

ASSIGNMENT TYPE	Individual assignment: Reflection
WEIGHTING	30%
WORD COUNT	2000–2500 words; 6–9 pages
FORMAT	Report
LEARNING OUTCOMES	LO1, 2, 4

OVERVIEW

This assignment is an opportunity for you to investigate and consider how operations management relates to the strategic objectives of the organisation, as translated through an operations strategy.

TOPIC

Identify an organisation with which you are familiar and address the following points by providing your answer immediately after each subheading.

Introduction: Identify the organisation, outlining what type of organisation it is (industry, products/services they supply etc.) and indicate why you have chosen it. If you do not wish to identify the organisation for confidential reasons, then call it 'Organisation X'.

Part A: How well is the company's present strategy working? Can you prove or quantify your answer?

Part B: Identify the company's resource strengths and weaknesses. What effect are these strengths and weaknesses having on the organisation? A resource strength represents a competitive asset and is a big determinant of its competitiveness and ability to succeed in the marketplace (such as product range or warehouse location). A resource weakness is something that is holding the company back and possibly contributing to failure in the marketplace (such as location or staff training).

Part C: Analyse (fully) the key value activities for the organisation. A key value activity in this sense may be supply chain management, research and development, production, distribution, sales and marketing, and customer service. Which activities does the organisation do well? For each of the key value activities, indicate whether it is a competence (something an organisation has learned to perform well), a core competence (a competitively important activity that a company performs better than other internal activities) or a distinctive competence (a competitively valuable activity that an organisation performs better than its rivals), and explain why.

Part D: Analyse (fully) the competitive advantage of the resource strengths by addressing the following four questions:

1. Is the resource strength unique in the sense that it is difficult to imitate?
2. Is the resource strength durable?

3. Is the resource strength superior competitively?
4. Can the different resource strengths and competitive capabilities of rivals trump the resource strengths (of your company)?

You will have to prove or quantify your responses.

Part E: Identify and analyse the resources that are not being used to the fullest extent. Does the organisation hope to gain competitive advantage by underutilising resources or using resources that are redundant?

(Note: Examples of resources that fit into this category might be using teams that do not build teamwork or staff that do not follow documented processes. Redundant resources are resources that have not been maintained at required operating levels, such as out-of-date computer systems that are slow and do not provide required information. I used to ask for 'redundant' resources and some students just said, 'We do not have any'. So, you can treat this part by describing underutilised resources or 'redundant' resources, but you must have something to describe.)

Part F: Critically comment (fully) on how your organisation manages the primary value-adding activities within the value chain. Can the proficient performance of these value chain activities translate into strategic (competitive long-term) advantage?

Part G: Analyse the challenges for the organisation from a strategic operations perspective.

PRESENTATION OF ANALYSIS

Address each part as a subheading and provide your answer immediately below each subheading.

GUIDANCE

This is an exercise to evaluate an organisation's resources and competitive position.

- We expect 6–9 pages of extremely high-quality analysis. Ten pages or more of response is far too much.
- Select an organisation that you are familiar with, and that you are able to write about (no confidentiality issues etc.). The 'organisation' can be for-profit, non-profit, a church, a society, a university or something else.
- If the chosen organisation is large and diverse, you could choose a relevant business unit. So, instead of analysing Toyota world-wide operations, for instance, you might choose a franchise dealer in your home town. The idea is for there to be a clear strategic focus as many organisations have varying strategies in different areas. The clearer the process, the better.
- There is no boundary requirement about the chosen organisation, only that it should be specific enough to permit meaningful analysis but not so narrow that analysis becomes trivial. For instance, 'Fonterra's manufacturing operations' is too wide; whereas, 'moving one cow from paddock A to paddock B' is (possibly) too narrow!
- Value activities are activities that add value from a customer perspective. Examine these activities from within the organisation and where they interact with customers and suppliers. The value chain is the complete set of these activities that collectively adds value from a customer perspective.
- You should critically discuss your answers. For example, if you answered Part D 'Analyse the competitive power of resource strengths' with 'Yes, Yes, Yes, No' then you can expect zero marks. You may have answered the questions literally but there is no depth of analysis.
- There is no 'model answer' and definitely no 'correct answer'. Any answers (or partial answers) copied from the internet or another source will be severely penalised. We want you to think about the organisation (that you choose) and come up with your assessment. We want your own assessment and not the assessment prepared by some other person. There is absolutely no requirement to search the internet — in fact, that would

be a detrimental step if you want to score well.

