PROACTIVE MARKETING AND ITS ROLE IN MONITORING COMPETITION AN EXPLORATORY STUDY AT THE ISTIQBAL FURNITURE COMPANY IN DUHOK

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Abstract

Proactive marketing is an everyday activity and strategy on which companies work today due to multiple needs and desires and their diversity. In addition, the willingness of companies to meet the underlying needs and desires of customers would give the company a privileged position in the market under existing competition and competitive advantage. Thus, this study problem illustrates the correlation and regression relationships between proactive marketing and competitive advantage in the marketing of home and office furniture. Thus, the goal is to come up with proactive marketing ideas that are in line with current trends and that will help the company stay one step ahead of its competitors. The hypothesis is that proactive marketing has a significant correlation and effect on competitive advantage. Proactive marketing has a significant correlation and impact on competitive advantage. A group of 30 employees from Vana Furniture Company in Mosul and Duhok were chosen, and they were asked to fill out a questionnaire and use the SPSS VER-24 statistical software to test their research hypotheses. Researchers came to a number of conclusions, including that proactive marketing is important because there is already a lot of competition, a lot of products, and a lot of customers who want to buy them. Companies should move toward proactive product marketing as they meet customers' visible and hidden needs and desires.

Keywords: Proactive Marketing, Competitive Advantage.

Introduction

In general, companies face many challngess to survival and growth as a result of existing competition and subsequent crises, whether financial, health-related, or otherwise. Companies have to deal with a lot of problems because of the competition and the wide range of customer needs and desires. This helps them figure out how to invest in opportunities, fight threats, and come up with new ideas on a regular basis.

Based on this, it appears that this topic is significant to companies, marketers, and marketing decision-makers because of its active role in uncovering latent customer demands through proactive company orientation toward items before competitors feel them and work on marketing them. This allows the company to take advantage of chances and achieve its goals when it comes to marketing its competitive advantage in the market.

First Section: Methodology

I.Problem Statement

The study's main problem stemmed from its role in uncovering the role of companies' proactive marketing roles in prompting a competitive advantage over other competitors. As there are many commercial companies selling furniture in the Iraqi market, each one has its own policies and marketing strategies for entering the market with new products ahead of competitors; this is determined by the company's capabilities, material and moral capabilities, market position, and brand.

According to this presentation, the research problem is as follows:

- 1-Is there a correlation between proactive marketing and competition monitoring?
- 2-What is the effect of proactive marketing on monitoring competition?

II.The Significance of the Study

After presenting the main research problems, it can be concluded that proactive marketing is critical for commercial companies, particularly those seeking excellence, whether by lowering production and marketing costs, differentiating them through their brand and the services they provide to buyers and customers, or by providing fast distribution channels that enable products to reach buyers and customers quickly. A commercial enterprise has a unique place in the market and, more specifically, among its customers, making its customers happy and loyal to achieve its goals.

III.The Objectives

The ongoing study seeks to achive the following objectives:

- 1-learn about proactive marketing concepts.
- 2-Learn about the proactive ways in which commercial companies might market their products.
- 3-Learn about the concept of competitive advantage.
- 4-Learn about the correlations and impact between proactive marketing and competitive advantage.
- 5-Attaining the conclusions and recommendations that serve as the study topic's summary.

IV.The Study Population And Sample

The study group was represented by many commercial firms in Mosul and Duhok that specialize in the marketing of home and office furnishings. For various reasons, the research sample was drawn from individuals represented by Istiqbal Furniture Manufacturing and Marketing Company. The key ones are the openness and cooperation of the company's management and staff and the breadth of the items offered. The corporation competes in the market, and its pricing is commensurate with the purchasing power of its clientele. A sample of 30 employees was selected.

V.The hypothetical study scheme

This hypothetical study scheme has two parts: the independent variable (proactive marketing) and the dependent variable (competition monitoring), both of which are study variables. Figure 1 shows the two parts of the hypothetical study.

