

Management Levels & Types. Go to the web site of Stephenville, Texas at www.ci.stephenville.tx.us. Scroll down to the link for the Organizational Chart of the city government. Determine who would be considered 1) top management, 2) middle management, 3) first-level management. Find the position & name of 1 person for each level of government (top, middle, first-level). Find the website to a city near you and link to the organizational chart. Using Stephenville, Texas as a model, create an organizational chart for your chosen community. Find the position and name of 1 person for each level of government for the town.

External Environment. Select a well-known corporation and to its Web site. Download (or read online) its latest annual report. What external factors have affected the company in the past year? How have those factors affected the company financially? How has the company responded to those factors? (Think about BP Oil)

Advocacy Groups. Go to the web site of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), www.peta.org. Answer the following questions: 1) What are PETA's goals? 2) What types of companies might PETA affect politically? 3) Do you believe in PETA's actions? Why or why not? 4) How far should advocacy groups go in promoting their causes? 5) How should business organizations react to these groups?

Vision and/or Mission Statements. Go to the various Web sites of five well-known corporations and find their vision and/or mission statements.

Respond to the following:

1. How does each company set its mission statement? Is it: 1) targeting? 2) common-enemy? 3) role-model? 4) internal-transformation?
2. What elements of each mission lead to this conclusion?
3. Be sure to include the name of each corporation and the Web site address.

Suggested format:

Name of company

Web address

Main business purpose

Answers to Items 1 & 2

What to Do to Plan for “What if...”

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is for students to engage in scenario planning. It is an exercise in dealing with adversity and learning how to make tradeoffs. As students examine the data presented in the case, the challenge for them will be to make distinctions between safe assumptions, risky presumptions, and factual data. In the process, students should clearly define their objectives and their strategy for accomplishing them.

Setting it up: Put students into teams of four or five and have them imagine that they are the management team for a major regional amusement park (like Six Flags, Cedar Point, or Paramount). As such, they should create a plan that addresses the issues brought forth in the case. About ten minutes after the start, encourage the teams to interact by asking for feedback from one another, as suggested by question #2.

Questions

1. **As a team, put together initial best-case and worst-case scenarios for the amusement park in the situation described above.**
2. **Check for consistency and plausibility of facts in each of your team’s scenarios. You may wish to test your preliminary scenarios by sharing them other teams in the class and asking for feedback.**
3. **Write the final scenarios for the amusement plan and develop one contingency plan for each.**

In approaching the facts of this case, the most important pending development is the change to the school calendar. If the target market is largely unavailable during a park’s standard operating season (summer), then they are going to have to institute drastic makeovers to their operations. That one change to the external environment will affect the marketing strategy – including targeting, pricing, and product/ service strategies, the recruitment strategy, and the cash flow situation. In fact, for the worst-case scenario, teams may choose to harvest the business and enter an alternative category.

Example best-case scenario:

In ten years, the park operates much the same as it does now. Even though the target audience, teens and children, is only available during a handful of two-week breaks throughout the year, they still enjoy coming to major amusement facilities. Instead of being open every day during the summer, every evening during the holiday season, and on some weekends in the spring and fall, the park will open every day during each two-week school vacation, every weekend during the year, and every evening during the holiday season. It will also consider opening for after school hours a few times a week. Though it no longer serves as a full-time summer job, teens and older citizens might view it as the perfect part-time or weekend job, so the park avoids having to dole out the benefits demanded by traditional work forces.

Example best-case contingency plan:

Since the population is aging, and because thrill rides aren’t as popular during cold weather, the park will decrease spending on those rides and offer new attractions. For older customers, the park will develop more stage shows, and dedicate a large portion of land to recreate natural park settings including lagoons, walking and bicycle paths, reading benches, and gardens. To maintain relevance with its younger audience, the park will add an extreme sports facility, virtual-reality and Internet gaming centers, and indoor thrill rides (think Disney’s Space Mountain). Parks owned by movie studios (e.g., Paramount) might choose to add cinemas to their mix. In order to attract part-time teen workers and older workers, wages will have to be slightly increased or a part-time benefits package (like Starbucks’) will be offered.

Example worst-case scenario:

Because of scheduling changes, tourist attendance will shrink in proportion with the number of summer vacation days that are lost. As the younger crowd stays away, thrill rides lose popularity and cause a major decrease in return on investment. Since older customers become the leading patrons of the park, entry prices must be reduced. The practice of hiring teens to run the operations on the grounds is no longer feasible, and

operating costs increase with the shift to hiring adult full-time workers. The amusement park, as we know it today, becomes a losing business proposition and must find a new value proposition.

Example worst-case contingency plan:

Operating days and hours will be drastically reduced and the product/service mix will be altered significantly or entirely reproduced. The park will have to offer alternative forms of entertainment, preferably finding a mix that appeals to both ends of the age spectrum. Recruiting strategy will have to change considerably, too. Perhaps the park will morph into an entertainment supercenter that features movies, stage shows, interactive and virtual reality gaming, and some forms of outdoor recreation. If that marketing research shows that such a change would not be profitable, the park might lobby the state for a gambling license and take advantage of its huge land resources to operate a casino resort. The state might accept on account of the new facility's ability to replace lost tax revenue and increase employment among the aging population.