formulation and implementation of the strategy due to a lack of data about the consumers (*Faith Popcorn, 1992*)

The projected life cycle stage.

The implications of the product life are key when defining the marketing strategy since they try to foresee (with a certain level of inaccuracy) which will be the evolution of the sales in the future. Offering a "simile" with the biological cycle of life. This aspect is also related with the visualization of future behaviors. One of the most interesting applications from my point of view is the one of determining the best moment or good moment in which the company should enter in the market keeping in mind the positions of the competitors, the level of uncertainty in the environment, etc.. This is an interesting possible future field of investigation.

General economic conditions in which you must do business.

Should we look for turbulent markets or should we escape from them? How they will affect us such questions as the "evolution of the rents in our consumers"? Is the company prepared at cultural level to enter in cost strategies? (Nicholas et al., 2003) can the company deal with certain levels of uncertainty? Answering to these questions will also help to establish appropriate parameters to formulate marketing strategies.

Also is recomendable to take into account, some requirements for marketing strategies like analysed by *Robert J Hamperand and L.Sue Baugh, 1990*) where the different marketing strategies must meet specific deadlines ( When is the objective to be accomplished?) The planning in time will be crucial to avoid falling in the trap of speaking of expected intentions or marketing actions whic do not get completed because are not time-related. The terms of time are key to define the degree of execution of the strategic plan of marketing. Marketing strategies must control performance. ( Are the proper steps being taken to achieve the objective?), They must must allocate resources directly and indirectly, ( Do we have sufficient resources to accomplish our objectives ?) (Dodge & L., 1995). This type of mistakes affect to the businesses in a regular way since sometimes the managers

cannot be able to assign resources in an appropriate way and keep balance in the marketing strategies. For example, it can be that "too optimistic managers" have a tendency to launch products to the market without the appropriate assignment of resources, while other too conservative do not invest enough in new developments just because they are too focused in profitability. Marketing strategies must be carefully timed. Taking into account seasonal factors, economic conditions, etc, (Jain & C., 1983)

#### **4. ELEMENTS OF MARKETING STRATEGY**

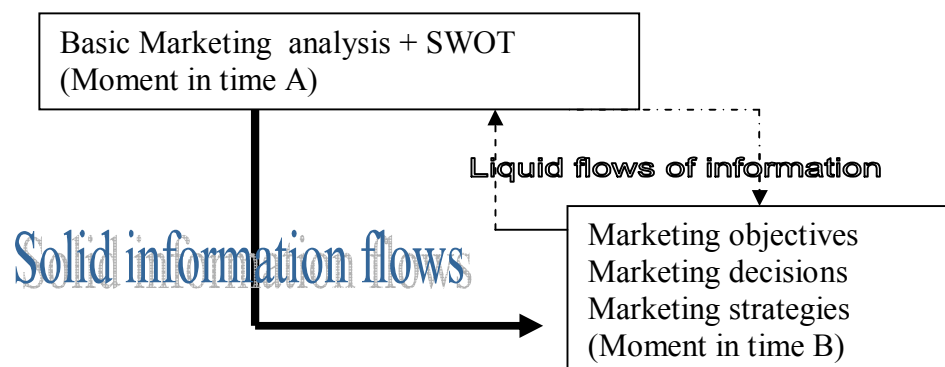
A marketing strategy is made of several interrelated elements. The first and most important is market selection. (Brown, A., Sommers, & E., 1982) which is directly related to choosing the markets to be served. Product planning includes the specific products the company sells., the makeup of the product line, and the design of individual offerings in the line. Another element is the distribution system: the wholesale and retail channels through which the product moves to the people who ultimately buy it and use it. The overall communications strategy, employs advertising to tell potential customers about the product through radio, television, direct mail, and public print and personal selling to deploy a sales force to call on potential customers, urge them to buy, and take orders. Finally , pricing, is an important element of any marketing program and is one of the most directed marketing elements in the creation of value for shareholders ( Doyle, 2000). The company must set the product prices that different classes of customers will pay and determine the margins or commissions to compensate agents, wholesalers , and retailers for moving to product to ultimate users.

We should also analyse the implications of the term, Strategic Market Management.  
(Aaker et al., 2004)

- The "External, market orientation" it must be kept in mind since the companies are guided to the market in a regular way. Reliable data in the strategic analysis has bigger possibilities of success and bigger chances of optimizing their results.
- These strategies should be "proactives", this is important for at least 2 reasons. First, one way to be sure of detecting and quickly reacting to major environmental changes is to participate in their creation. Second,

such environmental changes can be so significant that it is important to influence them when possible. (Aaker & A., 1998)

- Concern about input to the information system. An external orientation places demand on the supporting information system. The determination of what information is needed, how it can be obtained efficiently and effectively, and how it should best analyzed, processed, and stored can be the key to making the strategy development process effective. (Aaker, 1998). With no doubt it will be key the power to establish a good level of information for the company from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The management team should not fall in the problem of a lack of data or on the other side the problem of "too many data". The strategic decisions will require excellent quality data, which is the one that the company need to ensure getting the goals and contributes to reduce risk. It is necessary to mention that it can be equally bad a defect in the data like an excess of data.
- Online Analysis and Decision Making. There is also a trend away from using only the annual planning cycle and toward more of a continuous "on-line" system of information gathering, analysis and strategic decision making. The design of such systems is demanding and will require new methods and concepts. Although it is important at conceptual level to understand that a first step is "analysis"(Gilligan, Colin, Wilson, & S., 2003) and after the analysis the manager makes decisions, in fact and in the strategic marketing practice the manager never stops to analysing and deciding , it is a liquid process in which flows of information are exchanged.



