

Introduction - Global Marketing Strategies

There can be little doubt of the increasing importance of the international environment for United States enterprises. In the last four years we have witnessed two major crises in the international monetary system, considerable advances in East-West economic relations, and a significant rise in foreign investment flows into the United States. In 1971 the United States suffered its first trade deficit since 1888 (reaching more than \$6 billion in 1972), touching off significant protectionist sentiment in various quarters, and resulting in the introduction before Congress of numerous pieces of restrictive legislation. The outlook for the future continues to be rather pessimistic as imports of oil, gas, and other fuels will reach staggering proportions.

For the marketing executive concerned with global markets, these developments strike at the core of his area of responsibility. What factors determine the degree of international competitiveness of his various product lines? How can consumer needs in different environments best be met? Which products should be produced in which countries to supply which markets?

This article discusses , frameworks which allows the international marketing executive to evaluate his products' performance in world markets and, more importantly, to predict changes in their performance over time. By having some concept of future trends in relative competitiveness, the firm can anticipate any changes in strategy necessary to reduce its exposure to changing trade patterns. The use of the same framework also is illustrated as an aid in assessing the suitability of a particular marketing strategy which has evolved in one market to other markets the firm may wish to enter.

The concept of product life cycles certainly is not new to marketing students or practitioners. Application of the S-shaped growth curve to sales forecasting can be found as early as 1922. What is relatively new is the attempt to expand its use as a marketing tool to include the international dimension.

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