

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Nowadays, it's impossible to imagine any business without strategic planning. The world is changing so fast that moving forward without direction feels like walking blindfolded. War, migration, digitization all of these factors are playing the biggest role.

I've had the chance to observe how these processes play out in real life through Raccoon School. They started as a small language studio has gradually grown into something much more impactful. What amazed me the most was how they responded to the full-scale war in Ukraine. Instead of pausing operations or waiting for stability, they adapted programs online, opening branches abroad, and reshaping the way they deliver education to meet people where they are. And most importantly, they've kept their humanity. Education, in its core, is built on trust. That strategy becomes crucial. When a school understands why it exists, where it's heading, and what values it wants to stand for, it builds an inner stability. That kind of focus helps it endure even in the most unpredictable conditions [1].

To better understand what influence on school's strategy, we applied the PESTLE model. It's a tool that helps break down the external influences into six categories: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental.

Starting with politics, the war and resulting migration forced a dramatic shift. Raccoon quickly responded by offering educational support to Ukrainians abroad and creating international programs. Economically, people have become more cautious with money. Raccoon adjusted by focusing on practical, life-oriented courses such as English for medical workers or IT specialists. Social factors also play a key role. Today's learners, especially the younger generation, aren't just looking for grammar drills — they're looking for real connection and personal growth.

Technology is, of course, a one of the main influencers. But it's not enough to simply move lessons online. The way technology is integrated matters. Raccoon's platform feels smooth and user-friendly, not like an afterthought. This shows they don't just follow trends, they prioritize the student experience.

Legal aspects are less visible but even more important, especially when working across borders. Operating in both Ukraine and Poland means navigating two very different bureaucratic systems, and doing it carefully. This kind of behind-the-scenes effort often goes unnoticed but can make or break a project.

Surprisingly, even environmental factors come into. While not a major focus, their shift to online education helps reduce unnecessary transport, printed materials, and office space — which aligns well with today's sustainability mindset [2,3].

To dive deeper into the school's activity, I also used SWOT analysis. Raccoon's strengths include a committed team, flexible approaches, and strong emotional intelligence. Weaknesses? Like any growing project, they're still small in scale and somewhat dependent on a few key individuals. That could be risky. Opportunities lie in expanding further internationally and partnering with companies. Threats, of course, include a competitive market, economic pressure, and free learning apps.

Looking at Porter's Five Forces added more context. Students today have a lot of options — so buyer power is high. The competitive rivalry in language education is also intense, from private tutors to global apps. But Raccoon stands out by offering something tech alone can't. Its personal support. As for suppliers, in this case, the teachers, they're actually scarce and valuable, so creating a strong internal culture becomes strategic. Substitutes like Duolingo or YouTube exist, yes, but they can't replace a real person telling you, "You're doing great. Don't give up."

Marketing also plays a role, but not the kind that relies on loud ads. Raccoon speaks with honesty and humor. They communicate like real people, not a faceless brand. That kind of authenticity isn't just refreshing it builds loyalty.

And behind all of this is logistics — the scheduling, teacher selection, feedback loops. These operational details create an invisible structure that holds the school together. Students may not see the system, but they feel it in the reliability and the overall comfort of the experience [2,3,4].

After doing this analysis, we came to a simple conclusion: strategy in education business isn't about spreadsheets and forecasts. It's about being honest about who you are, what you can offer, and who you want to help. If you have that clarity plus a strong team and a willingness to evolve then even a small school can grow into something truly meaningful.

References

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