

COMPETITIVE AND ANTI-COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOR OF ORGANIZATIONS FROM A MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

Abstract. Managers of organizations have always sought the best decisions to achieve positive results in their activity.

From a marketing perspective, the adoption of managerial decisions requires careful analysis of the target market to discover and capitalize on opportunities, and knowledge of direct competitors that operate within that field of activity. Directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, organizations develop competitive behavior caused by the use of a range of methods, techniques and marketing strategies. It is desirable that this market-oriented behavior be adopted consciously focused on achieving performance targets and aiming at finally getting a competitive position on the relevant market. Through the implementation of marketing strategies can be achieved marketing objectives of the organization. But at the same time, increasing competition causes a strong competitive rivalry between these organizations and as a result, some of them will resort to anti-competitive behavior from a desire to gain market supremacy. These anti-competitive behavior seriously affects the competitive environment and consumers. This article, based on the literature in the field, shows the types of competitive and anti-competitive behavior and proposes a set of recommendations for the implementation of marketing strategies which will position the organization among the best performing competitors on the market.

Key words: competitive and anti-competitive behavior, competitive rivalry, marketing capabilities, marketing strategy

Менеджеры организаций всегда стремились принимать оптимальные решения для достижения положительных результатов в своей деятельности. С точки зрения маркетинга принятие управленческих решений требует тщательного анализа целевого рынка, чтобы обнаружить возможности и воспользоваться ими, и знания прямых конкурентов, которые работают в этой сфере деятельности. Прямо или косвенно, сознательно или бессознательно организации разрабатывают конкурентное поведение, вызванное использованием ряда методов, приёмов и маркетинговых стратегий. Желательно, чтобы этот рынок, ориентированный на поведение, был принят сознательно и направлен на достижение целевых показателей и конкурентное положение на соответствующем рынке. Благодаря реализации маркетинговых стратегий, могут быть достигнуты маркетинговые цели организации. Но в то же время рост конкуренции заставляет сильных конкурентов соперничать с этими организациями, и в результате некоторые из них будут прибегать к антиконкурентным действиям из-за желания получить рыночное превосходство. Это антиконкурентное поведение seriously влияет на конкурентную среду и потребителей. В этой статье на основе литературы в данной области показаны типы конкурентных и антиконкурентных действий и предложен ряд рекомендаций для реализации маркетинговых стратегий, которые будут позиционировать организацию среди самых быстрых конкурентов на рынке.

Ключевые слова: конкурентоспособность и антиконкурентное поведение, конкурентное соперничество, маркетинговые возможности, маркетинговая стратегия.

Manifested in the context of strong competition among organizations competing in the same market segment, managers with the organization's marketers must define a conceptual framework between the marketing and business performance. Morgan [3] describes the conceptual framework of the necessary marketing abilities which the organization uses towards the implementation of marketing decisions and obtains an advantageous competitive position.

To describe the marketing abilities needed by the organization, Morgan [3] suggests the development of four distinct categories: 1) *dynamic* — market learning, resource reconfiguration, capability enhancement; 2) *architectural* — strategic market planning, marketing strategy implementation; 3) *cross-functional* — brand management, CRM, new product development; 4) *specialized* — product management, pricing management, channel management, marketing communications, selling, market research.

Therefore, the competitive behavior involves adapting the organization to the competitive environment conscious actions and manifestations with the clear aim to compete and gain a dominant position in the market. The existence of direct competitors, their expression through the adoption of marketing strategies assumes a competitive rivalry. In fact, competition is synonymous with competitive rivalry. This term clearly describes what is happening in every field of activity in which competitors seek to gain an important position in the market. According to Porter [6], competitive rivalry is a strong competitive power manifested through a series of actions, specific marketing strategies and tactics designed to lead to obtaining favorable position in the reference market. The number and size of competitors affects the intensity of competition in the sense that a large number of competitors in a market increases the rivalry between them. But even in a situation where there is a smaller number competitors of approximately equal forces, competitive rivalry will manifest as strong as they will try a series of strategies and tactics to gain a better competitive position. This orientation, clearly determined to eliminate other competitors often resorting to anti-competitive behavior, is marked by a lack of loyalty and fairness and breach of legislation on competition. To determine the ability of the organization we should use a thorough comparative analysis of what the organization possesses compared to other direct competitors. Once known strengths of its competitors, managers will focus on developing the

ability to learn faster than other competitors and turn this into a real competitive advantage. This competitive advantage should be seen "as a superior *marketplace position* that captures the provision of superior customer value and/or the achievement of lower relative costs, which results in market share dominance and superior financial performance".