The marketing strategy is based on an analysis of data in the moment A. These data they conclude in a moment of the time and they are transferred to the following phase which is that of Strategies of Marketing and it is developed in the moment B. I call to this flow of data "solid flow" because they are data which leave of an own investigation with a purpose guided to strategies. On the other hand, upgrades of data and modifications of aspects exist so much internal as external, which can be key to determine strategic actions in marketing. In this case the company will continue adding and incorporating any information that believes convenient on the planning process, that is to say that the manager will continue adding "liquid flows of information".

- The importance of developing and maintaining and entrepreneurial thrust is increasingly being recognized. The need for the development of organizational forms and strategic market management support systems that allows the firm to be responsive to opportunities.
- Considering multiple strategies. Strategies in marketing can be seen from many different angles and perspectives.
- Implementation. A growing recognition is that the implementation of the strategy is critical. The companies should be concerned as to whether the strategy fits the organization ( its structure, systems, people and culture)
- Other issues to take into consideration and which influence in strategic marketing are: the understanding of growth markets and Market Share, managing international realities, implicating empirical research, utilization of methodological developments, for example, portfolio models, experience curves, scenario analysis, market structure analysis and technological forecasting; and finally getting into interdisciplinary developments, including marketing, organizational behaviour, finance and accounting, economics, strategy. (Aaker et al., 2004)

Other key characteristics of strategic marketing reveals its nature and scope, like for example:

Market -Driven strategies (Daltas, Arthur, McDonald, & Philip, 1987; Piercy & Nigel, 2003), where competitive advantage is customer driven and is based on :

- 1) The degree of customer satisfaction achieved by a firm.

2) The extent to which the firm exceeds the customer satisfaction levels of the competition. Marketing strategy contributes to competitive advantage(Day & S., 1984) by combining the customer-influencing strategies of the business into an integrated array of market-focused actions. Strategic marketing includes the actions of the businesses aimed at providing customer satisfaction. Strategy development considers business scope, generic options, competitive advantage and organizational effectiveness. Customer targeting and assembling the market influencing components of the business are coordinated among the functions of the business. Strategic marketing provides the organization's link with the environment and emphasizes marketing as an integrated responsibility of the business rather than a specialized function. Achieving competitive advantage requires teamwork and functional integration. ( *Cravens, 1982*)

Environmental turbulence. The turbulence(Dobni & Brooke, 1998; Ennew et al., 1993) of the contemporary business environment places a special importance on strategic marketing. Strategic Marketing provides the expertise for environmental monitoring, for deciding what customer groups to serve, for product specifications, and for deciding which competitors to position against.

Customer satisfaction. The customer is strategic (Chiquan et al., 2004) and both terms related directly to strategic marketing.

Financial performance. The objective is to make strategic marketing decisions that contribute to the financial performance of the business. Return on investment replaces sales as the basis for guiding marketing decisions.(Huang & Hongtu, 2000)

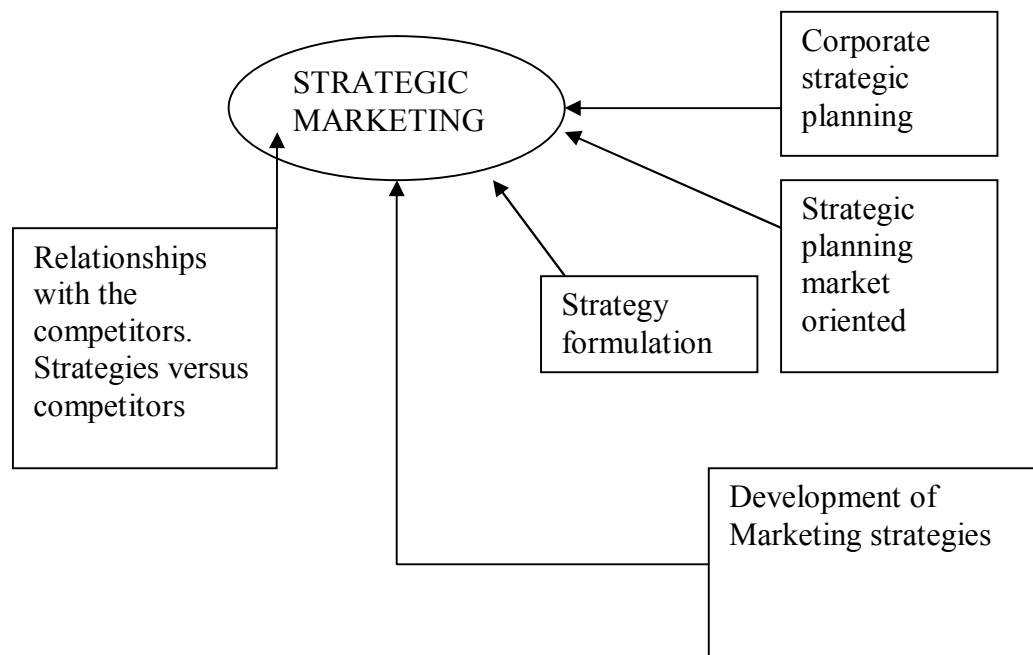
## **5. INTERSECTIONS OF STRATEGIC MARKETING WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES**

