Review of Multinational Strategic Management: An Integrative Entrepreneurial Context-Specific Process by Robert J. Mockler

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standardize research variables across international studies.

Most chapters provide charts with the statistics of their findings, and some offer illustrative lists. Chapter 1 also offers some graphs to illustrate its findings.

All studies offer suggestions for further research. Since some of these studies appear to have a similar aim, it would be interesting to see the authors in this book collaborate on the metrics that should be considered in all new international studies. For example, Aviv Shoham’s findings and A.N.M. Waheeduzzaman’s separate study on standardization might make an interesting joint follow-up project. The studies pertaining to China and India also support examining international attitudes in rural regions to balance out the findings from urban settings. Timothy Wilkinson offers an interesting perspective on how city and state politics impact foreign direct investment versus export promotion.

While each chapter offers interesting insights and would be of interest to international managers, the book lacks a conclusion tying the studies together or identifying particular trends. In the preface, each study is summarized individually, but no conclusion is drawn from the body of work presented in the book. I found myself flipping back and forth to compare similar findings in different parts of the book, particularly with regard to the debate on adaptation versus standardization.

Overall, the book offers a great overview of recent international business research and would be an asset to libraries with an international business orientation, especially those focusing on Asia. However, it might be more worthwhile to monitor for follow-up studies from these findings and to contact the individual authors about additional conclusions.

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**Management**

**Multinational Strategic Management: An Integrative Entrepreneurial Context-Specific Process**

$49.95.

**Multinational Strategic Management** is a book of considerable scope that explains the processes that companies use to expand overseas. Robert J. Mockler, a professor of management at St. John’s University Tobin Graduate School of Business, has written an overview of managing across borders that is intended as a textbook for executive training, as well as for graduate business schools and advanced undergraduate classes.

Multinational businesses are defined as businesses that possess service or production facilities in other countries. Companies expand overseas in a variety of ways, with wholly owned subsidiaries, joint ventures, and exporting. To illustrate the benefits of multinational expansion as well as some of his strategic concepts, Mockler describes a group of Americans — investors in a cellular phone venture in Tashkent, Uzbekistan — who, after overcoming a series of cultural and technical hurdles, achieve a return 40 times their original investment.

One concept that runs throughout Mockler’s study is that of time perspectives. Companies must respond to the existing market, anticipate changes that will occur over the intermediate term, and formulate long-term strategies. Microsoft’s decision in the mid-1990s to exploit the commercial potential of the Internet is an example of a long-term strategy. Another important theme is contingency theory, otherwise known as the “It All Depends” theory. Companies must constantly refine their strategies as situations rapidly change. McDonald’s decision to adapt its menu to Hindu beliefs by offering sandwiches without beef when expanding into India is an example of contingency theory. Furthermore, Mockler makes a distinction between management (planning, budgeting, and day-to-day practical duties) and leadership, which involves vision and motivation. Leadership is necessary for companies such as McDonald’s to maintain a balance between centralizing to maintain efficiency and dealing with issues at the local level. Moreover, leaders must have entrepreneurial focus to deal with the rapid change in business. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric (GE), demonstrated the spirit of an entrepreneur when he used a strategy known as “creative destruction” that involved laying off over 100,000 workers to completely reorganize the company.

Mockler devotes specific chapters
to marketing, production, technology, finance, and multicultural diversity — repeatedly emphasizing that in the business world all of these components must be integrated. It takes quite a skilled juggler to keep all of these balls in the air. Take Rupert Murdoch, from the chapter on finance, whose news corporation exploited its multinational joint ventures to pay only 7 percent in taxes on $10 billion in sales — although perhaps that’s not so much juggling as sleight of hand.

One of the strongest features of Multinational Strategic Management is the useful charts and diagrams. The chapter on marketing includes a diagram on operating strategy that contains several factors managers should consider, such as competition, government policies, product adaptability, production costs, and socio-cultural factors. The many charts and diagrams demonstrate the depth of Mockler’s scholarship, as does an exhaustive 40-page bibliography.

In addition, Mockler’s writing style is easy to follow and jargon-free. Multinational Strategic Management was published in 2002, and the latest works cited were published in 2000. Consequently, there is no mention of the September 11 terrorist attacks and their impact on how international business is conducted.

Executives, business students, and business librarians will benefit from reading Multinational Strategic Management, as well as anyone who needs a broad overview of multinational business processes. Business librarians will appreciate the practical charts and diagrams for organizing the types of information that are needed to answer a variety of business reference questions. This book should be in every academic collection.

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Europages

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Eurédit, publisher of EUROPAGES, is based in Paris. This directory covers 500,000 companies selected in 33 European countries and is searchable in 15 languages. It demonstrates much of the kind of country coverage that would be ideal in a pan-European database. All 25 countries of the enlarged EU are covered. The problem is that the number of companies included in the actual directory is very small considering the number of countries covered. The data is produced very much as a contact directory, rather than a detailed company profile as demonstrated by the activities of the shareholders, who include three of Europe’s leading Yellow Pages publishers — SEAT Pagine Gialle (Telecom Italia), TPI (Telefónica), and DeTeMedien (Deutsche Telekom).

Conclusion

It would have been very exciting to have been able to report that with the enlargement of the EU, the pan-European company information providers had risen to the occasion and developed intuitive new products and services that enabled business information researchers to conduct excellent searches across the new 25-country bloc. I envisioned that I would have much to research and learn when I suggested this article.

After all, there have been good pan-European databases since the mid-1980s and the company registries of Europe have been talking to each other about integration and data sharing since 1990. Unfortunately, there is little good news to impart at this time. I am left wondering why such seemingly great opportunities for new business information services have yet again been missed by suppliers.

I am already being asked to conduct complex searches on companies across the enlarged EU and also suggesting these wider searches to clients. I imagine I am not the only business information researcher who is coping with this challenge. The greatly increased task means using old tools and designing elaborate searches requiring complex choices of country groups. Having to check that you have actually chosen the right 25 countries of the EU to search across is a task that is time consuming and unnecessary given the state of the art of database technology. I would have expected that any company information vendor covering Europe, at the very least, would now have an easily selected enlarged EU country choice available on their systems and services.

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