

ASSIGNMENT 4:

PRODUCT STRATEGY

THE OBJECTIVE

Learning to identify characteristics of good strategic thinking and signs of great product strategy from a case study, based on general information received in lectures.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Read the simplified industry case study below and highlight 4-5 elements of where product strategy has enabled the company to succeed — and 1-2 points where the strategy might have created obstacles for the company in the future.

THE TASK IN STEPS

1. **Identify and categorise key elements of the product strategy.**

Read the case and make a note of those events, decisions, etc. that you find to reflect (product) strategy. These can be decisions or actions in terms of (but not limiting to) e.g.

- Changes of target segments
- Market choices
- Product elements
- Technology choices
- Resource decisions, such as competencies
- Organizational choices
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2. **Form an initial timeline.** Form a (visual) timeline of key elements that you have identified. In this visualization, use the categories of events from the previous step (segments, market, tech, etc.)

This initial timeline is likely to be the first version of your final deliverable. Revisit and revise it as you proceed in your analyses.

3. **Analyze consequences.** How have these elements and choices affected the development of the product and the company? What have these choices enabled or prohibited in terms of further development? How have decisions and outcomes accumulated?
4. **Name the strategies.** Based on above, analyze each year and form a short description of what you perceive to be the driving idea of the strategy each year (Rumelt would label this as “guiding policy”)
5. **Future strategy.** What would be the driving idea for the strategy for the next few years?
6. **Present the results.** Present the results in one page. A basic template would be a figure that illustrates the timeline and the key moments, overlaid with the years and your summaries of driving ideas.
7. **Return as a single pdf-file.** Report the above on a single page. Add a page for potential short notes.