One of the problems that should be solved in this document is to define clearly the frontiers and borders of the term Strategic Marketing. This term understands mainly two sections of possible confusion since when speaking of strategic marketing we speak of two influence areas:

1. The area of Marketing.
2. The area of the strategy.

Of course, the "marketing strategy" is comprised between two worlds: one referring to strategy ( corporate or militar) and the other focused to the application in the

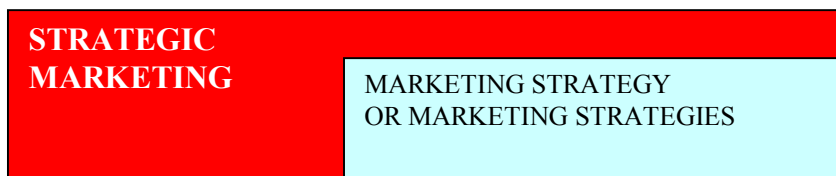
territory of marketing. It is easy, that companies they are among these two fields, since the strategic marketing is a coalition of both. In order to clarify which is the area of strategic marketing, is quite appropriate the following focus of *Kotler, 2000*.



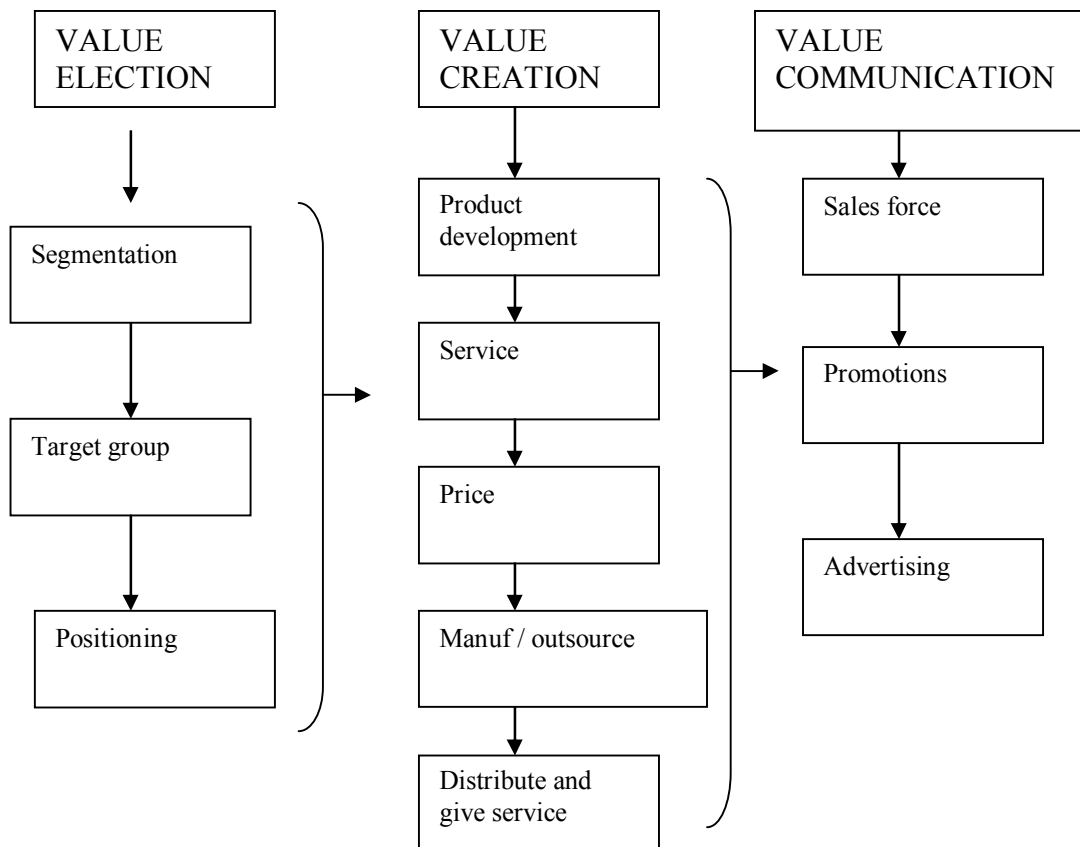
On one hand the author observes the importance of making *strategic decisions of marketing* from a perspective of the movements of the competitors understanding that these will influence in future decisions key on products or markets. On the other hand the corporate strategy will also exercise influence in the marketing strategy, (Aaker et al., 2004; Jain, C., Punj, & Girish, 1987; Kerin, A., Peterson, & A., 1983; Lambin et al., 1993) since the marketing strategy is negotiated at a level of Strategic Unit of Business, (SBU), while the company strategy is developed at corporate level. This means that the strategy usually incorporates weight in other such disciplines as the human resources, finance and manufacturing. Nevertheless and like it will be commented later on, both strategy can have tendency to make a mistake in the practice, since in some cases they outline some similarities. The "strategic planning oriented to the market"(Kotler, Philip, Andreasen, & R., 1991), meaning that this planning contributes in essence to the strategic marketing, not being the same "strategic marketing", reason why we will add other factors to the