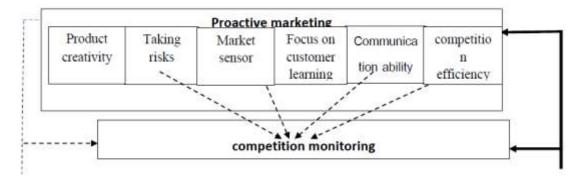


Figure (1) Study Hypothetical Scheme

VI.Hypotheses

Three main hypotheses have been formulated:

- 1-At a level of 0.05, there is a significant correlation between proactive marketing and competition monitoring. It leads to the following hypothesis:
- 2-Proactive marketing has a significant effect on performance and competition monitoring at a 0.05 level of significance. It leads to the following hypothesis:

VII.Research Tools and Methods

The pre-built software SPSS VER.24 was used to analyze the practical study data and extract its results, which included the following things:

- 1-Finding the values of correlation coefficients to show the strength or weakness of the correlation between the research variables.
- 2-Finding F-value coefficients to demonstrate the degree to which an independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable.
- 3-Finding the coefficient of discrimination R^2 to show the strength of the influence relationship between the two variables.

VIII.Study Limitations

- 1-Human limitations: A sample of employees working for a home and office furniture Istiqbal company.
- 2-Spatial limitations: the company's headquarters are in Duhok.
- 3-Time Limitations: 04/02/2022 to 01/03/2022

Second section. Theoretical Framework I.The concept of proactive marketing

Proactive marketing is a critical strategy for organizations to succeed in a competitive market and one of the primary pillars for achieving innovation and excellence in product provision. Through proactive marketing, organizations have taken on the responsibility of monitoring and following up on their internal and external environments, particularly market trends, and identifying current and future customer needs and desires. Work to anticipate changes in the outside world, such as changes in technology and competition, which lead to the identification and investment of opportunities for the organization's growth and leadership. This means that there are a lot of chances for businesses to come up with new products, find new customers for them, and grow their production and marketing activities.

As a result, numerous concepts associated with proactive marketing have been cited in contemporary marketing research, which have been discussed in light of current developments, including competition. As shown in Table 1, the following are the most common ideas about proactive marketing:

Table (1) Concepts of Proactive Marketing as Reported by Researchers

#	Researcher	Concept		
1	Consue, et.al, 2008: 12	"Changes in the industry in which the organization operates in		
		response to fundamental changes in the industry's circumstances,		
		as well as the ability to generate them at the product, market, or		
		industry level"		
2	Baskey, 2014: 95	"The organization's ability to search for information and new		
		knowledge about customers in order to meet their latent needs and		
		discover additional needs that customers are aware of by utilizing		
		customer learning approaches, market sensing, and market		
		communications, so that it can lead market changes by relying on		
		the entrances of creativity and innovation, and management. The		
		risk is that the organization will be proactive in improving its		
		competitive position in the market."		
3	SANDBERG, 2015: 53	"The organization's reliance on information from the market		
		before the situation has a direct effect on the organization or the		
		change in the market has an effect that the organization has agreed		
		with."		
4	Zubway, 2013:81	"The process of investing in opportunities by introducing new		
		products that fit the current and future needs of customers."		

Reference: Prepared by the two researchers based on the sources indicated in the Table.

The term "proactive" refers to a type of marketing that allows marketers to deal with the current situation in a flexible way by using data and the organization's ability to change with the times. Because it has a role in the search for new customers, it covers all types of marketing.

According to what has been presented, the researchers see proactive marketing as "the process of gathering the necessary information on market demands, proactively seeking and investing opportunities to deliver new and distinct products in the target market to attract the attention of existing and potential customers in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market."

Third: The Significance of Proactive Marketing

It's no secret that customers have a diverse range of needs and desires. Each within the context to which he belongs, and numerous human studies have shown both visible and hidden demands in the field of consumer behavior research and product identification. The hard part is meeting people's unspoken needs, which is why the new trend is for companies to market their products before the competition does. They do this by sensing the market and getting to know people before the competition does.

Fourth: The Dimensions of Proactive Marketing

After reviewing the research and studies in the field of marketing, the researchers relied on several dimensions that have been addressed by researchers and writers, including (USSAHAWANITCHAKIT) and (PHOKHA), (MBACHU), (ARAUJO & GAVA), (Baskey, 2014, 97), and (VERHEES), 2005: 12), and the two researchers agreed to use the dimensions that Baski referred to in his study, as they are consistent with the data from the current research and its:

1. Product Creativity:

Innovation in product manufacturing and marketing is a feature of the industry that grows over time. The company is introduced to new products for the markets that are different from what other companies offer, and this helps the company reach more customers, meet the needs of existing customers, and gain new customers.

