

# Final Report

## Group 1b. Software Evaluation

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July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Management System software developed in the Spring 2003 IPRO targets medium-sized family businesses. Research finds that most midsized companies do not have a strategic plan. (Final Report, 2003) The SMS software incorporates critical factors, such as the customer, the internal process, and the learning and growth of the business, in addition to the financial aspect that midsized businesses are primarily concerned with.

Our teams focus was the development of a super software template. The future members of the IPRO team will use this template to develop the next version of the software. This team plans to complete a strategic market review of the various strategic management software available today. The team has come up with a criteria list that was used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the software that were reviewed. This criteria list also became the source of the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis that was done for each of these companies. The continuous evaluation of the position of the SMS software in the market place is important in order to identify new trends and upcoming challenges. The strengths of other systems were identified, and will soon be used to enhance the performance and applicability of our own system. A majority of the time spent by the group was in developing an acceptable criteria list and then subsequently ranking the software by this list.

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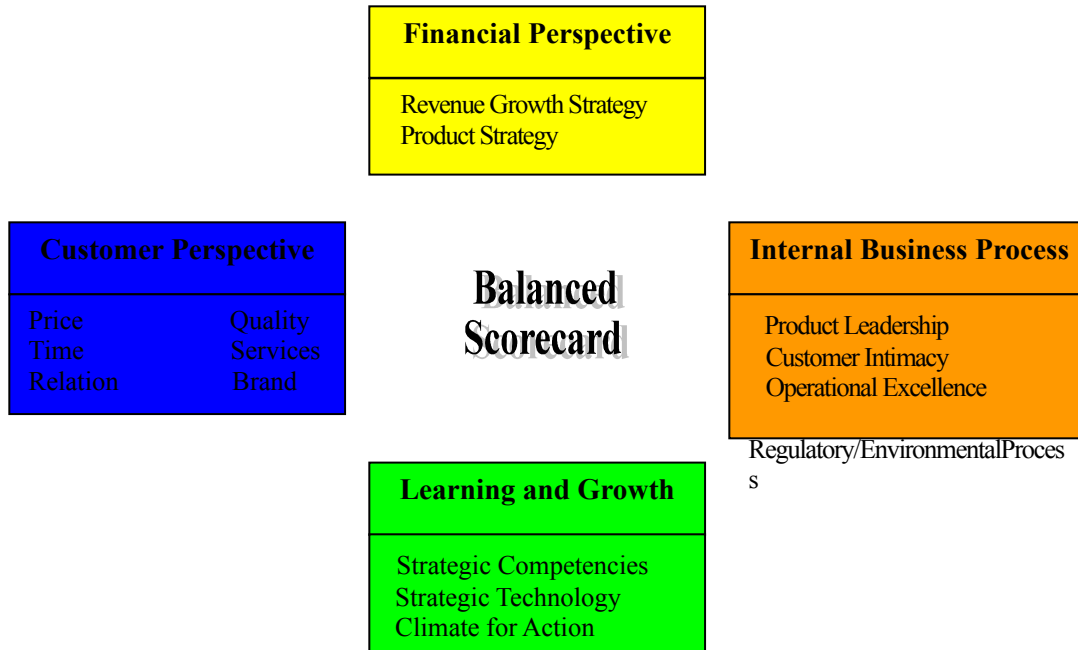
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## **1. Introduction & Background of the Project**

### **1.1 Balanced Scorecard (BSC)**

The Balanced Scorecard is a concept proposed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton. It is a performance measurement and management system using objectives to measure in four inter-related perspectives – financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth. (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) The BSC enables companies to track financial results while simultaneously monitoring progress in building the capabilities, and acquiring the intangible assets needed for future growth. The BSC is not a replacement for financial measures; it is a complement. (Kaplan & Norton, 1996)

There are five important principles that help execute strategy rapidly in BSC. According to “The Balanced Scorecard” an article by Kaplan and Norton, the first principle is ‘Mobilize change through executive leadership’. This principle encourages the executive team to recognize the involvement in the project. The second principle is ‘Translate the strategy into operational terms’ that puts emphasis on translating strategic objectives that are organized from four perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes, learning and growth (refer to Figure 1). Another principle is ‘Align the organization to the strategy’. This principle means that BSC helps to define the strategic linkages that integrate the performance of multiple organizations. ‘Make strategy everyone’s everyday job’ is the next principle. For instance, in order for everyone to contribute to the organization, there are three processes required: using communication and education to create awareness, aligning personal objectives with the strategy, and linking compensation to the scorecard. Finally, the last principle is ‘Make strategy a continual process’. This means that strategy should be linked to the budgeting process, and the organization should also have a management meeting to review the strategy on a timely basis.



**Figure 1 Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard**

## 1.2 Strategic Management System (SMS)

Since the development of BSC by Robert Kaplan and David Norton, many strategic management softwares have implemented the BSC as part of their strategy framework for instance the Kalidonis Model, a strategy developed by George Kalidonis with the capabilities of the BSC as a framework for implementing and managing strategy, in addition to the Kalidonis model the Strategic Management System(SMS) was developed. Besides the four inter-related perspectives used by the BSC, the SMS software includes vision and mission (refer to Figure 2). Led by Dr. David Pistrui, the SMS Software aims at small to medium-sized family businesses in the Chicagoland area that have between 20 to 500 employees with value greater than \$10 million. (Final Report, 2003)

The biggest advantage of the SMS is that it is free, and can be accessed anywhere with username and password as long as one can access to Internet. With its web-base capabilities, company management can lay out their future planning even at home late at night, whenever wherever. With the newly added Spell Checking ability over the spring, and a well define glossary, help can be obtain easily.