same such and like it is expressed in the graph. The formulation of the strategy is also a part or element that it intervenes since in the process of strategic marketing it integrates several elements coming from the previous analysis so much external as internal. The strategy formulation helps to the marketing strategy because the marketing manager should help to develop decisions of coherent marketing. To sum up, the author, makes reference to the "development of the different marketing strategies", that is to say all those marketing decisions that take in reference to such elements as Product, Price, Promotion or Distribution, that is to say those that belong to the Mix.

Seeing this graph seems clear to separate the concept strategic marketing of the concept marketing strategy. The first one originates with the contribution of the previously mentioned elements where they are included the development of the different marketing strategies. Therefore the author understands that the term strategic marketing is wider than the term marketing strategies, defining this way a clear and concise limit. From my perspective this could be drawn as:



In this line, professor Kotler aims a clear intersection between tactics and strategy. Let's take a look at the following graph:

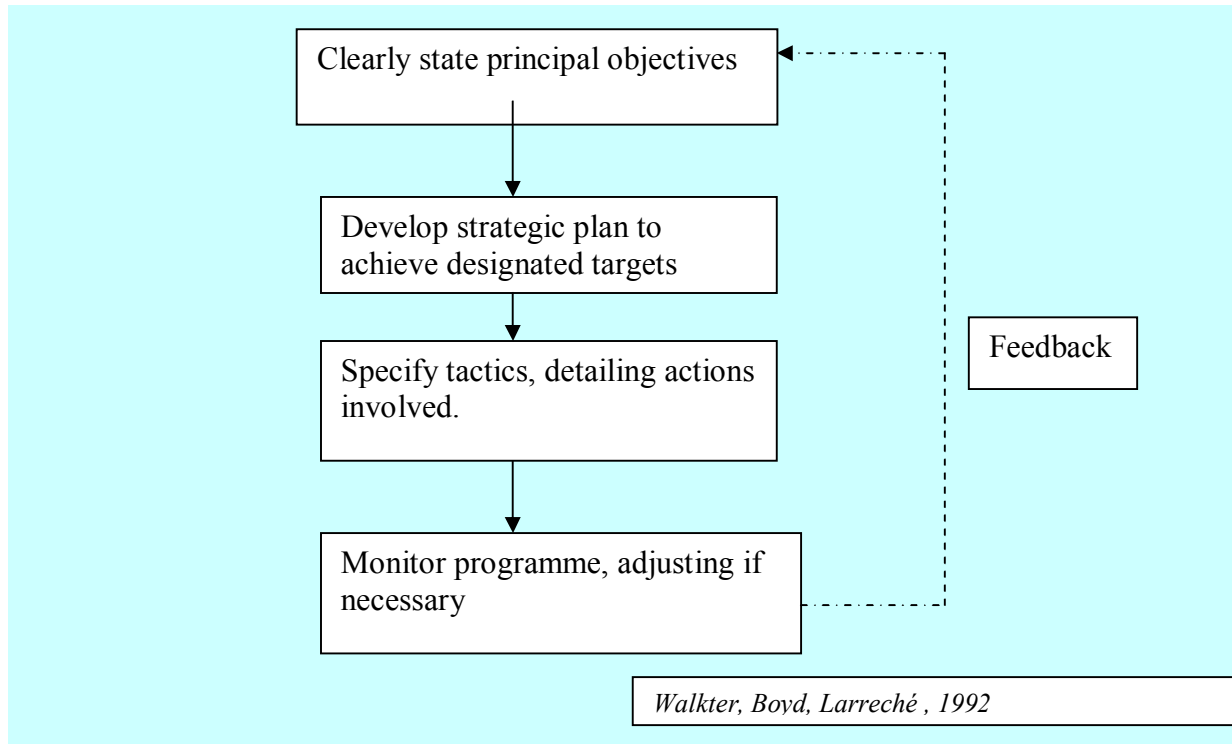


## Strategic marketing      Operational marketing

According to the previous diagram, it seems to be that the strategic marketing is guided to “decisions” to select among different alternatives or roads toward those that the company should walk. That selection type will be kept in mind from an optic of strategic marketing, deciding on if the manager should segment or not, and in case it does, to specify in what segments the company will be present. Also inside the strategic marketing other such aspects are included as the definition of the Target Group, based on the information picked up in previous studies. To conclude, to define a positioning strategy will be key to guarantee a certain personality to the marks and to create in this way a mental image in the consumer. On the other hand, the operational marketing is guided to create value, that is to say, as well as the strategic marketing choose a road, (Lambin et al., 2000; Walker et al., 2003), (that is to say it is as the steering wheel that guides toward where the company should go) the operative marketing develops value developing products, establishing prices, establishing levels of service and analyzing the needs of own production or of outsourcing. They will also be part of the marketing



