

Strategy for Tourism

3

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

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Culture and Strategy

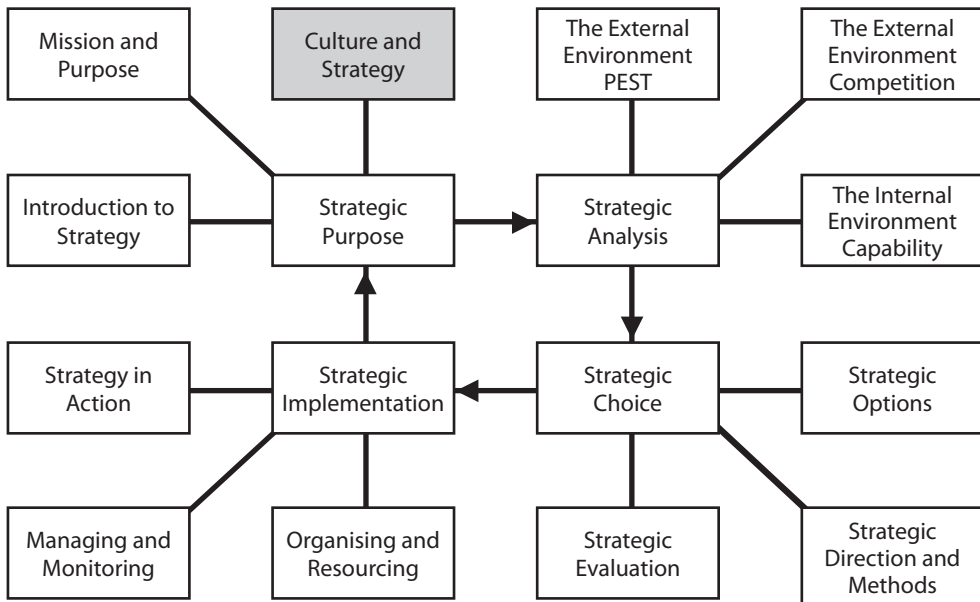


Figure 3.1

Learning outcomes

After studying this chapter and related materials you should be able to understand:

- Culture, difference and reproduction
- Organisational culture
- Cultural web
- The cultural environment

and critically evaluate, explain and apply the above concepts.

Introduction

Culture:

a set of shared values, attitudes, goals, and practices that characterise a group of people.

At the end of Chapter 1 the complexity of strategy was emphasised. In particular it was stated that there are no universal goals shared by organisations and entities across the globe. Rather the human dimension of strategic planning was underlined. This human aspect draws attention to the fact that people operate as members of particular cultural groupings. Their behaviour patterns are moulded and formed by culture. So it is important to understand how individuals are embedded within organisations and entities which are prone to create cultural norms. Additionally, organisations themselves are embedded within a broader social system which sanctions and normalises certain behaviours and ideas.

To help understand these aspects of strategy this chapter initially studies the concept of culture and cultural reproduction at a general level. It then focuses on culture at the organisation level before widening its analysis to consider the cultural environment within which tourism entities operate. One of the key reasons to study the effects of culture is the challenge of strategic change. For if organisations cultivate a particular culture, and culture performs a role in determining behaviour, then culture may present a conservative pull that inhibits strategic change and innovation. This is the challenge of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973), or path dependency, where organisations and entities are prone to reproduce existing ways of doing things. Case Study 3 identifies the corporate culture of the Walt Disney Company, discusses how it is maintained and transmitted and looks at the cultural challenges of a US company operating in China.

Case Study 3: The Walt Disney Company

The Walt Disney Company (WDC) with headquarters in the USA was founded by Walt Disney in 1923 and has grown to its present position as a leading global entertainment and media company with interests in the four key areas of media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment and consumer products. The mission of WDC is to be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information.

WDC demonstrates a strong and distinctive corporate culture. Walt Disney, the founder of WDC had, and still has, a significant influence on the company's mission. He was always keen to promote a wholesome image for the company and the enduring WDC culture can be seen from a number of angles. For example the value statement of WDC is arranged over seven key ideas:

Innovation

- ◆ We follow a strong tradition of innovation.

Quality

- ◆ We strive to follow a high standard of excellence.
- ◆ We maintain high-quality standards across all product categories.

Chapter extract

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