

## **Strategic planning at Land O' Lakes International Kenya**

Nyagode, Christine

### **Abstract**

Strategic planning is the disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is what it does and why it does it. Strategic planning is concerned with matching the organization to the environment it operates. The challenges of strategic planning are in the involvement of managers in guiding the future direction of the organization. Managers will need to consider what threats and opportunities exist in the future in-order to position the entity appropriately (Bryson 1993). The research was undertaken in order to understand strategic planning at Land O' Lakes International, a not for profit international organization. The objective of the study was to investigate how strategic planning is done at Land O' Lakes International that makes it successful in acquiring many donor funded projects and implementing them amid strict requirements and limited funding. A number of studies have been done in Kenya regarding strategic planning processes in several industries and companies. In-depth interviews were carried out on senior managers who played key roles in strategic planning. Five interviews were conducted on respondents who were highly experienced people in the management of the organization. The country director plays a dominant role in strategic planning and is a very influential figure in providing the right culture. Annual plans are developed however the organization forecasts three year plans. Diverse tools are used in the process of strategic planning however; emphasis is placed on environmental review and financial analysis. Monitoring and evaluation is key to the organization and is ongoing to keep all divisions and projects in focus There is no uniform approach to strategic planning, different companies apply different approaches. It was evident from the research that Land O' Lakes International has put in place a strategic planning system that is unique to its context. The strategy development process is less formal, continuous and is integrated into everyday aspects of work. The strategic planning process is an annual event that is highly formalized, rational and analytical. Factors such as organizational Size, complexity, the need for internal consistency and comprehensiveness will determine how informal a planning system will be. Strategic planning in Land O' Lakes International is not without its complications and challenges. This is due to the complex nature, multi country, multi culture and competitive environment that pose challenges during strategic formulation and implementation. The study was carried out with limited resources and time more resources and time would be needed to get a deeper and clearer picture. The findings of a case study cannot be used to make generalizations regarding planning in diversified firms in Kenya.