operative, marketing activities that are guided to communicate the value (Day & S., 1990) that the company believes. This value will be communicated to clients eminently, through actions of advertising, promotions or through the sales department.



Such as its observed, it seems to be that it is important in a strategic process of marketing, to separate in several phases the complete process. The strategic marketing is understood most of the occasions as a process.(Dodson et al., 1988) This process begins with a clear specification of the objectives, because if the company does not know where it wants to go and why could be guided in an erroneous way. ( if you do not have a clear idea about where do you want to go, you take the risk of ending in the middle of nowhere).

This focus agrees with the one previously proposed by Kotler and called "value election". Once the objectives have been clearly specified, strategic plans will be developed with the purpose of completing the given and marked objectives, it is here when new intersections or confusions can arise between the tactics and the marketing strategy, although the pattern leaves us clear that the following tactical phase includes detailed plans of actions, concluding the process in adjustment plans and monitorization if it is necessary. The models talks about the importance of feedback. Those objectives and goals will be re-done and continuous way.

The best criterion for identifying marketing strategies.

Strategic marketing management shares several of these characteristics. In particular the development of sustainable competitive advantage is central to strategic marketing, and there is a very strong case that strategic marketing is crucial to adding value, ( Doyle, 2000). However, strategic marketing does not involve the entire organisation, nor does it cover the full range and depth of the organization's activities. The focus of strategic marketing is on products, markets and the management of relationships with customers, both actual and potential. (Ross Brennan, Paul Baines and Paul Garneau. 2003)

Major Differences between Strategic Marketing and Marketing Management, ( Jain 1993.)

<i>Point of difference</i>	<i>Strategic Marketing</i>	<i>Marketing Management</i>
Time frame	Long range, i.e. decisions have long term implications	Day to day, i.e. decisions have relevance in a given financial year
Orientation	Inductive and deductive	Deductive and analytical
Decision process	Primarily bottom-up	Mainly top-down
Relationship with environment	Environment considered ever changing and dynamic	Environment considered constant with occasional disturbances
Opportunity sensitivity	Ongoing to seek new opportunities	Ad hoc search for a new opportunity
Nature of job	Requires high degree of creativity and originality	Requires maturity, experience and control orientation
Leadership Style	Requires proactive perspective	Requires reactive perspective
Mission	Deals with what business to emphasize	Deals with running a delineated business

*These differences are relative, not opposite ends of a continuum*

The first differences to take into account in order to separate the terms Marketing Management and Strategic Marketing is to analyse their impact in time horizon. It looks like that the Marketing Management is oriented to short term, on the other side strategic marketing is oriented to mid and long term view. Here, the results have a clear and deep impact in the company balance sheet ( assets and liabilities). The orientation is also different because in Strategic Marketing is "inductive and deductive" and in Marketing Management is "deductive and analytical". The first one, makes the assumption that some variables are subject to interpretation, like for example SWOT analysis. On the other side, Marketing Management contains other elements easier to analyse and to measure, these elements can be quantified. This can make reference to the phase of strategic formulation, in which the objectives are setup, meanwhile the Marketing Management focus on how we will implement them.

Also the decision making process varies. Strategic Marketing is oriented under a Bottom up wher the strategy is given by tactics ( *Ries / Trout, 1988*). On the other side, the decision taking processes in Marketing Management are Top-Down just because in most cases belong to planning systems much more rationals. From this perspective, and taking into consideration that today's companies and their structures are becoming flat we should say that a focus in Strategic Marketing is more appropriate than a focus on Marketing Management due to the level of flexibility given by the Bottom-Up planning systems.

