Assignment

Consider implications of a news story that Amazon is opening 300-400 brick-and-mortar retail/bookstore locations, from the perspective of another retailer: Wal-Mart / Macy’s / Ross / Kohl’s. Think about your company’s value chain, and answer the following questions:

1. **Which topics are you concerned about?**
2. **Where will you gather this information?**
3. **How will you analyze this information?**
4. **How do you link to strategy?**

Gathering CI: The Basics

**Beginning Research**

- Identify what you **know** and what you **need** in order to phrase questions and stay focused.
- **Triangulate** your research, i.e. use multiple sources, for the most robust information. This includes search engines, licensed databases, and primary research.
- Have **Perspective**: Some information, e.g. trade secrets, emerging/niche market statistics, and intelligence on or small and private companies, is very difficult or expensive to find.

**Secondary Research**

- Most widely used CI method
- Google alerts: regular email updates on any search you create
- Google filetype search: “wearable computing” market research filetype:pdf
- Subscribe to RSS feeds from company press pages, industry websites, expert blogs, etc.
- University & Public Libraries: access licensed databases (some may be limited to current students)

**Primary Research (talking to people)**

- LinkedIn: ask executives for an informational interview
- Job Postings: What positions are companies filling?
- Surveys, focus groups, and onsite customer observations, are all types of primary market research
- Trade Associations & Organizations: Feature both industry experts and possibly group-sponsored research reports. Student memberships may cost less!
Sample Scenario:
Barnes & Noble’s Perspective

What topics am I concerned about?
Where will I gather this information?

*First, a B&N executive should drink a concentrated alcoholic beverage... then evaluate the credibility of the news story.

? How is the retail space (including products, services, and atmospheric experience, customer demographics) of the Amazon Books store in Seattle, different from a Barnes & Noble Store?

Primary research:

- Examine and/or visit the various retail spaces.
- Interview consumers about their experiences in these spaces, and the improvements they want.

? What is the current (and evolving) dynamic between Amazon’s digital and physical storefronts?

BRG > COMPANY > Strategy

- 10-K SEC filings * Analyst Conference Call transcripts * Analyst reports
- Skim and keyword search these documents to save time!

? What do different types of consumers want from their shopping experiences, so that Barnes & Noble can differentiate its offerings from Amazon’s?

BRG > MARKETING > Consumers

- Mintel: database covering most aspects of various consumer groups’ lifestyle and shopping behaviors and preferences.
- eMarketer: database covering consumers’ relationships and usage of all types of digital content and devices.

? What are the broad trends affecting my industry as a whole?

BRG > INDUSTRY > Trends

- Business Source Complete: like Google for business research, except it cuts out the extra 3 million results of junk.
- Sample Search: Amazon AND “brick and mortar” (quotes return phrases in “that exact sequence”)
- IBISWorld: Comprehensive baseline reports on and industry, including macro trends.