



Exploring the Nature of Business Strategy Change for Mental Health Practices in the Age of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The Convergence Lab (TCL) is a mental health medical group practice that provides group and individual therapy for its adult clients. TCL is a 5-year-old organization with five clinicians and one full-time office manager. As a result of COVID-19, TCL has experienced a 75% decrease in revenue since patients are unable to complete their appointments in person. The paper examines how one mental health medical group practice used a management consultant to help the practice change its business strategy to respond to COVID-induced business challenges using automation and technology driven strategic approaches. This inquiry uses organizational development action research intervention and a content analysis of the literature to create real-world solutions that will have value to scholar practitioners that are doing applied research to help similar organizations that are challenged to respond to the global pandemic.

KEYWORDS

Business Strategy, Counseling, Management Consulting, Strategic Change, Strategic Planning, Tele-Counseling

INTRODUCTION

This case study examines real life data for a one mental health medical group that is has been given the fictitious name of TCL at the request of the organization to protect its privacy and intellectual property. This case represents an intervention from a management consultant to help the practice respond to COVID-induced business challenges. Implementing a strategic market management process allows organizations to manage volatility occurring in an organization's external environment (Aaker, 2001).

Before COVID-19, TCL lacked a formalized strategy to address the pandemic. As a result, a management consultant brought the help given over 75% decline in revenue due to COVID-19. Unlike a single strategic planning event that is often completed once, annually, using a strategic change process allows organizations to continuously take in information, thereby deconstructing the organization from

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a predetermined, time-bound planning cycle (Aaker, 2001). The Convergence Lab used a management consultant to help the organizations adopt a strategy to respond better to COVID-19.

Strategic planning ideologies emerged and dominated the strategic management process between the 1960s and the 1980s (Emerald, 2003). The process encompasses a business's structured review of its customers and markets to craft a strategy to respond to changing market forces (Aaker, 2001). These organizational strategy changes might include plans to move into new markets or prioritize learning priorities and more (Aaker, 2001).

Strategic planning consultants have a myriad of tools for facilitating the planning process. One of these tools is a SWOT analysis, a review of an organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to craft organizational strategies around opportunities, strengths, and competitive advantages. (Krogerus et al., 2018). SWOT analysis helped clarify organization members and design strategies to bolster strengths and mitigate weaknesses (Krogerus et al., 2018).

Overview of the Problem

TCL is a mental health medical group practice that provides group and individual therapy for its adult clients. TCL is a 5-year old organization with five (5) clinicians inclusive of one (1) full-time office manager, and five clinicians are full-time staff. As a result of COVID, TCL has experienced a 75% decrease in revenue since patients cannot complete their appointments in person.

Research Method

This inquiry uses organizational development action research intervention and a content analysis of the literature. This paper utilizes articles from existing literature that explores the complexities and challenges facing mental health businesses in the pandemic. The value of a content analysis review of the literature is the ability to take dispersed, innovative perspectives and emerging research on a topic and articulately merge them for practitioner digestion or as a base-level foundation for future academic research. Databases used include ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Google Scholar, Business Source Corporate, ProQuest Business, and ProQuest News. Keywords included COVID-19 and counseling, Business Strategy and COVID-19, Change Management, Management Strategy, Strategic Planning, Planned Change, telemedicine, and Tele-counseling. The focus combined the use of seminal literature and current literature in 5 years.

Organizational development action research is a methodical examination approach to analyze real-world problems, establish evidence, apply established theories, engage in data collection interventions, present reliable results, and develop viable solutions (Stringer & Aragón, 2020; Masters, 1995; O'Brien, 1998).

This approach is the core methodology for management and organizational development consultants (Stringer & Aragón, 2020; Cheung-Judge and Holbeche, 2015). The ability to marry practical and theoretical frameworks in the study of complex organizations in real-time highlights the worth, value, and importance of organizational development action research as an approach (Stringer & Aragón, 2020; Masters, 1995; O'Brien, 1998).

Strategic Management Process Framework

Developing a strategic market management process takes intentionality and commitment. However, when an organization designs its strategy, develops an infrastructure to sustain it, and implements the procedure, it will be poised to reap the process's benefits. After much review, the management consultant chose to use Aaker's strategic market management process framework to design and manage the strategic changes needed to improve business. The management consultant believes Aaker's framework is a straightforward structure and is conducive to integrating other organizational and change models into the framework as needed. Aaker's framework for strategic market management has two main components: (1) strategic analysis and (2) strategic identification and selection (2001).

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