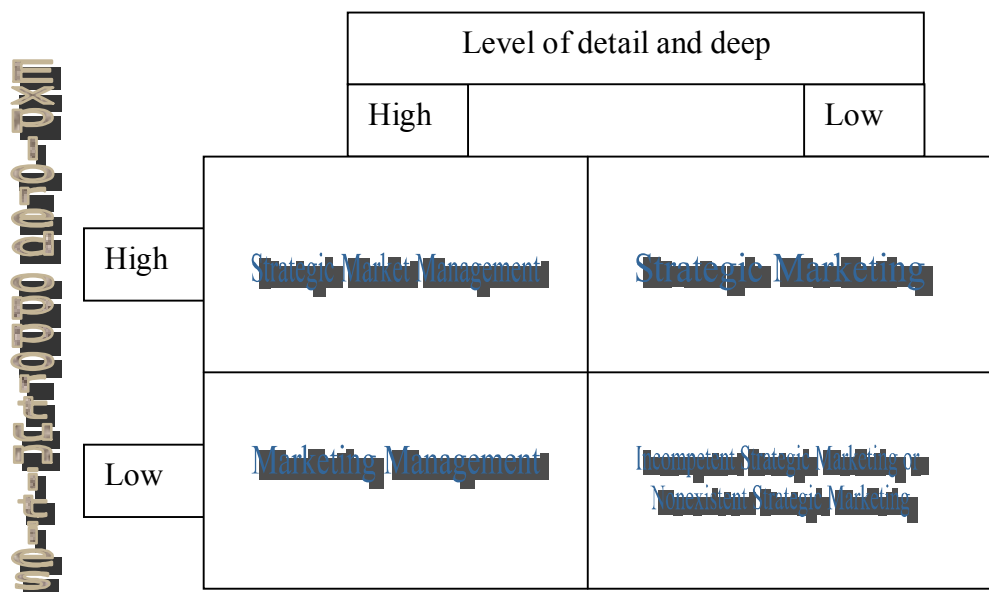
Taking into consideration the marketing environment, in Strategic Marketing, managers believe that change is always present, while Marketing Management approach sees change like something ocassional and punctual. So it could be really useful to know and measure the rate of change, that is to say, the probablity of dealing with new competitors in the market, the change of the market topography ( *Prahalad, Hamel, 1991*), price wars, price reductions, new products, also these analysis should be related to the market where we operate. Once this is determined, willl be easier to define and orient through Marketing Management or Strategic Marketing.

Taking into consideration the sensibility in front of opportunities which are given by both of them, we should say that strategic marketing develops a "permanent scanning system" about market and business opportunities. This is a managerial perspective which totally connects with the mentality of marketing. A lot of research has been done in order to determine the "strategic thinking process", (Aaker et al., 2004; Cravens et al., 2000; Igal, Karin, Kenneth, & Preiss,

2002; Jain et al., 1987; Lambin et al., 2000) and a common conclusion is that a good strategist are always seeking desperately new business and market opportunities. (Aaker et al., 2004; Piercy, Nigel, & Marketing., 1999; Prahalad et al., 2004)

On the contrary, the Marketing Management tries to identify and get connected with one or a few opportunities in order to test them "taylor made".

As we can see both ways are different, the first one is wider but less deep, while the second one is more thin but explored in a deeper way. See for example, next diagram:



This approach also ratifies the previous definition that Marketing Management is much more appraisable and more analytic than Strategic Marketing.

Strategic Marketing demands a high level of originality and flexibility since not all the elements they are controllable and appraisable. The key elements when formulating strategic diagnoses are clearly interrelated with the personal interpretation, ( Piercy, 1990) that is to say for example "business opportunities". Whenever a business opportunity is detected, we should specify them as "hypothetical opportunities", which can or cannot to be certain or true. They can or cannot to be completed, specifying alternative control systems of these opportunities like the impact matrix. (Kotler, 1997). On the other hand, the Marketing Management spreads to be less creative, contributing with a bigger maturity, (that is to say, part of premises made a will previously), experience, (

gives a lot of credibility to facts and last experiences), and it controls (that is to say, it measures, it quantifies, it calculates and it evaluates).

Keeping in mind the perspective of the leadership style is good to comment that Strategic Marketing should be "proactive" because it requires a constant "push", new perspectives, and it values new contributions. The new strategist should be "an activist" and develop radical changes in the company( *Hamel, 2000*), new ideas they can always be in any corner, so Strategic Marketing will always be scanning those areas and corners. To sum up I would say that when a Marketing Manager is thinking about launching a new product , and marketing management gives a lot of credibility to former data, forecasts, segment behaviour, etc... in this case marketing management asks "why?", and tries to support decisions in numbers and calculations. On the other side Strategic Marketing is open to new approaches and ideas, even if they are not related to clear and traditional products or markets... here the question is "why not"?

Marketing Management, is reactive, that is to say, goes with the assumption that the process creates and defines marketing actions, investments, etc..

### **5.1. Intersections between strategic marketing and corporate strategy**

The " approach" level for strategic decisions making is a function of the number of product-markets in which the firm operates and the degree to which activities between product-markets are interrelated. At one extreme, strategic decision making can be restricted to the highest levels, when a firm operates in a few, highly interrelated product-markets. In this situation, there is substantial overlap between corporate and marketing strategy. (*D.Sudharsan, 1995*). In fact, the only difference is that marketing strategy ( as we define it) focuses on a limited set of competitive advantages- advantages based on the performance of the marketing functions ( customers and channels) while corporate strategy must consider a wider set of business activities and relationships. There is a natural dilemma between the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to strategic decision making.

