

Implementation and Execution of Corporate Strategy: A Study of the Expansion of the Customer Base in Corporate Banking Branches

Jansen Maia Del Corso, PhD, Sérgio Luiz Loução, MSc, Wesley Vieira da Silva, PhD, and
Daniel Ferreira dos Santos, MSc

del.corso@pucpr.br, sergio@loucao.com.br, Wesley.vieira@pucpr.br,
danielsantos927@hotmail.com

Abstract

The use of strategies to set directions and goals, as well as to plan for the future is inherent in organisations. Most managers have a much greater knowledge on how to develop a strategy than of how to implement it and make it work. The formulation of the strategy should be consistent, clear and focused. Controls and monitoring are intended to demonstrate this integration. The present study aims to examine the strategic alignment in bank branches as well as the actions taken to meet the targets. Part of this study also examines how corporate strategy is communicated, implemented and how the main people in charge and respective organisational structures respond to these procedures and also identify best practices in the bank branches studied, considering the strategic goal of growing business customer base. The research methodology used in the article was done through interviews with managers and was conducted in fifteen medium and large branches of a banking institution located in the city of Curitiba, State of Parana, Brazil. The results show that the corporate strategy is in synergy with the efforts at the operational level. Barriers and constraints to successful implementation were identified in the study as well as best practices identified in the banks studied.

Keywords: Bank branches; Communication strategy; Strategy implementation; Strategy execution.

1 Introduction

The utilisation of strategies to define directions and goals, as well as to plan for the future is common in organisations today. Even informally, the planning and control can be found to be present in the minds of those who direct the organisation. The formulated strategy and planning tends to achieve success with greater facility, because they have a model or a set of decision criteria chosen by the leader which positively contributes to the success of the organisation (HREBINIAK, 2006, p. 41). The purpose of strategic management is to establish what the plans and initiatives are that must be followed to achieve the objectives, goals and established challenges.

The main objective of this research is to (i) analyse the strategic alignment of the bank branches and the implemented actions to achieve their growth goals from their business customer base, (ii) analyse how corporate strategy is communicated, executed and, finally, (iii) how the principal users and respective organisational bodies of the bank branches respond to these procedures.

The challenge faced by the organisations is linked in exactly how to put the strategy into practice, i.e., the implementation and execution. Although it may seem simple, those in the front line do not always have sufficient information about the purpose of what is required to be achieved with the strategy formulated by the company's board of directors.

This is a question of some importance. We recognise the need for further research on the topic, to the extent that there is a lack of synchronisation between the strategy and its implementation.

When looking at this reality, the article aims to answer the following research problem: *How do the bank branch administrators and employees execute the corporate strategies with respect to the expansion of the business customer base, in their own environment?*

To perform this study, one of the largest retail banks in the country was chosen, with both national and international connections. We selected a sample of bank branches from the municipality of Curitiba, State of Parana, as being one of the most important cities and state capitals in Brazil and for the ease of the researchers to be able to visit any one of the bank branches for the implementation of research and observation, where necessary.

2 Empirical Theoretical Background

This section presents the preliminary review of the literature on the themes that support the analysis of empirical data collected, offering a clear positioning of this work in relation to the theoretical foundations discussed below. This overview includes: a study on the organisational analysis based on Hunger and Wheelen (2002), considering the strategy of Resource Based View (RBV) and, in counterpoint, Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2011), questioning the concept of obtaining competitive advantage; a reading about concepts, characteristics and evolution of the strategy, having as support the works of Mintzberg (2006), Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2007) and Hrebiniak (2006); an evaluation of the strategy on business unit, considering that the objective of this research is about the bank branches of a financial institution; a review on the formulation and implementation of the strategy considering the views, among others, of Mintzberg (2006), Harrison (2005) and Hrebiniak (2006); the concepts of strategic alignment with a focus on communication, structures, processes and understanding of vision at all levels of the organisation; the implementation of the strategy based on the studies of Bossidy and Charan (2005), Kaplan and Norton (1997), Hrebiniak (2006) and Harrison (2005), with focus on the steps to implement a strategy and the barriers typically encountered in implementation; the operation of the strategy in order that the whole organisation is aligned and pointing to its implementation and enforcement, supported by paths defined by Hrebiniak (2006) and finally an analysis based on the work of Beer and Eisenstat (2001) about the obstacles to the implementation of a strategy and how to overcome them.