An essential part of the industry's growth comes from new products being made and sold that are different from those made by competitors. This results in a bigger market base, more satisfied customers, and more customers who come to buy the company's products (Al-Samman and Gargary, 2012, 18).

Product creativity is achieved by collecting information about the idea of presenting the new product, tracking its actual adoption, and working to find innovative ways to market it. Creativity means "to produce something new that did not exist before in this image" (Al-Salim, 2000: 1).

This is how Ababneh and Al-Shaqran, 2013: "radical creativity and its development and development among individuals and groups in organizations is a modern management topic that is important in light of the new global challenges and the intensification of competition," they write.

Most organizations have this concept and have worked to spread it as a culture. As for (Al-Sakarneh, 2008, 47), he defined it as "reaching everything new and affirming that radical innovation consists of reaching the new product or the new process that is completely different from what preceded it and achieving a great strategic leap in the market." As a result, it is a significant leap forward. It differs from what came before and breaks with it, achieving a new creative cycle at a higher level in terms of efficiency and advancing progress in its field and society in general.

Furthermore, (DANNEELS, 2002, 197) claimed that radical creativity's objectives include addressing the demands of customers and emerging markets, inventing new designs, generating new markets, and establishing new distribution methods. It includes new knowledge and ideas that don't fit with what we already know. It's also the result of new organizational methods and new approaches to technology, processes, and products.

That's what both (Chandy and Gerard, 2009, 3) said: radical creativity is considered an important driver for growth and success for the company, but also a source of its wealth.

Thus, radical creativity means "the organization adopts innovative ideas, methods, or entirely new designs that enable the organization to deliver a unique product or develop new production processes that utilize new components in novel and unusual ways that significantly contribute to meeting customer needs and establish a distinct reputation for the organization" (Danneels, 2002, 2003), which is why this type of creativity is critical in the organization.

2. Taking Risks:

the high level of competition between organizations, the liberalization of the economy, the emergence of new products, the short lifecycle of these products, the successive advancements in information and communication technology, and the intensification of competition are all factors that threaten the organization's stability and growth and expose it to numerous risks. To achieve success and survival, the organization must manage these risks.

It is a "scientific way to deal with risks that can cause certain losses by following certain procedures to reduce their negative effects or to cut down on them as much as possible" (Abdul-Aal, 2007, 50).

It was stated as "a specific method that the organization follows to confront the risks it is exposed to by the best means and the least possible cost, and that is about discovering the risk, analyzing it, and choosing the best means to confront it to achieve the desired goal" (Salam and Musa, 2007, 55). (Abdul Hamid, 2005, 315), also referred to as risk management strategies because a company can manage risks by avoiding, decreasing, sharing, or passing on risk to others.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that risk management plays a role in the increasing competitiveness between organizations and has evolved from a constraint to a source of competitive advantage. So, the organization must look at risks because not doing so could lead to its failure by putting its continuity and financial stability at risk and putting its reputation at risk with the people with whom it does business.

3. Market Sensing:

is referred to as "the process of acquiring knowledge about markets and utilizing it by organization employees to aid in decision-making and work on formulating, testing, modifying, updating, and improving the market" (STAAL, 2010, 24). Thus, market sensing entails responding to changes in the market and comprehending and learning from them to effect changes in them (CAI & HARRIES, 2002, 185).

(Staal, 2010, 24) believes that different aspects of the target market need to be identified, and to do so, a market sensor can be used and includes the following components:

- A. MARKET RECOGNITION: INCLUDES MARKET SEGMENTATION, AS ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO ALL CUSTOMERS. THE CUSTOMERS ARE VAST AND DISTRIBUTED GEOGRAPHICALLY AND DIFFER IN THEIR REQUIREMENTS AND PURCHASING PATTERNS. ORGANIZATIONS DIFFER IN THEIR ABILITY TO SERVE DIFFERENT MARKET PARTS, SO THEY MUST COMPETE IN ONE MARKET AND IDENTIFY THOSE PARTS THAT CAN SERVE THEM BETTER (PESONEN, 2013, 22).
- B.Value Estimation: It means "working procedures to obtain an estimate of a certain value in monetary terms from some recent market offers" (STAAL, 2010, 25), and this is done through the evaluation of internal engineering, direct or indirect survey questions, joint analysis, and comparison reference.