Evolution of Management Systems, by *David Aaker (1988)*, *Strategic Market Management p.10*

	Budgeting Control	/ Long range planning	Strategic Planning	Strategic Market Management
Management emphasis	Control deviations and manage complexity	Anticipate growth and manage complexity	Change and strategic thrust and capability	Cope with strategic surprises and fast- developing threats/ opportunities
Assumptions	The past repeats	Past trends will continue	New trends and discontinuities are predictable	Planning cycles inadequate to deal with rapid changes
The Process	Periodic	Periodic	Periodic	Real time
<i>Time Period associated with system</i>	From 1900s	From 1950s	From 1960s	From mid 1970s

After analyzing the previous table and focusing in the part that concerns us, Strategic Market Management, from an "emphasis" point of view in the Management, the marketing is subordinated to "strategic surprises" ( uncertainty exists) , and here it is necessary to associate the word surprise to unexpected effect. Here the manager associates to the word surprise the word "fast development", finding that the "speed in the changes" is also a critical factor. The assumptions of those that it leaves the Strategic Market Management are those that the cycles of planning can be inadequate due to the speed of the changes in the environment. It is here when models of "static planning" do not work adequately , but "ways of thinking and reactions" based on tendencies do. It is as "riding with the storm" ( Michaluk, G. 2002). The processes in this case must be developed in real-time, where such variables as " Time to market" it can be a key, let's see the example. Several web pages which sale the products as trips or books ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com) ) understand that the customer should be able to order through 3 clicks, that is to say that the client does not have to do any more than 3 clicks to finish a reservation. This demonstrates that the client will

leave the web page if the system doesn't allow him to make a quick and easy reservation.

## **5.2 How does strategic marketing fit with corporate strategy ?**

Corporate strategy is concerned with an organization's basic direction for the future. Its purpose, its ambitions, its resources and how it interacts with the world in which it operates. Every aspect of the organization plays a role in this strategy, its people, its finances, its production methods and its environment, including its customers, *Lynch, 2000, p.5.*

It is quite easy to confuse strategic marketing and corporate strategy. Both are concerned with big decisions, taking effect over a long period, having considerable resource implications being made by top managers. However, strategic marketing is concerned with a narrower range of decisions than strategic management and is focused at the level of business unit or competitive strategy, rather than at the corporate level. (*Paul Baines and Paul Garneau. 2003*)

### Differences between Corporate Strategy and Strategic Marketing.

- About the "scope", we should understand that corporate strategy determines, "which business should be in"? (*Walker, Boyd and Larreché, 1992*), for example, corporate development strategy, conglomerate diversification, vertical integration, acquisition and divestiture policy. Most of these decisions are based under the orientation of the whole company while things related to Business strategy decide about, "which product-markets should we be in within this business industry? Other like business development strategy or for example, concentric diversification. The role of Strategic Marketing here is that is related to Target Market definition, product-line depth and breadth, branding policies, product-market development plan or line extension and product elimination plans. As a general conclusion the scope in strategic marketing is narrower than in corporate strategy or business strategy.
- Taking into consideration items related to goals and objectives we should differentiate between corporate strategy where the corporate objectives are aggregated across businesses. See for example, revenue growth,

profitability, ROI, Earnings per share, contribution to other stakeholders. Taking into consideration business strategy these will be constrained by corporate goals. In this case objectives aggregated across product-market entries in the business unit.( Sales growth, New product or market growth, profitability, ROI, cash flow, strengthening bases for competitive advantage). Here the role of strategic marketing is constrained by corporate and business goals, objectives are defined also for a specific product market entry. ( Sales, market share, contribution margin, customer satisfaction). ( Jain 1993, Walker, Boyd and Larrech  , 1992).

- Taking into consideration the resource of allocation, the corporate strategy does among businesses in the corporate portfolio. Here the allocation is developed across functions shared by multiple businesses. (For example, Corporate R&D, Marketing Information Systems). On the contrary business strategy is among product-market entries in the business unit. In this case, allocation is done across functional departments within the business unit. Analysing the marketing strategy, allocation is done across the components of the marketing plan, for example, elements of the marketing mix. These elements are used for a specific product-market entry. It is also important to analyse the sources of competitive advantage.
- Taking into consideration, the sources of competitive advantage, and their origins in the corporate strategy, we could say that primarily through superior or corporate financial or human resources, more corporate R&D, better organizational processes or synergies relative to competitors across all industries in which the firm operates. About the business strategy, primarily through competitive strategy, business unit's competencies relative to competitors in its industry. And finally taking into consideration the role of marketing strategy, primarily through effective product positioning, superior on one or more components of the marketing mix relative to competitors within a specific product-market.
- Taking into consideration the source of synergy, and from a corporate strategy perspective we should talk about shared resources, technologies or functional competencies across businesses. From a business strategy perspective, shared resources ( including favourable customer image) or functional competencies across product-markets within an industry. And from a marketing strategy perspective a shared marketing resources, competencies or activities.



Other considerations to keep in mind are the differences that exist among guiding different functions or activities toward the manufacturing or toward the market.