2.1. Organisational Analysis

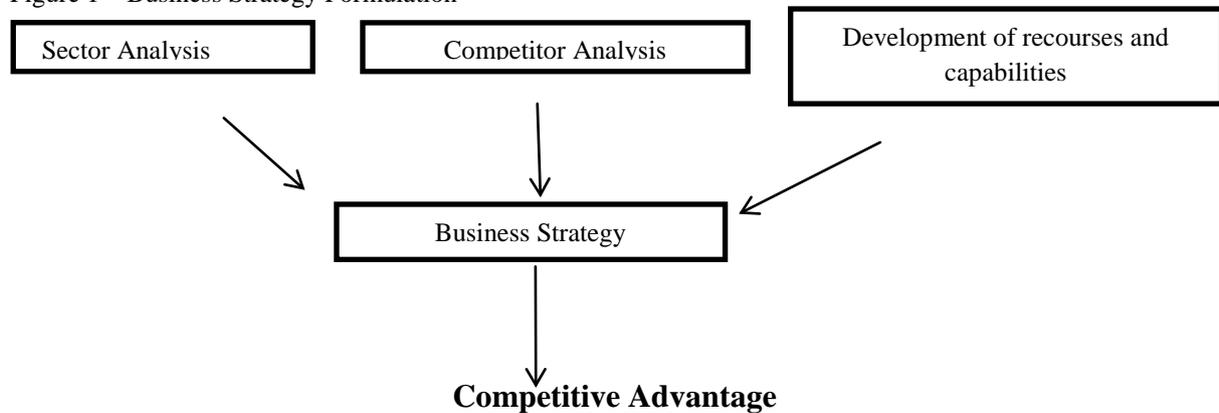
Organisational Analysis, also called internal analysis (and SWOT Analysis), as defined by Hunger and Wheelen (2002, p. 72), lends itself to the identification and development of the resources of an organisation. The internal analysis seeks to assess the quality and quantity of the resources of an organisation, including human resources, materials, financial and organisational capacity and that the organisation has the capability to use these resources in an efficient manner. Performed in a complementary fashion with an external analysis, when using internal analysis, the organisation seeks to compare itself with its competitors, and thus self-assess its own strengths and weaknesses. In this way, the

organisation can determine whether it will be able to "take advantage of opportunities while avoiding threats".

On the other hand, it is important to consider that the competitive advantage for the business, as it was portrayed by Castor and Zugman (2008, p. 111), assumes importance as its strength is derived from its informal structure and the organisational culture resulting from it. This in itself would be an inimitable source of competitive advantage, as the formal structure expressed in org charts can be easily copied by competitors.

For Hrebiniak (2006, p. 87), the company needs to have the capacity to understand its competitors and “develop means and capabilities that create a favourable competitive position”. The internal and external analyses necessary to develop a consistent business strategy and obtain competitive advantage is shown in Figure 1. These analyses make it clear for the organisation "what is possible or feasible in terms of strategic development". For this author, an organisation must "try to match its resources with the external opportunities and position itself in accordance with these, in order to maximise its chances and gain competitive advantage" (HRENIBIAK, 2006, p. 98).

Figure 1 – Business Strategy Formulation



Competitive Advantage	
Main Problems	
Sector Analysis	Size and Concentration of the sector Number of Strategic groups (Market segments) in the sector Power of the buyers or clients Power of the suppliers in the sector Number of products that could be substituted Rivalry in the sector
Competitor Analysis	Resources and Capabilities of the competitor Size and Power of the Competitor's Market Competitor's Strategies Previous defensive and offensive movements of the competitors
Resources and Capabilities	Our own Tangible and Intangible Capacity Our Capacity for Competitiveness Existence of a core competency – Do we have any? Resources and Capabilities of the competitors

From: Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 88.

Hrebiniak (2006, p. 89) argues that "the questions of analysis of figure 1 were presented and discussed in a more than adequate form in the specialised literature, especially by Michael Porter". He continues by arguing that "the planning and business strategy and the conditions that affect the position of the industrial sector and the competitive advantage can also affect the successful implementation of the strategy".

2.2. Strategy: Definitions, Origins, Characteristics

The theoretical basis of the strategy is aimed at structuring proposed aligned concepts to this study, providing a vision of how it can be introduced into the banking world with respect to bank branches studied, and substantiate its applicability.

The use of the expression “strategy” has been utilised for many centuries and was usually associated with military actions with respect to the command or conduct of armies in battles and wars. In an administrative context, there are records going back to the time of Pericles (450 B.C.) already with a sense of administrative skills and management.

2.3. Business Unit Strategies

Harrison (2005, p. 130) mentions that the responsibilities of the business unit managers, which he defines as "the way how an organisation will compete in its chosen markets", include:

- a) establishment of the general direction of the business unit;
- a) constant analysis of the changes in business situations;
- b) selection of a generic strategy and the specific strategies needed to implement the generic strategy (strategic posture);
- c) administration of resources to generate sustainable competitive advantage.

Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2011) show, figure 2, the main strategic themes in the business units.

The competitive strategy, according to Johnson; Scholes and Whittington (2011, p.188), is related to the search for competitive advantage in business level markets or in public services, providing services with the best quality/price ratio, and the different bases of competitive strategy include five important points: Strategy "without frills", low price strategy, differentiation strategy, hybrid strategy and differentiation defined strategy.