C.Customer Feedback: Is "a customer's opinion of a product or service that is offered by a certain business, and it is used to improve the quality of these products and services to keep up with their competitors" (Al-Kubaisi, 2002, 15).

4. Focus on Customer Learning:

it means "the organization's ability to collect information about the current and potential customer." It includes the extent to which it distinguishes the organization's brand and future perceptions of the extent of the customer's loyalty to the organization through his continued dealings with it, in addition to knowing his needs and desires. (Al-Kubaisi, 2002, p. 15)

ACCORDING TO JAWORSKI ET AL. (2000,49), THE EMPHASIS ON CUSTOMER LEARNING REFLECTS "THE ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY TO COMPREHEND CUSTOMERS' REQUIREMENTS, PARTICULARLY LATENT ONES, AND THE ONGOING EFFORT TO FIND OTHER REQUIREMENTS THAT CUSTOMERS ARE UNAWARE OF." ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THEIR CUSTOMERS, AND THE REAL CHALLENGE FOR ANY BUSINESS IS NOT TO MAKE AND SELL GOODS AND SERVICES BUT TO BE ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS CONSISTENTLY AND WANTS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS.

5. Marketing Communications Ability:

IT REFERS TO "A COLLECTION OF CAPABILITIES AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO COMMUNICATIONS THAT ENABLE AN ORGANIZATION TO MEET AND SUPPORT CUSTOMERS' NEEDS FOR NEW PRODUCTS AND GENERATE THEIR DESIRE TO PURCHASE THESE PRODUCTS" (GRIFFITH, 2002, 258), OR "HOW AN ORGANIZATION INFORMS, PERSUADES, AND REMINDS CUSTOMERS, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, ABOUT THE PRODUCTS YOU PRODUCE OR OFFER" (KOTLER & KELLER, 2018, 470).

ACCORDINGLY, WE NOTE THAT THE ABILITY OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IS REPRESENTED BY A SET OF ELEMENTS THAT THE ORGANIZATION USES WITH POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS TO INTRODUCE THEM TO THE PRODUCTS OFFERED BY THE ORGANIZATION, PUSH THEM TO PURCHASE DURING A CERTAIN PERIOD, AND THEN GET THE REACTION IN THE FORM OF DATA AND INFORMATION THAT CONSTITUTE AN ESSENTIAL BASIS IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING FUTURE DECISIONS.

FOR AN ORGANIZATION TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT MARKETING ITS PRODUCTS, IT MUST BE ABLE TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MIX FOR THE TYPE OF MARKET IT WANTS TO REACH AND KNOW ABOUT ITS CUSTOMERS' DEMOGRAPHIC AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS.

6. The Efficiency of Innovative Competition

Today, competition is the lingua franca of the world, a source of concern for organizations, and a criterion for excellence, survival, and advancement. Significantly, its marketing efforts are directed at maximizing resource utilization in order to achieve innovation, implement a competitive marketing strategy, and overcome obstacles (BEINER, et al., 2011, 332).

Fouth: Competition Monitoring Concept

Analyzing current competitors and identifying their strengths and weaknesses is critical to an organization's success, as competitor analysis assists in predicting potential risks, identifying market gaps, identifying alternative options, and understanding industry dynamics and business rules in the market (Pesonen, 2013, 29).

as well as studying new competitors entering the market and following them up by collecting accurate data and information that benefits the competing company in determining its existing position in the market, and determining its capabilities, especially with regard to its ability to flood the market with products and win customers (Kotler, 2018, 345). The only way to study competitors and figure out what they're doing is to keep an eye on them in the market and follow up on what they're already doing (Abu Bakr, 2016, 21).

So, the two researchers think it's important to study the concept of competitive advantage because it's so important to keep an eye on what your competitors are up to.

Fifth: the concept of Competitive Advantage

Possessing and growing a competitive advantage in business is a strategic objective for institutions in light of the severe competitive challenges inherent in an economy based on efficiency, quality, and knowledge. Innovative concepts and methods for gaining a competitive edge.

