

Category

Strategy

Core vs Edge Strategy Playbook

Defend, extend, and create — three distinct plays for three parts of the business

- Executive
- Intermediate
- Template Included

- Mithun A. Sridharan
- 01 February 2019
- 4 minute(s)

Overview

A framework for classifying business activities into core, adjacent, and edge, and applying the right strategic play — defend, extend, or create — to each instead of one uniform strategy across the whole business.

How is this different from the Three Horizons model?

Three Horizons organizes investment by time horizon (near-term to long-term). Core vs Edge organizes it by the business's current centrality to competitive advantage, which is a related but distinct lens — a Horizon 1 initiative can be either core-defending or edge-extending depending on what it actually does.

What counts as "edge"?

Activities genuinely peripheral to current competitive advantage — early-stage experiments, small emerging business lines, or capabilities being tested for future relevance — not simply "smaller" parts of the existing core business.

```
{ "@context": "https://schema.org", "@type": "FAQPage", "mainEntity": [ { "@type": "Question", "name": "How is this different from the Three Horizons model?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Three Horizons organizes investment by time horizon (near-term to\nlong-term). Core vs Edge organizes it by the business's current\ncentrality to competitive advantage, which is a related but distinct\nlens — a Horizon 1 initiative can be either core-defending or\nedge-extending depending on what it actually does." } }, { "@type": "Question", "name": "What counts as \"edge\"?", "acceptedAnswer": { "@type": "Answer", "text": "Activities genuinely peripheral to current competitive advantage —\nnearly-stage experiments, small emerging business lines, or
```

capabilities\nbeing tested for future relevance — not simply \"smaller\" parts of the\nexisting core business.\" } }] }

Subscriber access

Unlock this playbook

This playbook — including every framework, template, and step-by-step section — is available free to Think Insights subscribers. Enter your email to unlock it instantly and get our weekly insights newsletter. No account needed, and access is remembered on this device.

First Name

Last Name

Email

Country

☐ I agree to data processing in accordance with GDPR

Leave this field blank

References

Related playbooks

Strategy

Board Strategy Committee & Governance Playbook

A framework for structuring a board-level strategy committee — its mandate, the metrics it reviews, and its standing agenda — so it adds real strategic oversight

- Executive
- Intermediate
- Template Included

[Read playbook](#)

Strategy

Corporate Strategy: From Vision to Executable Roadmap

Turn your company vision into an executable roadmap: a proven cascade from strategic pillars to OKRs to a resourced, quarterly-reviewed plan

- Executive
- Intermediate
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

[Read playbook](#)

Strategy

Turnaround & Restructuring Strategy Playbook

A structured approach to corporate turnarounds, sequencing immediate stabilization, strategic refocusing, and relaunch so recovery efforts don't collapse into a

- Executive
- Advanced
- Template Included
- Workshop Ready

[Read playbook](#)

Talk to us about your business portfolio

Tags

- Core Business Strategy
- Business Portfolio
- Innovation Strategy

Author

Mithun A. Sridharan

I'm Mithun A. Sridharan, Founder of this website - Think Insights - on Strategy, Management Consulting, Leadership, Digital Transformation, and Data Literacy. Follow me on social media or connect with me on LinkedIn for updates.