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CIPS L6M2 Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	- Understand and apply tools and techniques to address the challenges of global supply chains: This section targets Supply Chain Analysts and covers methods for analyzing global supply chains, such as STEEPLD analysis, benchmarking, and performance metrics. It also evaluates regulatory influences, including import - export controls, tariffs, and employment regulations like equality, health, and safety. A critical skill assessed is applying STEEPLD analysis to supply chain challenges.

Topic 2	Understand and apply the concept of commercial global strategy in organizations: This section measures the skills of Global Strategy Analysts and focuses on evaluating the characteristics of strategic decisions in organizations. It includes understanding strategic versus operational management, strategic choices, and the vocabulary of strategy. A key skill measured is effectively differentiating between strategic and operational management.
Topic 3	Understand financial aspects that affect procurement and supply: This section measures the skills of Financial Analysts in assessing how costs, funding, and economic objectives impact supply chains. It includes managing currency volatility through exchange rate instruments like forwards or derivatives and addressing commodity price fluctuations using futures or hedging. A critical skill assessed is managing financial risks in global supply chains effectively.
Topic 4	Understand strategy formulation and implementation: This section evaluates the skills of Strategic Planners in understanding how corporate and business strategies impact supply chains. It covers strategic directions, diversification, portfolio matrices, and methods for pursuing strategies like mergers or alliances. It also examines aligning supply chains with organizational structures and managing resources like people, technology, and finance. A key skill measured is implementing strategies under uncertain conditions.

CIPS Global Commercial Strategy Sample Questions (Q36-Q41):

NEW QUESTION # 36

SIMULATION

XYZ is a toilet paper manufacturer based in the UK. It has 2 large factories employing over 500 staff and a complex supply chain sourcing paper from different forests around the world. XYZ is making some strategic changes to the way it operates including changes to staffing structure and introducing more automation. Discuss 4 causes of resistance to change that staff at XYZ may experience and examine how the CEO of XYZ can successfully manage this resistance to change

Answer:

Explanation:

Causes of Resistance to Change & Strategies to Manage It - XYZ Case Study When XYZ, a UK-based toilet paper manufacturer, implements strategic changes such as staff restructuring and automation, employees may resist change due to uncertainty, fear, and disruption to their work environment. Below are four key causes of resistance and how the CEO can manage them effectively.

Causes of Resistance to Change

1. Fear of Job Loss

Cause: Employees may fear that automation will replace their jobs, leading to layoffs. Factory workers and administrative staff may feel particularly vulnerable.

Example: If machines take over manual processes like paper cutting and packaging, employees may see this as a direct threat to their roles.

2. Lack of Communication and Transparency

Cause: When management fails to communicate the reasons for change, employees may speculate and assume the worst. Unclear messages lead to distrust.

Example: If XYZ's CEO announces restructuring without explaining why and how jobs will be affected, employees may feel insecure and disengaged.

3. Loss of Skills and Status

Cause: Some employees, especially long-serving workers, may feel their skills are becoming obsolete due to automation. Managers may resist change if they fear losing power in a new structure.

Example: A production line supervisor may oppose automation because it reduces the need for human oversight, making their role seem redundant.

4. Organizational Culture and Habit

Cause: Employees are accustomed to specific ways of working, and sudden changes disrupt routine. Resistance occurs when changes challenge existing work culture.

Example: XYZ's employees may have always used manual processes, and shifting to AI-driven production feels unfamiliar and uncomfortable.

How the CEO Can Manage Resistance to Change

1. Effective Communication Strategy

□ What to do?

Clearly explain why the changes are necessary (e.g., cost efficiency, competitiveness).

Use town hall meetings, emails, and team discussions to provide updates.

Address employee concerns directly to reduce uncertainty.

Example: The CEO can send monthly updates on automation, ensuring transparency and reducing fear.

2. Employee Involvement and Engagement

□ What to do?

Involve staff in decision-making to give them a sense of control.

Create cross-functional teams to gather employee input.

Provide opportunities for feedback and discussion.

Example: XYZ can form a worker's advisory panel to gather employee concerns and address them proactively.

3. Training and Upskilling Programs

□ What to do?

Offer training programs to help employees adapt to new technologies.

Provide reskilling opportunities for employees whose jobs are affected.

Reassure staff that automation will create new roles, not just eliminate jobs.

Example: XYZ can introduce digital skills training for workers transitioning from manual processes to automated systems.

4. Change Champions & Support Systems

□ What to do?

Appoint change champions (influential employees) to advocate for change.

Offer emotional and psychological support (e.g., HR consultations, career guidance).

Recognize and reward employees who embrace change.

Example: XYZ can offer bonuses or promotions to employees who successfully transition into new roles.

Conclusion

Resistance to change is natural, but the CEO of XYZ can minimize resistance through clear communication, employee involvement, training, and structured support. By managing resistance effectively, XYZ can ensure a smooth transition while maintaining employee morale and operational efficiency.