Take your time with this individual assignment; if you get it right then you are well on the way to understanding operations and supply chain management.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

	A RANGE / (80% +)	B RANGE / (65–79.99%)	C RANGE / (50–64.99%)	D–E RANGE / (0–49.99%)
OVERALL DESCRIPTOR	Addresses all of the criteria and marking factors to an accomplished level of achievement.	Addresses all of the criteria and marking factors to a good/very good level of accomplishment, but with scope for further development.	Addresses most of the criteria and marking factors to a satisfactory/good level of accomplishment, but with scope for considerable further development.	Does not address the criteria and marking factors to a satisfactory level of accomplishment.
<i>MARKING FACTORS</i>				
PART A: COMPANY'S PRESENT STRATEGY (WEIGHTING 10%)	<p>The answer presents the company's strategy in excellent depth and detail and explains whether it is working. The answer fully supports this with quantifiable proof.</p> <p>The answer does not require a fully detailed strategic description — it is more about an analysis of how well it is working and how you arrived at that conclusion.</p>	<p>The answer presents the company's strategy in sufficient detail to say whether or not it is working. The answer supports this view with quantifiable proof.</p> <p>The answer does not require a fully detailed strategic description — it is more about an analysis of how well it is working and how you arrived at that conclusion.</p>	<p>The answer attempts to say whether or not the strategy is working.</p> <p>The answer does not require a fully detailed strategic description — it is more about an analysis of how well it is working and how you arrived at that conclusion.</p>	<p>It is not clear how the strategy is working.</p> <p>The answer does not require a fully detailed strategic description — it is more about an analysis of how well it is working and how you arrived at that conclusion.</p>
PART B: RESOURCE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES (WEIGHTING 10%)	<p>Report identifies and fully analyses significant resource strengths and significant resource weaknesses. The report fully evaluates the effect that these have on the company's performance.</p> <p>These are usually not easy to find and will require some deep thinking.</p>	<p>Report identifies and fully analyses resource strengths and resource weaknesses. The report evaluates the effect that these have on the company's performance.</p> <p>These are usually not easy to find and will require some deep thinking.</p>	<p>Report identifies and analyses resource strengths and resource weaknesses. The report considers the effect that these have on the company's performance.</p>	<p>Report fails to identify and analyse resource strengths and resource weaknesses.</p> <p>The analysis is superficial.</p>
PART C: KEY VALUE ACTIVITIES (WEIGHTING 20%)	<p>Activities clearly classified (competence, core competence or distinctive competence) and classification is fully justified. The analysis of key value activities is superb.</p>	<p>Activities classified (competence, core competence or distinctive competence) and classification is justified. You analyse key value activities well.</p>	<p>Activities attempted to be classified (competence, core competence or distinctive competence) and classification justification started. The analysis of key value activities is incomplete.</p>	<p>Activities somewhat classified (competence, core competence or distinctive competence). However, the justification needs more work.</p>
PART D: COMPETITIVE POWER OF THE RESOURCE STRENGTHS (WEIGHTING 20%) This relates back to Part B above which identified the resource strengths	<p>The answer fully analyses each resource strength across the four points and you have proven and/or quantified each point in a superb manner. The competitive power of the resource strengths is emphasised.</p>	<p>The answer analyses each resource strength across the four points and you have proven and/or quantified each point. The competitive power of the resource strengths is evident.</p>	<p>The answer looks at each resource strength and you have attempted to prove and/or quantify each one. The competitive power of the resource strengths is not evident.</p>	<p>The answer lacks depth and analysis. You have attempted to prove and/or quantify the competitive power of the resource strengths.</p>
PART E: UNDERUTILISED RESOURCES (WEIGHTING 10%)	<p>The analysis demonstrates a deep understanding of underutilised resources and redundant resources. You use various forms of evidence and data to substantiate the argument.</p>	<p>The analysis demonstrates an understanding of underutilised resources and redundant resources. You use various forms of evidence and data to substantiate the argument.</p>	<p>The analysis lacks an understanding of underutilised resources and redundant resources. You do not substantiate the argument with various forms of evidence.</p>	<p>The analysis is weak and incomplete. You do not substantiate the argument.</p>

	You acknowledge the limitations of the evidence.			
PART F: PRIMARY VALUE-ADDING ACTIVITIES (WEIGHTING 20%)	The analysis demonstrates a very deep understanding of primary value-adding activities. You present the argument very clearly and succinctly and elucidate how the proficient performance of these value chain activities translates into competitive advantage.	The analysis demonstrates a deep understanding of primary value-adding activities. You present the argument clearly and elucidate how the proficient performance of these value chain activities translates into competitive advantage.	The analysis demonstrates a moderate understanding of primary value-adding activities. You describe how the proficient performance of these value chain activities translates into competitive advantage.	The analysis demonstrates some understanding of primary value-adding activities. However, it does not demonstrate how the proficient performance of these value chain activities translates into competitive advantage.
PART G: CHALLENGES (WEIGHTING 10%)	The response is very perceptive and analyses the challenges for the organisation from a strategic operations perspective. It would lay a firm foundation for an executive action plan.	The response briefly analyses the challenges for the organisation from a strategic operations perspective. It would be helpful in laying a foundation for an executive action plan.	The response presents some challenges for the organisation from a strategic operations perspective.	The response fails to present challenges for the organisation from a strategic operations perspective.