Logically the approach to follow under a perspective of strategic marketing is the one of the market.(Piercy et al., 2003) It is important to analyze the repercussions that the following table developed by *Walker, Boy and Larrech  , (1992)* which speaks of Differences between Production-Oriented and Market-Oriented firms":

Business Activity Or Function	Product orientation	Market orientation
Product offering	Company sells what it wants to make, primary focus on technology, functional performance and cost.	Company makes what it can sell, primary focus on customer needs and market opportunities
Product line	Narrow, primary concern is to design standardized products so production runs will be long and unit costs minimized	Broad, primary concern is to customize offerings to meet the unique needs of various target segments
Pricing	Based on production and distribution costs	Based on perceived benefits provided
Research	Technical research, focus on product improvement and cost cutting in the production process.	Market research focus on identifying new opportunities and applying new technology to satisfy customer needs.
Packaging	Protection for the product designed to minimize costs	Designed for customer convenience, a promotional tool.
Credit	A necessary evil, minimize bad debt losses.	A customer service, a tool to facilitate customer purchase.
Promotion	Emphasis on product features, quality and price.	Emphasis on product benefits and ability to satisfy customers needs or solve problems

Strategic planning	Financial and/or long range planning systems, top down planning.	Strategic planning or strategic market management systems; more participation from lower levels of management.
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*Walker, Boy and Larreché, (1992)*

Referring to the relative repercussions to the product policy:

It is necessary to understand that the strategic marketing searches in a clear and visible way to place the activity of the company in such variables as the consumer's needs and market opportunities. The product line, as well as the brands will spread to be wide and appropriate to the consumer's likes. Doing this, maybe the company could enter in unproductiveness and reduce its scale economies due to the adaptation of the product line to the customers needs. . Nevertheless these unefficiencies will be balanced with a bigger unit margin which the consumer will be willing to pay for the added value that it reports him having a bigger adaptation from the product to their needs.

On the other hand the company that is not market oriented is the one which sells what it wants to manufacture, developing initially a focus on technology, functional performance and cost.

In reference to the product line:

A narrow and primary concern is to design standardized products so production runs will be long and unit costs minimized, while on the other hand the market orientation places emphasis on customization of the products in order to meet the unique needs of various target segments.

Referring to the price policy:

In a production orientation, pricing strategies are conducted under the costs analysis criteria. Factors like, industrial costs, and financial margins determine the selling price. On the other side a market oriented company will determine initially

through research what is the accepted price for the customers and then, it will try to adapt its own cost structure to the given price.

Referring to research activities:

Manufacturing oriented companies develop mainly technical research, they focus on product improvement and cost cutting in the production process. While in the orientation to the Market this it will be Market research focus on identifying new opportunities and applying new technology to satisfy customer needs.

Referring to the packaging:

If the company has a mentality toward production, then the main objective of the packaging is the one of protection for the product designed to minimize costs, while if the orientation of the firm goes in toward market orientation, then the packaging is mainly designed for customer convenience. The packaging is seen as a promotional tool in order to be better sold.

Referring to credit:

The companies focused in the production consider credit as a "necessary evil" in order to minimize bad debt losses. The companies focused in market orientation, believes that the customer service is a critical success factor and the credit reports are a tool to facilitate purchases.

Referring to the promotion:

The companies oriented to production, give a lot of importance to product features, under a physical consideration. ( Issues like durability, quality, colours, strength, materials, etc..)

On the other side, the companies which are market oriented, place a special interest in product benefits and ability to satisfy customers needs or solve their problems. ( Obviously this is a wider conception and is the right conception of marketing).

Referring to the strategic planning:

The companies oriented to production, develop accurate financial and/or long range planning systems, top down planning. While the companies market oriented search for a big number of business opportunities and scan in them deeply, ( strategic market management), in this case it exist a wider participation from lower levels of management.

## 8. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

After studying the concept, definitions and boundaries of strategic marketing and marketing strategy it is crucial to see that even most of authors agree about the term , it is not a static term and it changes after the time. We could say that the foundations of the strategic marketing orientations and thoughts are based on the same ideas and pathways but they need to be reoriented under a totally different world where business transactions are bigger, the competitiveness has a different nature, and the scale of the marketing strategies can be bigger and wider.

One of the most interesting findings is that strategic marketing consists in a process of thinking , analysing and acting under possible and potential changes. These changes lead us to uncertainty and risk, and it looks that these variables are not very deeply tested in front of the planning process, although still more research about this is required.

Business opportunities exist to develop further the research stream building on the initial work done through the literature review. A range of suitable topics are available for research consistent with the overall themes of the work in the rol of strategic marketing. These include:

- Further work to characterise the nature of individual practices in strategic marketing analysis and the context within which they are relevant.
- Research within an industry or industries understanding the factors affecting transition between strategic marketing theory and strategic implementation.
- Further work on the antecedents and consequences of the various strategic marketing practices identified.
- The role of IT in strategic marketing practice.
- The impact that some specific marketing strategies in terms of

positioning, competitive advantage, segmentation, etc... have in risk reduction and uncertainty related to profitability.

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