NEW QUESTION # 37

SIMULATION

Assess benchmarking as an approach to analysing an organisations performance.

Answer:

Explanation:

Benchmarking as an Approach to Analyzing Organizational Performance

Introduction

Benchmarking is a performance measurement tool used by organizations to compare their processes, products, or services against industry standards, competitors, or best practices. It helps organizations identify performance gaps, set improvement targets, and enhance competitive advantage.

There are different types of benchmarking, including internal, competitive, functional, and generic benchmarking, each serving different strategic objectives.

1. Types of Benchmarking

Organizations can adopt different benchmarking approaches based on their goals:

Type of Benchmarking	Definition	Example
Internal Benchmarking	Comparing performance within the same organization (e.g., different branches, teams, or departments).	XYZ Construction comparing the efficiency of two regional project teams.
Competitive Benchmarking	Comparing performance against direct industry competitors.	Coca-Cola benchmarking sales performance against Pepsi.
Functional Benchmarking	Comparing a specific function with best-in-class organizations, even from different industries.	Amazon studying Toyota's lean logistics to improve warehouse efficiency.
Generic Benchmarking	Comparing general business practices across industries to improve efficiency and innovation.	A bank adopting customer service strategies from the hospitality industry.

2. How Benchmarking Helps in Performance Analysis

Benchmarking provides quantifiable insights to assess and improve organizational performance in key areas:

- Identifies Performance Gaps - Highlights areas where an organization lags behind competitors or industry best practices.
- Improves Operational Efficiency - Helps streamline supply chain, production, and customer service processes.
- Enhances Strategic Decision-Making - Supports data-driven decisions for resource allocation, pricing strategies, and process optimization.
- Drives Continuous Improvement - Encourages a culture of innovation and best practice adoption.
- Boosts Competitive Advantage - Enables organizations to stay ahead in their market by implementing superior processes.

Example: A retail chain benchmarking delivery speed against Amazon may adopt AI-driven inventory management to reduce delays.

3. Advantages of Benchmarking

- Objective Performance Measurement - Uses industry data to provide realistic performance targets.
- Encourages Best Practice Adoption - Helps companies learn from successful competitors.
- Enhances Cost Efficiency - Identifies areas for cost reduction and resource optimization.
- Facilitates Strategic Growth - Helps companies improve customer experience, product innovation, and market positioning.

Example: McDonald's benchmarked Starbucks' digital loyalty program, leading to the launch of MyMcDonald's Rewards, improving customer retention.

4. Limitations of Benchmarking

- Limited to Available Data - Confidential industry data may not always be accessible.
- Lack of Context - Differences in business models, resources, and market conditions can make direct comparisons misleading.
- Focus on Imitation Over Innovation - Firms may focus too much on copying competitors rather than developing unique strategies.
- Resource-Intensive - Conducting in-depth benchmarking requires time, expertise, and financial investment.

Example: XYZ Construction benchmarking against a large multinational may find certain strategies unrealistic due to scale differences.

5. Application of Benchmarking in Different Sectors

Organizations across industries use benchmarking for performance analysis:

Industry	Benchmarking Focus	Example
Manufacturing	Operational efficiency, cost reduction	Toyota benchmarking against Tesla's battery production
Retail	Customer service, supply chain speed	Walmart benchmarking against Amazon
Finance	Digital transformation, fraud prevention	HSBC benchmarking against fintech firms
Construction	Project delivery timelines, sustainability	XYZ Construction benchmarking against industry leaders in sustainable building

Conclusion

Benchmarking is an effective performance analysis tool that helps organizations identify gaps, adopt best practices, and enhance competitiveness. However, it must be used carefully to avoid blind imitation and consider contextual differences. When integrated with other strategic models (e.g., SWOT, Balanced Scorecard), benchmarking provides a powerful framework for continuous improvement and strategic growth.

NEW QUESTION # 38

SIMULATION

Why is it important for an organisation to measure performance? Describe one tool that can be used to measure performance

Answer:

Explanation:

Importance of Measuring Performance & Performance Measurement Tool

Introduction

Performance measurement is essential for organizations to evaluate their efficiency, effectiveness, and strategic success. It provides quantifiable insights into business operations, helping companies make data-driven decisions, improve productivity, and maintain competitive advantage.

To achieve this, organizations use various performance measurement tools. One widely used tool is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which provides a holistic approach to measuring performance across different business areas.

1. Importance of Measuring Performance

Organizations must measure performance to achieve the following benefits:

1.1 Supports Strategic Decision-Making

- ☐ Helps businesses align operations with strategic goals.
- ☐ Identifies areas needing improvement or investment.

Example: A company analyzing supply chain delays can make informed decisions on sourcing alternative suppliers.