As shown in figure 2, managers need to consider the bases in which the strategies based on price or differentiation can be sustained by strategic capabilities, developing lasting relationships with customers or the ability to achieve a lock-in position, thus making it an "industry standard", recognised by suppliers and buyers, and finally, that the collaboration strategies can offer alternatives to competitive strategies or may follow in parallel (JOHNSON; SCHOLE; WITTINGTON, 2011, p.188).

Turning the strategy into action has been seen as an extension of the planning process; it is related to the implementation planning of a model in which a strategy is first formulated and then implemented, being necessary to understand the logic and then persuade the people in relation to what has been proposed, elaborating controls and feedback systems suitable for strategies which can be refined, changed, etc. if required.

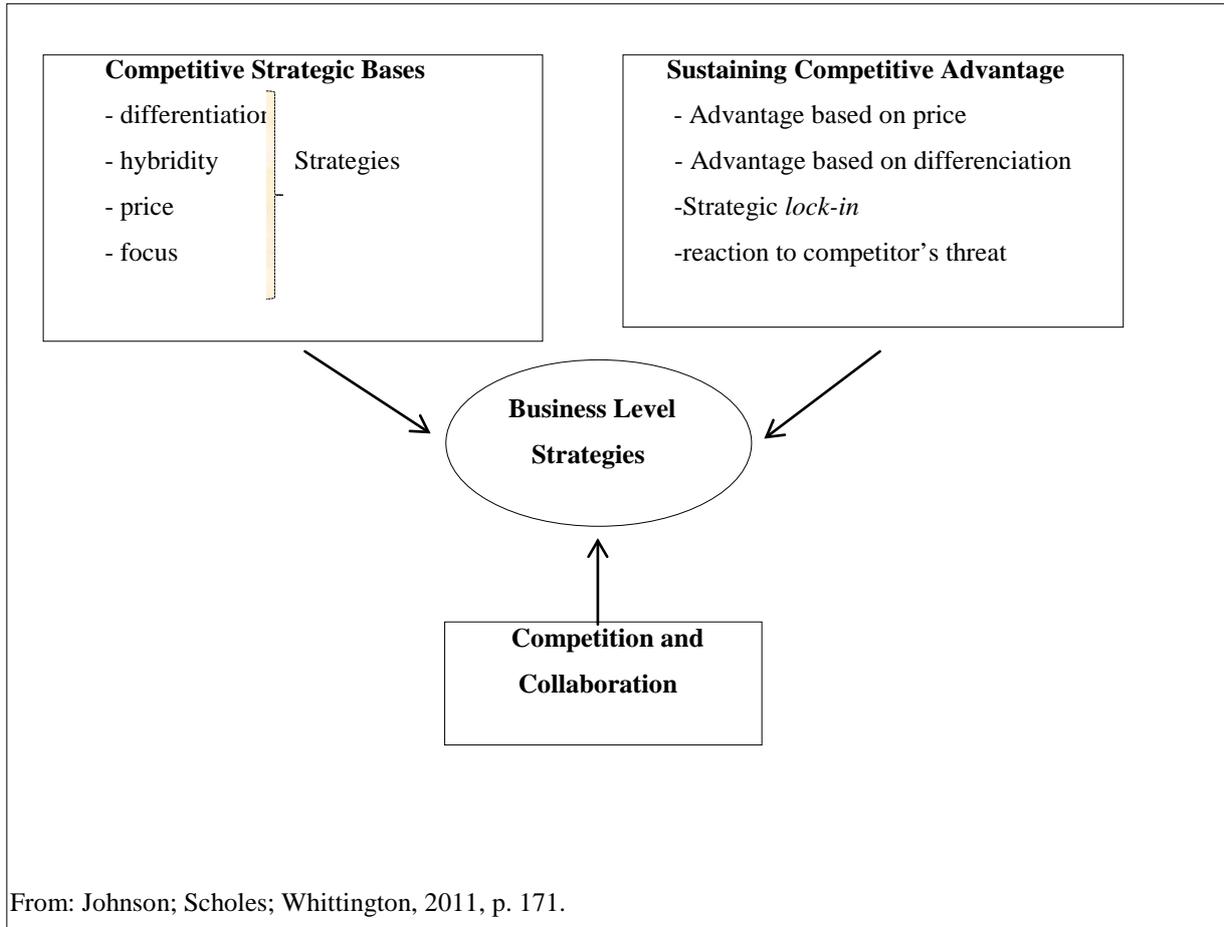
2.4. Strategy Formulation and Implementation

In the specialised literature, a broad discussion about the strategy formulation and implementation can be found. The discussions are in relation to the content and the process of the strategy, the steps and the factors to be considered in the implementation process and also those that determine its effectiveness (BOWER, 1982; MINTZBERG, 1994).

