**Strategic Management**

**Jun 2025 Examination**

**Q1. Panniker Foods is a 100-year spices company based in Kottayam, Kerala. The company has been owned & managed by the Panniker family since its inception by its founder Cherayi Panniker – who had started the company after his retirement as the royal chef to the Maharaja of Kerala. From modest beginnings, the company has grown organically to a turnover of Rs.300Cr. Traditionally, the company has been run as a family business, with each generation of the Panniker family automatically joining it – as have all the employees and their families.**

**Aju Panniker, the great-grandson of the founder has completed his B.Tech in Food Technology in Kerala and as well, his MBA from the Marshall School of Business at USC in Los Angeles, California. Thereafter, he has worked for 10years at Heinz Ketchup in the USA. With the current family management growing older, Aju has now returned to head the company as its MD & CEO. Aju is now keen to apply Strategic Management principles to make the company competitive and relevant to the 21st century. Explain how Strategic Management can lead to a Competitive Advantage.**

**Ans 1.**

**Introduction**

Strategic Management is a critical tool for organizations navigating today’s dynamic business environment. For a legacy firm like Panniker Foods, which has thrived for over a century through traditional operations, adopting modern strategic approaches is crucial for ensuring long-term sustainability and growth. With Aju Panniker’s global exposure and academic foundation in food technology and management, the company is now poised for transformation. The application of strategic management will help Panniker Foods reevaluate its internal capabilities, market position, and future direction. This process involves aligning the company’s mission with evolving customer expectations, improving competitiveness, and

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**Q2. GREAT Engineering is a 60-year-old Machine Tool firm based in Pasadena, California. The company has been founded, owned & managed by the Trent Family**

**– in fact, the company’s name is an acronym for the Founders, the brothers GRaham, Edward and Albert Trent. The founders were in fact living the “American Dream” - From modest beginnings, the company has grown organically from a small Contract Machine Shop producing Auto & Aerospace components to a Manufacturer of CNC Vertical Milling Machines with a turnover of $400M. Traditionally, the company has been run as a family business, with the next generation of the Trent family automatically joining it – as have all the employees and their families.**

**With the current family management growing older, and in order to stay competitive, the Trent family has agreed for GREAT Engineering to be acquired by Milligan & Daniels – the world’s Largest Machine Tool firm. Dean Trent, the eldest grandson of Graham has completed his BS in Engineering and as well, his MBA from UCLA, California, is currently the company’s SVP of Operations. Milligan & Daniels is now keen to apply Strategic Management principles to ensure that GREAT Engineering stays competitive and relevant. Dean has been asked to head the company’s adoption of Strategic Management methods. Discuss the phases of Strategic Management principles and how they contribute to the long-term success of a firm. (10 Marks)**

**Ans 2.**

**Introduction**

Strategic Management is a dynamic process that enables organizations to define goals, make informed decisions, and align resources to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. For a legacy company like GREAT Engineering, transitioning from a family-run business to being part of a global corporation like Milligan & Daniels presents both challenges and opportunities. With Dean Trent leading the charge, the application of Strategic Management principles becomes critical to preserving the firm’s heritage while ensuring relevance in a globally competitive market. This process will support data-driven decision-making, innovation, operational excellence, and long-term value creation. By methodically following the phases of Strategic Management, GREAT Engineering can evolve from a traditional setup into a

**Q3 (A) Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak famously started Apple in a garage and began to develop their unique business strategy. The two men had a rough breakdown of business responsibilities: Jobs handled business and creativity, while Wozniak engineered their creations. The problem? Both Jobs and Wozniak were young men without any real business experience, and they needed expert guidance if they were going to get their company off the ground. So, they built a board and brought business experts to help get the fledging tech company going.**

**And that they did. Apple began to churn out revolutionary computer products, led by the genius of Jobs and Wozniak. Jobs, however, wanted to be CEO. The board pushed back because they felt that Jobs pushed people too hard, rubbed people the wrong way, and burned bridges left and right. He was building an incredible business but making everyone around him unhappy. As a result, Apple’s board believed he wasn’t ready for the CEO role because they felt that he was following Mintzberg’s Entrepreneurial Mode of Strategy.**

**Describe Mintzberg’s Entrepreneurial Mode of Strategy. What are its Pros & Cons.**

**Ans 3a.**

**Introduction**

The entrepreneurial mode of strategy, as described by Henry Mintzberg, is typically associated with bold visionaries leading an organization with a central focus on innovation and growth. This strategic mode often emerges in new or young companies driven by a strong leader who is passionate about ideas and willing to take risks. In Apple’s early days, Steve Jobs exemplified this approach by focusing intensely on product innovation, user experience, and disruptive thinking—hallmarks of entrepreneurial strategy, but also sources of organizational

**Q3(B) In 1983, Jobs recruited the CEO of PepsiCo, John Sculley, to be Apple’s CEO. The Board heartily endorsed Sculley’s appointment as they’d seen his work at PepsiCo and felt that he embodied Mintzberg’s Planning Mode of Strategy.**

**Describe Mintzberg’s Planning Mode of Strategy. What are its Pros & Cons. (5 Marks)**

**Ans 3b.**

**Introduction**

Mintzberg’s Planning Mode of Strategy reflects a systematic and analytical approach to business decision-making. This model is often applied in mature organizations where formal planning processes are in place. When John Sculley joined Apple as CEO, he embodied this mode with his structured, data-driven approach to leadership—very different from Steve Jobs's instinctive, entrepreneurial style. The Planning Mode aims to mitigate risks through careful