1.2 Improves Efficiency and Productivity

- ☐ Tracks operational effectiveness to reduce waste and costs.
- ☐ Ensures departments meet KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

Example: A manufacturer measuring production efficiency can identify bottlenecks and streamline processes.

1.3 Enhances Customer Satisfaction and Quality Control

- ☐ Monitoring performance ensures high product/service quality.
- ☐ Helps companies respond to customer expectations and feedback.

Example: A retail company tracking customer complaint resolution times can improve customer service.

1.4 Ensures Financial Stability and Profitability

- ☐ Measures profit margins, cost efficiency, and revenue growth.
- ☐ Assists in budgeting and financial planning.

Example: A business monitoring cash flow and profitability ratios can detect financial risks early.

1.5 Supports Continuous Improvement and Benchmarking

- ☐ Allows companies to compare their performance with competitors.
- ☐ Encourages a culture of continuous improvement.

Example: A company benchmarking its sustainability metrics against industry leaders can enhance CSR strategies.

2. Performance Measurement Tool - The Balanced Scorecard (BSC)

One widely used performance measurement tool is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC).

2.1 Explanation of the Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC), developed by Kaplan and Norton, measures performance across four key perspectives:

BSC Perspective	Key Question	Example KPI
Financial 💰	How do we create value for shareholders?	Revenue growth, profit margins, cost savings
Customer 🎯	How do customers perceive us?	Customer satisfaction scores, retention rates
Internal Processes ⚙️	How efficient are our internal operations?	Supply chain efficiency, production cycle times
Learning & Growth 📚	How do we foster innovation and employee development?	Employee training hours, innovation success rates

2.2 Application of BSC in Performance Measurement

- ☐ Holistic View: Measures financial and non-financial performance.
- ☐ Strategic Alignment: Ensures all departments contribute to business goals.
- ☐ Data-Driven Decision-Making: Provides insights for process improvements and competitive positioning.

Example:

A logistics company implementing BSC could track:

Financial: Cost per delivery

Customer: Delivery accuracy and satisfaction scores

Internal Processes: Warehouse efficiency

Learning & Growth: Employee training on automation tools

3. Advantages and Limitations of the Balanced Scorecard

☐ Advantages

- ✓ Aligns performance measurement with business strategy.
- ✓ Ensures balanced focus across financial and operational areas.
- ✓ Encourages continuous improvement through KPI tracking.

☐ Limitations

- ✗ Can be complex and time-consuming to implement.
- ✗ Needs regular updates to remain relevant.
- ✗ May require cultural change for adoption across all departments.

Conclusion

Measuring performance is essential for strategic decision-making, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, financial stability, and continuous improvement. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is a powerful tool that provides a comprehensive performance assessment, helping organizations maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

NEW QUESTION # 39

SIMULATION

Using Porter's 5 Forces, describe the business environment of a company of your choice

Answer:

Explanation:

Porter's Five Forces Analysis - Business Environment of Tesla

Introduction

Porter's Five Forces Model, developed by Michael Porter, is a strategic framework used to analyze the competitive environment of an industry. It evaluates five key factors that influence a company's profitability and strategic positioning.

For this analysis, we will examine Tesla Inc., a leading electric vehicle (EV) and clean energy company, to assess its business environment using Porter's Five Forces.

1. Competitive Rivalry (High)

The automotive industry is highly competitive, with established brands and new entrants challenging Tesla's market position.

☐ Key Factors:

Traditional automakers (Toyota, BMW, Mercedes, Ford, Volkswagen, GM) are expanding into EVs.

EV-only competitors (Rivian, Lucid, NIO, BYD, Polestar) are gaining market share.

Tesla's technology (battery innovation, autonomous driving) gives it a temporary edge, but competitors are catching up.

Example: Tesla's Supercharger network gives it an advantage, but competitors like Hyundai and Ford are forming EV charging alliances to reduce Tesla's lead.

Impact: Tesla must continue innovation and brand differentiation to maintain market leadership.

2. Threat of New Entrants (Medium)

The barriers to entry in the automotive industry are high due to capital investment, brand recognition, and regulatory requirements.

☐ Key Factors:

High R&D costs for battery technology and autonomous driving deter new entrants.

Tesla's strong brand recognition makes it difficult for new brands to compete.

Government incentives and EV market growth encourage startups like Rivian and Lucid.

Manufacturing expertise required-many new EV companies struggle with scaling production.

Example: Apple planned to enter the EV market but faced challenges in battery sourcing and technology.

Impact: While Tesla faces some risk from new startups, its established brand, patents, and economies of scale help protect its position.

3. Bargaining Power of Suppliers (Low to Medium)

Tesla relies on specialized components and raw materials (e.g., lithium, cobalt, semiconductors) for battery production.

☐ Key Factors:

Tesla has vertically integrated its supply chain, producing in-house batteries (Gigafactories).