It can be noticed that, in order to promote the implementation, it is necessary to have a clearly defined strategy, as well as arguments on the factors and processes that favour (or not) its implementation.

According to Harrison (2005, p. 37), the strategy implementation consists of "managing relations with the stakeholders and organisational resources, in order to move the organisation towards the successful execution of its strategy, keeping in mind its strategic direction". Taking into account the combination of the strategic administration perspectives - traditional model, a vision based on stakeholder resource and approach - Figure 3 shows a

Figure 2 – Business Level Strategies



From: Johnson; Scholes; Whittington, 2011, p. 171.

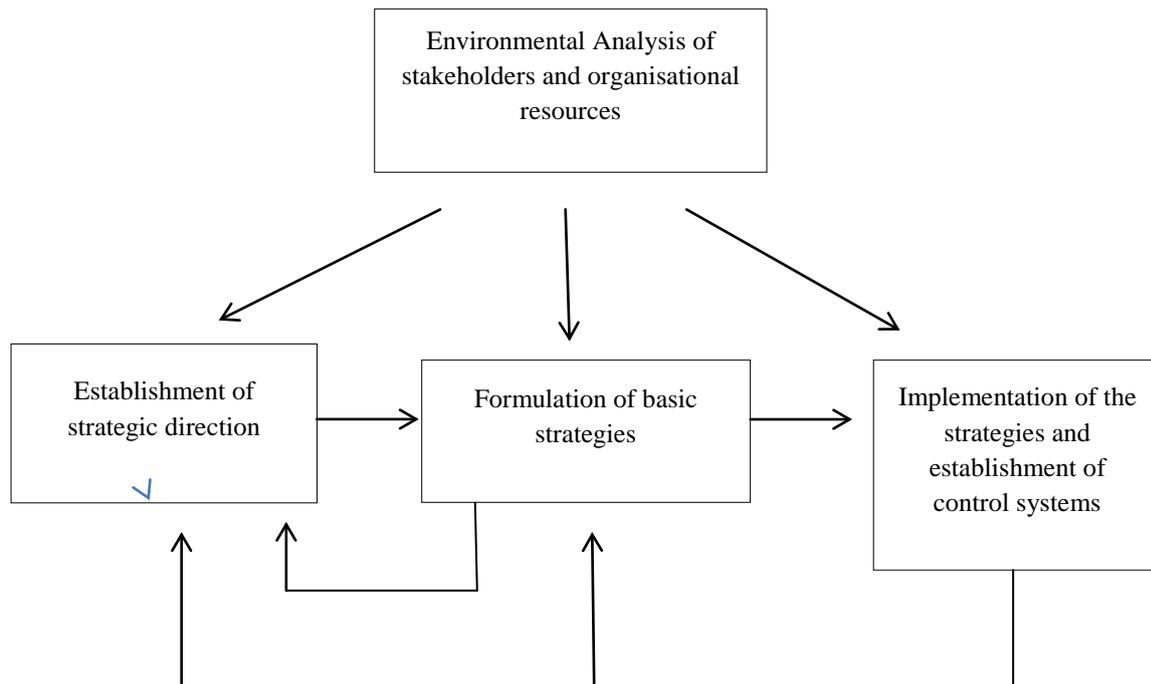
typical sequence of activities; which starts with (1) a situation analysis of both the general and operating environments of the organisation, including internal resources and internal and external stakeholders; (2) establishment of strategic direction, reflected in the organisational mission statement and vision; (3) formulation of specific strategies; (4) implementation of the strategy, which includes the design of an organisational structure, control of organisational processes, administration of relations with stakeholders and administration of resources to develop competitive advantage. The feedback arrows at the bottom of Figure 3 indicate that organisations always return to their initial activities during the strategic administration process as they gather new information and change their points of view. For example: a company may discover that a new strategy cannot be implemented. In this scenario it is necessary to return to the formulation stage to re-evaluate its strategic approach.

2.5. Strategic Alignment

In the process of strategy implementation, the concept of strategic alignment can be found, which involves the communication of the strategy to all levels of the organisation. In the field of strategy, the concept of alignment is also required in both the formulation process, and the strategy implementation.

In the formulation, the concept refers to adjusting the strategy to the competitive environment, creating at the same time the idea of consensus between the strategists about the outcome of the strategic decisions. This influences the level of behaviour and drives the communication of the strategy to other hierarchical levels (EISENHARDT, 1999).

Figure 3 – The Strategic Administration Process



From: Harrison, 2005, p. 35.

2.6. Strategy Execution

It is not possible to deal with the implementation theme without having something to execute. For this reason, the strategy is the all important first step. However, according to Hrebiniak (2006, p. 49), most managers have a much greater understanding about how to develop a strategy, and then develop and carry out a plan than of how to run it and make the strategy work. One of the obstacles that managers often face, is not having a structure, a conceptual model, a guide, a map to guide them, in fact, anything at all to direct them during the implementation in a logical and systematic way.

