

Jonathan Gander

## ***Strategic Analysis: A Creative and Cultural Industries Perspective***

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The book *Strategic Analysis: A Creative and Cultural Industries Perspective* by Jonathan Gander aims to demonstrate how the practice of strategic thinking and analysis can and should be applied by managers working in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI). Through a range of competitive scenarios and case studies in CCI, the book provides a clear series of steps through which to identify and tackle strategic issues facing an enterprise and the wider CCI sector.

The book is divided into 6 chapters dealing with the ways how organizations that produce creative and cultural products with symbolic meaning analyse their current competitive situation and make decisions about possible future strategic directions.

The first chapter of the book entitled *Competing in the creative and cultural industries* discusses what it means to be strategic in the CCI and argues that having a strategy and adopting a competitive approach presents a significant achievement for organizations in the CCI. The author is also aware that constructing and following a strategy is an outcome that requires a considerable investment of time and thought, economic as well as reputational resources, which may eventually prevent organizations in CCI from seeking a strategy that will give them a competitive advantage. The chapter concludes with a scheme to divide the various sectors that make up the CCI into three groupings of enterprises: those providing an ephemeral experience, those providing either one-off non-scalable products or services, and those creating enduring reproducible products or services. The analysis of strategic considerations, approaches and applications is further organized using these three groups.

The second chapter *Diagnosing the problem and formulating a response* introduces some of the recommended models and frameworks that can

be used to analyse a company's current competitive position to diagnose the strategic problem, challenge or opportunity. This includes analysis of the current strategic position of the company using three interconnected levels of analysis: the macro-environment, the industry and the firm. In the following chapters, these analytical perspectives and frameworks were applied to different sectors within the CCI.

Each of the next three chapters took one grouping of creative/cultural organizations to identify the critical success factors that shape competition within them. To examine aspects of competition and to illustrate how the strategizing tools introduced in Chapter 2 can be applied, each chapter used different case studies. By applying these diagnostic tools and frameworks, the author demonstrated how such diagnosis might be applied and lead to a range of strategic directions applicable for each grouping. The third chapter *Strategizing for experience providers* deals with the CCI firms involved in designing, delivering and hosting experiences such as popular music gigs and classical performances, ballet and contemporary dance performances, opera and musicals, exhibitions, festivals and art shows. What characterizes them is that they are involved in making something happen, at a particular place and time, not making a thing that can be distributed. *Strategizing for bespoke singularities/one-offs* is the title of the fourth chapter which investigates strategies for organizations producing products and services that are singular in character and not designed for mass production. Those organizations include three linked types of creative practice: 1. Providers of services such as design agencies, architectural practices and marketing firms; 2. Visual artists; and 3. Couture fashion designers. The fifth chapter *Strategizing for the makers of reproducible products* includes strategies for organizations that make popular music, films, TV and radio programmes, digital games, high street fashions and accessories, photographic prints, books and magazines. Those are highly reproducible cultural products intended for mass reproduction and distribution. A range of possible strategic directions for organizations operating in these three areas were presented in each chapter.

The sixth chapter *Crafting a strategy* considers how decisions are made, how strategic directions might be crafted, and how the proposed bases of competitive advantage might be evaluated and selected. For the

strategy to be effectively crafted by the organization through a reflective process of thinking and acting, organizations need to, according to the author, reject the view that strategy is the province of the senior management team and encourage all employees to 'own' the strategy and therefore seek to craft it rather than merely follow it. To develop a concise strategy, organizations must clearly indicate what problems are being solved, how and why. It is necessary to have a structured set of diagnostic frameworks and agreed competitive principles.

The concluding chapter summarizes the issues analysed in this book and considers how the relationships within the organization and between the organization and its customers/community can give the organization a competitive advantage and help identify strategic directions that could help the organization thrive. Three strategic directions were presented in this chapter: *co-creation*, the situation when users are involved in creating, not just consuming; *crowdfunding*, funding model for creative and cultural production projects; *sharing economy*, collaborative consumption, and *behind-the-scenes approach*, which means establishing a link between the creator, the product and oneself. Although the creative and cultural organizations are highly distinctive in the way they operate, make decisions, design and deliver their products and services, this, according to the author, does not alter the value of established concepts and frameworks for thinking and acting strategically.

This book serves as a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners in the creative sector interested in how organizations in the CCI sector might apply strategic thinking to the way they analyse their current competitive situation and make decisions about possible future strategic directions.

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