Benefic competition rather oriented towards consumer satisfaction and competitive rivalry oriented towards eliminating direct competitors active on the same market segment will cause marketers to think strategically and implement the best marketing strategies. But there are not good strategies, or less good strategies. There are, however, wish to compete and win the best position on the market through marketing strategies.

As can be seen, organizations with a competitive behavior will be guided by a simple relationship: marketing strategy adopted after a careful analysis of the competitive environment and the needs of target consumers will pursue the organization's financial performance materialized, thus specific tactics most effective marketing mix. Choosing the most effective marketing tactics can be considered competitive behavior oriented both to the differentiation from other competitors as well as toward the satisfaction and loyalty of consumers. Therefore, it is recommended that these marketing decisions should be made by the team of experts of the organization and based on a careful analysis of market opportunities. Both the marketing department and the sales department have a significant role in the development of competitive behavior because they both collaborate and are involved in programs of market oriented activities.

It may be considered that there is a strong link between marketing strategy adopted and market orientation of the organization, which involves on the one hand, the focus on meeting the needs of consumers and, on the other hand, knowledge of competitors. The authors Morgan and Strong [4], Kohli and Jaworski [2], Narver and Slater [5] believe that market orientation organization is characterized by the following features: 1) understanding the needs of current and potential customers; 2) providing consumers value based on competencies; 3) Identification of direct competitors and knowing their strengths; 4) exploitation of business opportunities and avoid existing threats.

The purpose of developing a competitive or anti-competitive behavior is to gain a strong competitive position in the relevant market. But how to achieve this competitive position is a question mark for managers of organizations. It is considered that there are two steps for obtaining the competitive position [1]: 1) establishing the initial market offering in the minds of consumers; 2) differentiating the market offering from competitors in the minds of consumers.

In practice, these rules of manifestation of the competitive behavior are not always respected by the organization.

From the desire to achieve immediate gains and dominate, market managers often resort to anti-competitive behavior. As the name suggests this type of behavior, it seriously harms the competitive environment. In accordance with the EU Treaty on competition policy, anti-competitive behavior can be described by resorting to acts or facts which have the effect of: 1) restriction of competition — the removal of elements that define the competitive environment; 2) impeding competition — blocking market entry of competitors; 3) distortion of competition — any manifestation that harms consumer welfare and the society in general.

As observed in practice, often from the desire to gain significant profits and to dominate the market, competitors resort to methods and techniques that are not characterized by a competitive behavior based on loyalty and fair play. This type of behavior known as anti-competitive behavior has distinctive characteristics.

The success of a business depends on many factors, but it is obvious that one of them, perhaps the most significant is competition. Knowledge of competitors on the market, rather than simply identifying them, involves identifying the type of competitive or anti-competitive behavior developed by other organizations. Organization which carries out such an analysis, in its turn develops a certain type of competitive or anti-competitive behavior. Beneficial to consumers first, and for the other competitors, secondly, it is considered when all marketing activities are based on competitive behavior. Managers and marketers must clearly define the aims of the competition level. The desire to win should be supported by well-defined marketing activities and adopting obvious competitive behavior. Most marketing decisions will be made in compliance with this rule on competition. However, there are also forms of illegal competition practiced by other competitors who want to win at any cost. Therefore, the organization must develop their abilities in the competitive marketing materialized through the actions for the identification and analysis of direct competitors by developing and implementing competitive marketing strategies. It should be emphasized that, from the consumer perspective, an organization involved in the competitive fight deliberately oriented to adopting competitive behavior is much more appreciated in relation to these other organizations with rivals' image. Involvement in social responsibility actions and communication actions will build in time the image of a responsible company with strong competitiveness.

The organization must know their managerial and marketing abilities and evaluate them compared to those of its competitors. It is recommended that all marketing strategies be adopted after careful analysis of the market and objectives. Any marketing decision made will take into account the actions of other competitors. Marketing abilities will be maximized, particularly in the implementation of competitive

strategies that will lead to business performance. Therefore, analysis of competitors and adopting competitive strategies are some of the most important competitive behavior specific actions assumed by organization. Training of specialists in the field of competition becomes a necessity for the marketing department. These together with the marketers will make the most appropriate decisions, and will capitalize on the abilities and market advantages of the organization. For managers, knowing how competitors react to marketing strategies is necessary. They should not forget that many of the marketing actions initiated by the organizations are visible to consumers.

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