Kaplan and Norton (1997), in their book “Strategy in Action”, bring the *Balanced Scorecard – BSC* – as a means of assessing the strategy implementation and as its main point of how to achieve results. These authors, by making the BSC available as an instrument of learning by using indicators and thus creating a learning culture in organisations, enable large contributions which allow both high level administrative directors of the organisation as well as managers at various levels to be able to respond to the following questions:

Are we doing everything to meet our strategic goals?

Are we measuring correctly, i.e. are we choosing the correct indicators or do we need to change them?

Can I keep or do I need to change some of the indicators?

Are we achieving the expected results?

3 Metodology

The methodology used in this work presents an overview and the approach of the research process, thus demonstrating the methods, techniques and instruments used to guide the research resources towards the objectives of this study.

The chapter is divided into three sections: the first deals with the specification of the research problem and its limitations; the second details the delimitation of the research, with its design and the definition of the population and sample; the third presents the analysis of

the data, according to the interviews and surveys conducted with the bank branches and with the criteria presented.

3.1. Specification of the Research Problem

The theoretical background presented in section 2 will be applied according to the methodological procedures contained in this section. The research problem of this project is focused on understanding the factors that determine and affect the implementation and enforcement of the bank's corporate strategy into its branches, seeking to identify best practices in relation to the growth of their business customer base. As the review of the literature indicates that the number of functions with this purpose is very low or zero, this proposal assumes an explorative character which will arouse interest in this field of study, and stimulate discussions and further work on the topic.

3.1.1 Research questions

After the theoretical foundation, the research problem provokes some questions that must be answered according to the method employed. These questions reflect the specific goals established to meet the overall objective, as well as being related to relevant questions in the interviews.

In this way, whereas the focus of the research is to examine the implementation and execution of corporate strategy in bank branches, with specific emphasis to the growth of its business customer base, this study will answer the following questions:

How are the strategies communicated, implemented and accompanied in a bank branch?

What processes (developed by the bank branches studied) are used in strategic alignment and implementation to achieve growth in their business customer base?

How do some bank branches manage to outperform others located in the same geographical region?

3.2 Research Delimitation

This subsection presents how the survey was conducted, including the way that the research problem was investigated, detailing the nature and the type of research, as well as the data collection and analysis model.

3.2.1 Population and sample

For the purpose of this study, we opted to choose a financial institution with network of branches in the city of Curitiba, contacting 15 of them, who agreed to participate in the research. These fifteen branches represent 50 per cent of the total number of branches of this financial institution in the city.

In this respect we interviewed:

1st Step: General Managers of the 15 branches

2nd Step: 32 managers split into 14 general managers and 18 business account managers

Between the application of questionnaires 1 and 2, one of the general managers was on vacation and, for this reason, the 2nd step research only had fourteen general managers.

3.3. Data Collection and Processing

The data collection and analysis process encompasses certain procedures, amongst which: encode the answers, classify and tabulate the data, with the respective statistical calculations. Once this step is performed, the data is interpreted, looking to extrapolate

connections between the results obtained here with known results already derived from theories or previous studies (FIGUEIREDO; SOUZA, 2010, p.147).

The interviews involved the general manager and one or more of the business account managers in each bank branch studied. This was deemed to be sufficient, as these managers are the principal executives of each bank branch, as well as having more knowledge of their organisational internal policies especially when relating to their business customers.

4 Presentation and Data Analysis

To start off with, information is presented on the data survey by means of interviews and documentary analysis. It gives a brief profile of the branches studied while preserving its own identification as per the request of the interviewees. Then, the survey results are presented and analysed, correlating the information obtained with the theoretical basis of the study.

4.1. The Bank Branches Studied

The bank branches surveyed for this study are located in the city of Curitiba and are all part of the same financial institution, which operates in the whole country and also abroad.

The fifteen branches were chosen with the agreement of general managers to participate in the research. The survey of primary data occurred through semi-structured interviews. Two or three persons per branch were interviewed, one of them being the required general manager. The interviews with the 15 general managers had average duration of forty-five minutes, and all the interviewees presented relevant contributions to this study. After transcribing the interviews, the second questionnaire was drafted with open and closed questions.

This second questionnaire was created from the responses of the first questionnaire and was addressed to general managers and business account managers, with the purpose to indicate the processes, systems, resources and structure used to reach the growth target of the business customer base. The second questionnaire was prepared with seven questions: 1) structure and tools (material and human resources); 2) structure available to business customers (software, equipment); 3) reports made available by the institution for management and monitoring of goals; 4) reports produced and/or used by the branches, which are complementary to those provided by the institution; 5) degree of importance of the structures, resources, and tools used by bank branches studied; 6) degree of importance of the actions implemented by bank branches for the achievement of their goals and objectives; and 7) degree of importance of incentives intended to business account managers in search of their goals. In the second questionnaire, some fields were highlighted as blank so that the interviewees could supplement them with information considered relevant and that perhaps had not been addressed in the first questionnaire.