Raw material suppliers (e.g., lithium mining companies) hold some bargaining power due to limited global supply.

Semiconductor shortages have impacted Tesla and the auto industry as a whole.

Tesla has long-term contracts with key suppliers, reducing dependency risks.

Example: Tesla sources batteries from Panasonic, CATL, and LG Chem, but it is developing its own battery technology (4680 cells) to reduce reliance on third parties.

Impact: Tesla's vertical integration strategy lowers supplier power, but raw material scarcity remains a challenge.

4. Bargaining Power of Buyers (Medium)

Customers have more choices in the EV market, but Tesla's brand loyalty and product differentiation give it an advantage.

□ Key Factors:

Consumers compare Tesla against competitors based on price, range, and features.

Tesla's strong brand and innovation (Autopilot, long-range batteries, Supercharger network) reduce customer switching.

As more automakers enter the EV market, customers gain more bargaining power.

Price-sensitive buyers may opt for lower-cost EVs from brands like BYD and Nissan.

Example: Tesla's Model 3 dominates the EV market, but new affordable EVs from Volkswagen and Hyundai give buyers alternatives.

Impact: Tesla must continuously innovate and expand its product range to retain market dominance.

5. Threat of Substitutes (Low to Medium)

Substitutes for Tesla's products include public transportation, hybrid vehicles, and alternative energy solutions.

□ Key Factors:

Hybrid cars remain an option for customers who are not ready for full EV adoption.

Public transportation and ride-sharing services reduce the need for personal car ownership.

Fuel cell and hydrogen-powered vehicles could emerge as alternatives in the long term.

Example: Toyota is investing in hydrogen fuel cell vehicles (Mirai), presenting an alternative to battery EVs.

Impact: While substitutes exist, Tesla's unique market positioning and growing EV adoption reduce this threat.

Conclusion

Porter's Five Forces analysis shows that Tesla operates in a highly competitive environment, facing challenges from rival EV makers, supplier dependencies, and increasing buyer power. However, its innovation, brand strength, and vertical integration strategy provide a strong competitive advantage.

To sustain growth, Tesla must:

□ Continue investing in battery technology and AI-driven autonomous driving.

□ Expand affordable EV options to compete with lower-cost brands.

□ Strengthen supplier relationships to mitigate raw material shortages.

NEW QUESTION # 40

SIMULATION

XYZ is a construction firm which builds houses in Birmingham. Discuss a tool that it can use to assess the remote environment and discuss a tool it can use to evaluate the operating environment.

Answer:

Explanation:

Environmental Analysis Tools for XYZ Construction Firm

To make strategic decisions, XYZ Construction needs to assess both the remote environment (external macro factors) and the operating environment (industry-specific and competitive factors). Two widely used tools for these assessments are:

PESTLE Analysis - for analyzing the remote environment

Porter's Five Forces - for evaluating the operating environment

1. Assessing the Remote Environment: PESTLE Analysis

Tool: PESTLE Analysis helps organizations evaluate macro-environmental factors that impact long-term business strategy.

Why use PESTLE?

It identifies external influences (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) that XYZ cannot control but must respond to.

PESTLE Analysis for XYZ Construction:

Factor	Impact on XYZ Construction
Political	Government policies on housing, Brexit trade agreements, infrastructure spending
Economic	Interest rates affecting mortgage demand, inflation increasing material costs
Social	Population growth, housing demand, urbanization trends
Technological	Smart home innovations, AI-driven construction management
Legal	Building regulations, safety laws, labor laws
Environmental	Sustainability requirements, climate change effects on construction



Example: If the UK government introduces new housing grants, XYZ may expand operations to capitalize on increased demand.

2. Evaluating the Operating Environment: Porter's Five Forces

Tool: Porter's Five Forces helps XYZ analyze industry-specific competition and market dynamics.

Why use Porter's Five Forces?

It helps assess competitive pressures that impact XYZ's profitability and positioning.

Porter's Five Forces Analysis for XYZ Construction:

Force	Impact on XYZ Construction
Threat of New Entrants	Medium – High capital investment required, but new firms can still enter with funding
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	High – Limited supply of skilled labor and fluctuating material costs (e.g., steel, timber)
Bargaining Power of Buyers	Medium – Homebuyers have alternatives but government schemes influence demand
Threat of Substitutes	Low – Limited substitutes for housing, but prefabricated homes are growing
Industry Rivalry	High – Many construction firms compete for contracts and government projects

Example: If supplier power is high due to rising material costs, XYZ must negotiate better contracts or explore alternative suppliers.

Conclusion

- ☐ PESTLE Analysis helps XYZ understand the external environment affecting the construction industry.
- ☐ Porter's Five Forces enables XYZ to evaluate industry competition and make informed strategic choices.

NEW QUESTION # 41

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