The competitive advantage comes as "a function of satisfying the needs and satisfaction of employees as internal customers and satisfying the needs and desires of customers in the market to achieve their satisfaction and loyalty" (Abu Qahf, 2003, 50). To take lower prices relative to the prices of competitors with equal benefits, or to provide individual benefits in the product that broadly compensate for the price increase "(Porter, 2000, 8), and it is also known as "what distinguishes the company from others and leads to achieving profits." It also shows that the company has a driving force or a basic value that makes customers do things that they don't want to do when they deal with them. This value, or force, is important to the company, and it affects how customers act when they deal with them. It doesn't matter how long or short the life cycle of the good or service provided by this company is (Al-Dawi, 2015, 70).

Sixth. Sources of Competitive Advantage

There are many sources of competitive advantage for the organization, and some of them can be listed as follows:

- A- **Efficiency** is inherent in the most effective use of available resources. It is quantified by the number of inputs required to create specified outputs since the organization serves as a mechanism for converting inputs to outputs. Competitive.
- B- Quality: Since the result of rapid market developments, the importance of quality has expanded significantly, and businesses' primary concern has shifted to the customer and the value he seeks, as it is a cost and the result of attention paid at all points stages of production.

Additionally, it was defined as "a collection of qualities and features unique to a product that enable the fulfillment of apparent and latent wants" (Charles and Jones, 2012, 355).

C- **Knowledge**: It is regarded as an intellectual asset and a critical pillar for the organization's survival in light of the competitive climate primarily based on information and knowledge, which has become the actual value in several businesses. Development of Structures and Functions (Al-Galbi and Idriss, 2015, 455).

Third Theme: Application Framework

First: A Summary of The Research Sample (Vana Company for home and Office Furniture)

Vana Furniture is a market leader in the home and office furniture sectors. It looks ahead by relying on innovation and creativity in production and marketing, and the company operates under the vision of "achieving the best," which is our belief that we have invested seriously in and committed to, and it is noted that the company's goal is to "achieve the best." The foundation is built on identifying the optimal solutions for interior spaces and offering a diverse range of shapes and designs in its products. It operates branches in the Nineveh and Erbil governorates and is capable of meeting market demands for furniture developed and produced in accordance with international standards and of high quality at competitive prices. Its headquarters are located in Nineveh. The parent company and its subsidiaries have about 250 employees and service workers. They communicate with each other through the company's social media page all day.

Second: Testing the research hypotheses by analyzing the correlation and effect relationships between the two variables

1. Testing and explaining the hypotheses of the correlation between the independent and dependent variables at the macro and micro levels.

The correlation coefficient values between the independent research variables (proactive marketing) and the dependent variable (competitive advantage) at the macro level and for my agency are shown in Table 1.

Table (1) results of the correlation between proactive marketing and competitive advantage

Dependent Variable Independent Variable	Competition monitoring
Proactive Marketing	74.80**

n=30 * $p \le 0.05$

Reference: Prepared by the researchers based on the results of SPSS VER.24

According to Table 1, there is a significant correlation between proactive marketing in all of its dimensions and competitive advantage at the 0.05 level of significance, as indicated by the correlation coefficient of %74.80, indicating that marketing products in a proactive manner and making them accessible to customers results in a competitive advantage. The examined organization enjoys a significant competitive edge over rival organizations. On the other hand, the six dimensions of proactive marketing chosen contribute significantly to the organization's competitive edge. Product design and marketing creativity, risk tolerance, market sense, a customer-centric focus, communication competence, and inventive competition efficiency play a significant part. By preserving the organization's position and commercial reputation with its customers, it implies that the competitive advantage of the organization's products in the market may be increased by addressing the organization's customers' current and latent requirements and wishes. Accordingly, we can accept the first main research hypothesis, which states that "at the 0.05 level of significance, there is a significant correlation between proactive marketing and competitive advantage."