The survey of secondary data was performed by means of researching management reports from the bank branches, researching other more generic documents from the financial institution and researching the institution's own web site.

4.2. Data Analysis and Results

The presentation and analysis of the results was structured in three parts, in order to provide better organisation, understanding and utilisation of the results obtained in the research field and linked with the three specific objectives of the study:

- a) analysis of the first questionnaire applied to general managers of the 15 bank branches;
- b) analysis of the second questionnaire applied to general managers and business

- account managers of the 15 bank branches studied;
- c) analysis of the evolution of three indicators comparing the years 2011 against 2010, obtained through the secondary survey in the researched branches, from which the following stand out: customer base; business operating revenue; and loans/financing.

4.2.1. Analysis of the responses to questionnaire 1

In the first questionnaire, aiming to meet the specific goals and research questions of this study, the results were grouped into four topic areas: a) communication of the corporate strategy; b) implementation, alignment and execution of the corporate strategy in the bank branch environment; c) monitoring and control performed by these bank branches to reach the strategic objective; and d) best practices.

4.2.1.1 Communication of the corporate strategy

Analysing the responses of general managers, it was possible to see that a process of communication was adopted by the whole organisation which uses various mechanisms to ensure that the organisation's visions are understood at all levels.

The communication media most often cited were: a) annual meetings with the CEO; b) quarterly meetings with executive director of the branch network; c) monthly meetings with regional superintendent; d) internal network of TV, intranet, communications; and e) training in person or at a distance (e-learning).

4.2.1.2 Implementation, alignment and execution of the corporate strategy

For the strategy implementation to be considered successful, it needs to manage relations with the stakeholders concerned and the available organisational resources with a view to move the organisation towards the successful execution of its strategies and being consistent with its vision.

There is a systemised business model to be followed, in which it defines the number of customers to be contacted and visited per day, with the aim of achieving the proposed objectives.

4.2.1.3 Monitoring and control performed to reach the strategic objective

The analysis of the responses made by general managers and the researcher's observations in the branches studied identified total coherence between the processes and paths mentioned by the authors' analysis in the theoretical framework of this chapter, with the practice, routine and techniques used in bank branches. There is, in fact, in these branches, the existence of a standardised/systemised control process which also serves for the planning of the objectives to be achieved in the month.

One of the instruments for monitoring and control is that branch managers make use of simulators. Through using this, the managers can monitor daily the speed and systematic nature of the production and sales, of both the branch and its employees against the established target. This same simulator can also serve as an instrument to show the variable remuneration value of the employee, if, in fact, the correct assigned values are entered into the simulator.

Many respondents stated that the studies of geo-marketing may set a goal more daring for a particular branch, depending on its regional market share and also on its headcount. Example: having more business account managers equals a higher goal target, as one of the components for goal definition considers the headcount strength of the branch.

With regard to rewards and incentives, theorised by Hrebiniak (2006), Harrison (2005), amongst others, the respondents catalogue some of the organisation's national initiatives and other regional initiatives (at the superintendence or branch level). As will be

seen in the analysis of questionnaire 2, the variable remuneration - additional remuneration - is the main incentive for the employee to achieve and surpass his goal. Furthermore, this incentive works as a kind of control to "calibrate" his actions to the effective execution of the strategy.

4.2.1.4 Best Practices

One of the goals of this study was to identify best practices adopted by bank branches studied. Hrebiniak (2006) states that to execute and make the strategy work involves performing certain procedures, and even changes in behaviour that may lead the organisation to better results. What was identified by the analysis of the responses and also by the observation of the interviewer is that the routine between the different bank branches is very similar and follows a roadmap of well defined processes, both in the implementation of initiatives and actions to make the strategy work and, also, in the monitoring and controlling of the strategy implementation.

These best practices, as Harrison (2005) notes, can be characterised as organisational learning and replicated to other branches, not only as an alternative to do more and better, but also in order to break the inertia of the company perceived as stagnant, quite inflexible (DUCLÓS; SANTANA, 2009), to create the image of a company capable of developing more flexible and adaptable systems, requiring an organisation to be more creative, innovative, effective and with a greater degree of competitive advantage, considering the character that this type of culture provides is difficult to replicate.

4.2.2 Analysis of the responses to questionnaire 2

As was mentioned earlier, questionnaire 2 was formulated from all the considerations of the respondents to questionnaire 1, seeking to identify if a procedure, a control, a strategic action used and mentioned by a general manager is also used by the other managers, and what was the order of their importance or priority. This phase of the research also involved at least one business account manager from each branch researched.

