



CASE STUDY:

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE / THREAT ANALYSIS

"Our primary competitor had signaled its intent to launch a new product design and ordering system, and we needed to know if it would leapfrog our own. Through interviews with suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders, Line of Sight provided a detailed picture of the new capability and we responded confidently."

-Vice President Marketing, Manufacturing

Situation:

A mid-sized manufacturer in the Midwest has long been successful as the industry's number two player behind a much larger competitor by pursuing a differentiation strategy. One successful aspect of this strategy has resulted in a clear competitive advantage in the area customer service and service after the sale. With Line of Sight Group's market surveillance, however, we discovered that the large competitor had recently hired an executive from Disney, a company known for its excellence in customer experience, but little else was known. If this hiring was a signal that the competitor was intending to make improvements to its customer service, it represented a real threat to one of our client's primary advantages in the market.

Solution:

Line of Sight initiated a project to first verify the details of the hiring and then to assess the true risk it represented to the client. Through a combination of secondary, observed and primary data collection, we began to put the pieces together. The executive had in fact been hired to lead the company's customer service area and he had strong experience in several customer service-related areas within Disney. Moreover, we discovered that a major restructuring was being planned for the department including reassigned responsibilities, a human resources shakeout and a change in the physical location of the departments relative to the production areas. Having monitored this competitor for several years for our client, however, we also knew that the overall corporate culture was slow to change and that there was time to formulate a response.



Benefit:

Our client was able to evaluate several response options and had time to put them in place. Responses included sales force training on how to "pre-sell" before the competitor began making claims, a marketing campaign that emphasized the company's historic commitment to service, and investments in operational and technology improvements to ensure its hold as the industry leader in service.