2. Impact Hypothesis Test

The following Table (2) summarizes the findings of a linear and multiple regression study of the impact of proactive marketing dimensions on the competitive advantage of the research organization and its products:

Table 2 The results of linear and multiple regression analysis of the effect of the dimensions of proactive marketing on competitive advantage

Independent Dimensions	Dependent Variable (Competitive Advantage)				
Proactive Marketing		F	B0. parameter value	Indication 0.000	
Radical Creativity		51.05	0.779	Moral	
Risks		47.87	0.697	Moral	
logistic	0.544	39.6	0.635	Moral	
Focus on customer learning	0.51	37.2	0.588	Moral	
Communication ability	0.49	33.25	0.55	Moral	
Innovative competition efficiency	0.465	30.95	0.49	Moral	
Total Proactive Marketing	0.587	60.25	0.765	Moral	

n=30 * $p \le 0.05$

source: prepared by the researchers based on the statistical software SPSS VER.24 results

Table (2) demonstrates that the dimension of radical innovation has a significant partial effect on increasing the competitive advantage of the organization in question, with a coefficient of determination of (R2 = 68 percent) and being the most influential among the dimensions in terms of the values listed in Table (2). This indicates that creativity in product manufacturing and marketing through modern ideas that differ from what competitors think would give a distinct position to the researched organization in the market. The value of F was calculated, which was 51.05, which is greater than its tabular value. The least significant effect of the efficiency of innovative competition appeared in enhancing competitive advantage, and this is after calculating the value of the coefficient of determination of (R2 = 64.5%), which indicates that the efficiency of the proposed products came with a lower impact rate than other dimensions. The F value was calculated and was 30.95, which is higher than the tabular F value. This indicates that the efficiency of innovative competition has a clear role in enhancing competitive advantage. Thus came the rest of the variables in their impact on the competitive advantage, all of which are significant, according to the values extracted in Table (2). The strength of the effect is also evident by observing the results of extracting (F) values, which are higher than their tabular values of (4.001). With regard to the effect of proactive marketing at the overall level on the competitive advantage, it was found that there is a significant effect based on the value of R2 of 58.7% when the level of significance is (0.05) and the significance of the calculated F value of 60.25, and thus the validity of the second main hypothesis was verified, which states "there is a significant imapet of the dimensions of proactive marketing on the competitive advantage at the level of significance of 0.05".

Fourth Theme: Conclusions and Recommendations

First: The Conclusions

The researchers came to the following theoretical and applied conclusions, which are a summary of the scientific research findings:

- 1. Proactive marketing is one of the strategic activities businesses do today to achieve their growth, expansion, and profit objectives.
- 2. Monitoring and analyzing existing competition in the market is a driving force that differentiates companies from their competitors. This is accomplished by thoroughly studying and analyzing competitors.

- 3. It was discovered through a theoretical examination of proactive marketing that it is a current topic in the field of product marketing and meeting needs and desires.
- 4. Proactive marketing is one of the strategic activities that businesses use to achieve their growth, expansion, and profit objectives.
- 5. Businesses embrace proactive marketing dimensions by collecting data and information and identifying the latent needs of customers, enabling them to lead the market and anticipate future changes through the use of creativity and innovation.
- 6. It was discovered through statistical analysis of data from independent and accredited research variables that there is a significant correlation between two variables: proactive marketing in all of its dimensions and competition monitoring.
- 7. It was discovered through simple and multiple linear regression analysis that the dimensions of proactive marketing have a significant effect on monitoring competition, indicating that each dimension of proactive marketing has an effective and significant impact on the company under study by enabling them to know their competitors and their market orientations and investing in a way that enables them to lead and grow in the market.

Second: Recommendations

The researchers came up with a number of recommendations based on the findings that would improve proactive marketing actions and, as a result, increase competitive advantage:

- 1. Organizations must take care of their marketing efforts through proper planning and organization to get a competitive advantage.
- 2. Organizations should conduct thorough research and analysis of the market's characteristics and components.
- 3. Organizations must detect both current and hidden requirements and fulfill their growth, expansion, and profit objectives.
- 4. The organization must recognize and study the dimensions of proactive marketing to enable it to compete in the market.
- 5. The organization must develop an appropriate marketing strategy that differs from other organizations, especially concerning analyzing the market and revealing the needs and desires that can be met now and in the long term.

6. To gain a competitive advantage, businesses should shift toward modern choices that are compatible with the nature of the market and its quick changes.

7. Work to improve a company's competitive edge by requiring it to constantly look for and collect market information rather than stopping at a certain point.

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