4.2.2.1 Regarding the structure and resources: human and material

Questions 1 and 2 sought to investigate on the structure - material and human resources, software and equipment - available to customers. This data was grouped. It was evident that the utilisation is aligned to the concepts, techniques and instruments defined as essential to the strategy implementation.

With regard to material resources - equipment, software - that the organisation places at the disposal of its managers and business customers, it was observed that: thirteen branches (approximately 87 %) have meeting room which can be reserved for the customers to use; fifteen branches (100 %) stated that they provide their customers with electronic software systems for management billing, accounts payable, channel dedicated to internet banking; thirteen branches (approximately 87 %) offer a cheque reader - an instrument that facilitates and automates the transferring of bank deposits by companies; fourteen branches (approximately 93 %) offer a bulk express service - sending documents to the bank; as regards the use of exchange rate systems and technical support to companies for software use, only the branches three and four, respectively, mentioned that they provide these services.

4.2.2.2 Regarding the mechanisms for monitoring and control

Questions 3 and 4 sought to investigate the reports used by the branches in the identification of the number of new business customers that the branch needs to gain considering its budget and goals and, by which means, manages and performs the monitoring and control of the fulfilment of this objective.

In considering the information given by the thirty-two respondents, it was observed that the reports used are official organisational documents, none of which are of a complementary or bespoke

nature. This fact signals that sufficient information and controls already exist.

Amongst the aforementioned tools stands out: a system of credit limit pre-approval for the prospective customers, which facilitates the first approach with the business; monthly reports with information about the goals - financial; monthly and annual progress reports - comparing with the same period from the previous two years; monthly statement containing the branch objectives and the portfolio, per family of products, each business account manager lists: the strategy implementation; the strategy execution and monitoring and control of the strategy; simulator, through which the manager can schedule how he will perform in each product or product group.

Normally the manager makes his planning for the month by launching his intentions into this simulator and, daily, records that which has already occurred. This allows a very precise monitoring of his results. This simulator also calculates the value of variable remuneration, comparing against the production information that was entered.

5 Final Considerations

This section presents the results reported and analysed in the previous section, seeking to establish ties with the theoretical basis and with the proposed goals. It also presents the contributions and limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies.

This study aimed to examine the process of implementation and execution of corporate strategy in bank branches, considering the expansion of the business customer base. Specifically for this reason, the study sought to analyse and describe how a corporate strategy is communicated, implemented and monitored in a bank branch; analyse the processes developed by bank branches in strategic alignment and implementation; and, finally, identify best practices in the bank branches studied, all with the view to the growth of the business customer base.

It is clear to assume that the strategy or set of strategies of an organisation has, has its own peculiarities and secrets and, for this reason, not everything can be available or open.

The present article brings contributions from the fields of theory and practice, with regard to the former, the work presents the academics' and managers' theories that can be used when a problem arises in the organisational environment, with particular focus on the study of the bank branches. With regard to latter field, the article is important as it shows how those responsible for the strategy implementation in banks can adopt the results of this research as a source of information.

5.1 Conclusions

The research developed allowed us to observe that the strategy in the organisation, to which the bank branches studied belong, is formulated by the senior administrators, from the CEO, executive directors to the areas of planning, finance and geo-marketing studies, i.e. using techniques widely used in the literature, such as the analysis of internal and external environments. This results in challenges and goals established by the bank branches and their collaborators - business units responsible for implementation and execution of corporate strategy. In the environment of the bank branches, the strategy is considered to be functional or operational and, as a process, the strategy is considered to be deliberate, i.e., the strategy required by the leaders of the organisation. Although this sector is marked with rigid rules and regulations, some bank branch managers have demonstrated that creativity can be present.

In the bank branches, evaluating the progress of the implementation and execution of the strategy is shown by means of controls and monitoring systems that measure the performance of these branches and their employees and are connected to an incentive system of rewards and benefits. The overall goal is to maintain the implementation aligned to the strategy, in addition to other formal mechanisms to evaluate performance and feedback.

As for the communication process identified in the primary and secondary surveys adopted by the organisation, it is seen that the same process is presented efficiently to the extent that it is widespread and is feed back through various mechanisms and communication channels such as, for example, meetings, CEO's blog, training sessions, daily bulletins to the branches' commercial teams, amongst others.

With respect to the process of implementing the strategy, which includes its alignment,

implementation and monitoring, the concepts and the steps mentioned in theoretical framework are part of routine procedures for the bank branches studied and their collaborators.

It was evident, in responses to the questionnaires and in secondary research, that the expected annual growth of new business customer accounts to be between ten and fifteen per cent. However, we noted that only four branches were able to overcome the 10 per cent barrier of net increase in its customer base, comparing the year 2011 to 2010.

