CELL BRIEFS · NO. 6 · NOVEMBER 5, 2026

Positional Advantage

The cell both market orientation papers cite.

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POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE

FAMILY	3 · Resources and Capabilities
ERA	3 · Competitive Advantage (1980s)
BLOCK	IN · Inputs
TIER	3 · Landmark
ROLE	Defining statement
LINEAGE	Cell 2 of 6 in the Resources and Capabilities column

ANCHOR WORKS

Day and Wensley (1988), *Assessing Advantage: A Framework for Diagnosing Competitive Superiority*, Journal of Marketing.

BY THE NUMBERS

6 curated links out, second only to Market Orientation

27 anchor works cite it, across 11 families

11 Core cells hold one of those citing works

31 years from Alderson's differential advantage to this diagnostic

RELATED CELLS

Da Differential Advantage · **Cp** Market-Driven Capabilities · **Ra** Resource-Advantage Theory · **Ps** Competitive Positioning

Next in the series: **Hy** Computer-Mediated Markets, **Sq** Service Quality, **Cv** Customer Value.

WHAT IT IS

Day and Wensley framed competitive advantage as a cycle: sources of advantage (superior skills and resources) yield positional advantages (superior customer value or lower relative cost) that produce performance outcomes, which are reinvested in the sources. Assessment, they argued, needs both competitor-centered and customer-focused measures. It is the bridge between Porter's positions and the resource-based view, written for marketing before either camp had claimed the field.

THE LINEAGE



Second cell in a column with no block drift. Alderson named differential advantage; Day and Wensley gave it a diagnostic. Every later cell in the column (capabilities, adaptive capabilities, excellence) is a refinement of their "sources" box.

WHERE IT TRAVELS

Six curated links out, second only to Market Orientation: **Resource-Advantage Theory**, **Customer Value**, **Brand Equity**, **Enviropreneurial Marketing**, **Market-Based Assets**, and **Sustained MO Advantage**. Eleven deep-dive mentions in ten more places, from the value chain and logistics capabilities to export venture performance and corporate environmentalism.

WHAT IT RESTS ON

Two curated links in, from opposite ends of the table: **Competitive Positioning** (column 1; Porter's positions restated as outcomes of skills and resources) and **Market Share Effect** (column 18; PIMS measures as the performance side of the cycle). Its reference list reaches back to Smith (1956) on segmentation, Abell (1980), and Jacobson and Aaker (1985).

DESCENDANTS YOU WOULD NOT GUESS

27 anchor works in 11 families cite it; 11 Core cells hold one. Its descendants are the 1990s: **Market Orientation** (both 1990 anchors), **Resource-Advantage Theory** (Hunt and Morgan, 1995), **Learning Orientation** (Slater and Narver, 1995), **Innovativeness** (Han, Kim, and Srivastava, 1998), then **Marketing Capabilities** (2005), **Sustained MO Advantage** (2011), **Brand-Customer Asset Link** (2012), **CMO and Marketing Power** (2015), and **Marketing Excellence** (2020).

THREE THINGS THE CELL DOES NOT SHOW

1. **The parent of market orientation.** Kohli and Jaworski, Narver and Slater, Jaworski and Kohli (1993), MARKOR, and Deshpandé, Farley, and Webster (1993) all cite it. The orientation family's measurement program rests on a diagnostic from the capabilities family.
2. **The logic of "source of advantage."** Whenever a family claims that something (a brand, a relationship, an environmental stance, customer value) is a source of advantage, the curated link runs back here. Six families make that claim.
3. **Porter on one side, PIMS on the other.** Its two curated sources are Competitive Positioning and the Market Share Effect, the first and last columns of the table. The cell sits where the two 1980s traditions were reconciled.

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