About barriers and limitations, one of those mentioned was: a little or lack of operational structure of support for the customer account managers. Although many respondents had mentioned this topic in questionnaire 1, only one of the respondents said that in their branch back office support is used. In the perception of general managers, this item only occupied the seventh position in the order of importance of the ten relevant questions, whilst, for the customer account managers, this same question was classified as the fourth most important and virtually tied with the third. This highlights that a gap exists between the perception of general managers and the customer account managers, explaining, a priori, why this support is not encouraged as it should. As a result, it affects the results for both branch and customer account manager. Account managers, with more time for visits and relationship, could accomplish a lot more business, if internal arrangements within the structure of the branch were deployed in order to provide support to them.

As regards controls and monitoring, the reports made available by the organisation were considered to be sufficient, as during the primary and secondary searches, no other mechanisms of monitoring and control were identified other than those used in these official reports.

One of the best practices was the allocation of an account manager acting exclusively in prospecting for new customers and managing a portfolio of training, during a given period, which is compatible with the concept of Hrebiniak (2006) when he mentions that a successful execution requires change management. At the end of this period other branch customers were migrated to the product portfolio, thus changing their portfolio status to a well-formed portfolio or, what the managers term a full portfolio.

The behavioural control via benchmarking, budgets, BSC, systems of incentives and additional remuneration, is applied to the target organisation of the study, and is fundamental to define engagement, alignment and achievement of the expected results.

Bibliography

- BEER, M.; EISENSTAT, R. A. Contra os seis assassinos silenciosos (Against the six silent assassins). **HSM Management Magazine**, São Paulo, p. 119-124, 2001. BEER, M.; BOSSIDY, L.; CHARAN, R. **Execução: a disciplina para atingir resultados** (Execution: the discipline of getting results). 10. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2005.
- BOWER, J. L. Solving the problems of business planning. **Journal of business strategy**, v. 2, n. 3, p. 32-44, 1982.
- BOWER, J. L. Business policy in the 1980's. **Academy of Management Review**, v. 74, p. 630-638, 1980.
- CASTOR, B. V. J.; ZUGMAN, F. **Dicionário de termos de estratégia empresarial** (Dictionary of Business Strategy Terms). 1. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2008.
- DUCLÓS, L. C.; SANTANA, V. L. **Ciclo estratégico da informação: como colocar a TI no seu devido lugar** (Strategic Cycle of information: How to put IT in its proper place) . 1.ed. Curitiba: Champagnat, 2009.
- EISENHARDT, K. M. Strategy as strategic decision making. **Sloan Management Review**, v. 40, n. 3, p. 65-72, 1999.
- FIGUEIREDO, A. M.; SOUZA, S. R. **Como elaborar projetos, monografias, dissertações e teses: da redação científica à apresentação do texto final** (How to elaborate projects, monographs, dissertations and theses: writing scientifically for the final text presentation). 3. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Juris, 2010.

- HARRISON, J. S. **Administração estratégica de recursos e relacionamentos. (Strategic Management: Of Resources And Relationships).** Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2005.
- HREBINIAK, L. G. **Fazendo a estratégia funcionar.** O caminho para uma execução bem sucedida (Making strategy work: Leading successful execution and change). 1. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2006.
- HUNGER, J. D.; WHELLEN, T. L. **Gestão Estratégica: princípios e práticas (Strategic Management: principles and practices).** 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Reichmann Affonso Editores, 2002.
- JOHNSON, G.; SCHOLLES, K.; WHITTINGTON, R. **Fundamentos de estratégia (Fundaments of strategy).** 1. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2011.
- JOHNSON, G.; SCHOLLES, K.; WHITTINGTON, R. **Explorando a estratégia corporativa (Exploring Corporate Strategy).** 7. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2007.
- KAPLAN, R. S.; NORTON, D. P. **A estratégia em ação – Balanced Scorecard (The Balanced Scorecard – Translating strategy into action).** 26. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 1997.
- KAPLAN, R. S.; NORTON, D. P. **Mapas estratégicos: convertendo ativos intangíveis em resultados tangíveis (Strategic Maps: Converting intangible assets into tangible outcomes).** Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 2004.
- MINTZBERG, H. et. al. **O processo da estratégia: conceitos, contextos e casos selecionados. (The Strategic Process: concepts, contexts and selected case studies.)** 4. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman,
- MINTZBERG, H. **Ascensão e queda do planejamento estratégico (Rise and fall of Strategic planning.).** 1. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2004.
- MINTZBERG, H. The fall and rise of strategic planning. **Harvard Business Review**, p. 107-114, 1994.
- MINTZBERG, H.; AHLSTRAND, B.; LAMPEL, J. **Safári de estratégia: um roteiro pela selva do planejamento estratégico (Strategy Safari: The Complete Guide Through the Wilds of Strategic Management).** 1. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2000.
- THOMPSON JUNIOR, A. A.; STRICHLAND III., A. J.; GAMBLE, J. E. **Administração Estratégica (Strategic Management)** 15. ed. São Paulo: McGraw-Hill, 2008.