This semester, the SMS software is going to be made more user-friendly to customers. Therefore, users without any technical background or business background will find this software easy to use.



**Figure 2 Kalidonis & Pistrui SMS model**

## **2. Team Goals**

The following are the major goals that have been set for the Software Evaluation

Group:

- Identify, organize and evaluate a series of different software systems
- Analyze and create a rating system to benchmark and rank product/service offerings
- Develop and present examples of how different software systems can be integrated and applied to practice

On further examination the following sub-goals were identified to help the team complete the primary goals listed above.

- What are the primary and secondary concerns of the user of a management system, and how do we evaluate such a system from the users' point-of-view
- Compile a list of our competitors in this area
- Make a ranking system and use it to rank the strength and weaknesses of our competitors, preferably using a matrix that can visually depict these aspects
- Create an outline of a super software comprised of the identified strengths of the competitive software
- Do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the competing software systems
- Help Mappware in identifying its target market

### **3. Market Analysis**

#### **3.1 Market Research**

Small and medium-sized businesses are at the beginning of great expansion, according to the research of respected industry trade journals. However, they are also experiencing a great dilemma. A report from American Family Business Survey (AFBS) by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company and the Raymond Institute stressed the lack of strategic planning in family businesses. It found that 60 percent of family businesses do not have a formal strategic plan for their business. Those that do have a strategic plan are sabotaging themselves by not communicating it effectively throughout the company. Aside from this, another problem family businesses face is transition of ownership. Of 40 the leadership that is expected to retire within the next five years, only 43% have chosen their successors. (Final Report, 2003) The companies that have no formal strategy plan and are on the edge of leadership change are the primary target market of the SMS software.

According to Pulse Online magazine, small and medium-sized companies are looking to expand their current computer software. However, the expenses associated with the purchases of business software, as well as the technology and staff required to maintain it, is a major setback. Hence, application service providers (ASPs) have become popular. "Application Service Providers (ASPs) are third-party entities that manage and distribute software-based services and solutions to customers across a

wide area network from a central data center”. (Webopedia.com, 2003) In a research done by the Gartner Group, it is estimated that the ASP market will grow from \$2.7 billion in 1999 to \$22.7 billion by 2003. (Final Report, 2003) In view of the expected growth in small and medium-sized businesses, along with the need for business software, there is a definite potential market for SMS.

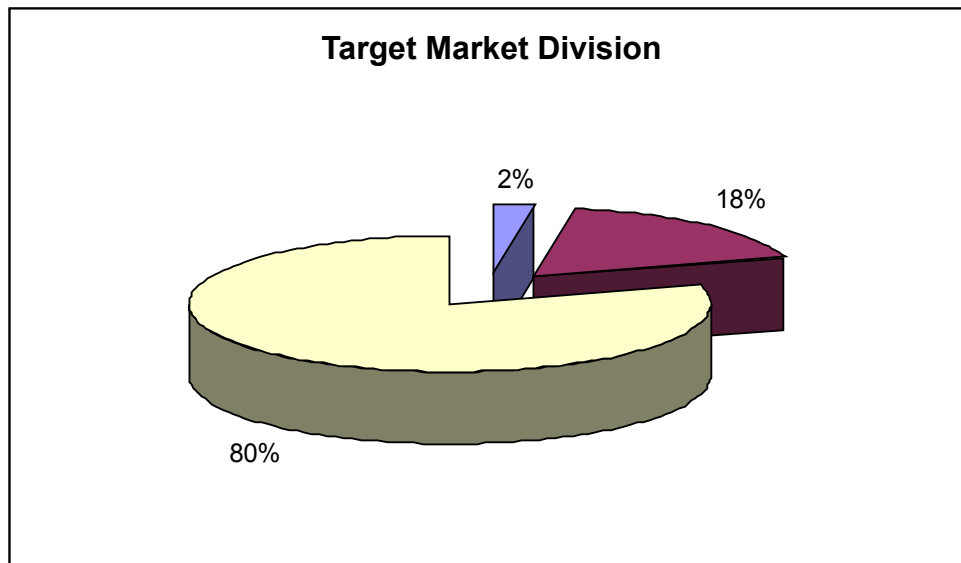
### 3.2 Market Analysis

According to Small Business Administration and 1998 Business Reference Guide, the size of a company is defined by the number of employees and/or amount of businesses. Size is divided as follow:

- Small: any business with 20 to 100 employees and/or priced at less than \$1 million
- Medium: any business with 101 to 500 employees and/or priced between \$1 million and \$20 million
- Large: any business with more than 500 employees and/or priced at more than \$20 million

Types of Business	Number of Businesses in Chicagoland area
Small	16,604
Medium	3,820
Large	497

**Table 1 Division of businesses according to the number of employees**





**Figure 3 Division of our target market based on the data from Table 1**

The target market of SMS consists of small to medium-sized, family- and closely-held enterprises, and non-profit/educational business in the Chicagoland area. Non-profit and educational businesses include hospitals, universities, schools, and chambers. According to the Census reports of 2000, there are 3,820 businesses out of 20,921 in the Chicagoland area that fit into our target market. (Final Report, 2003)

## **4. Competitor Analysis**

### **4.1 Competitor Comparison Guide**

The method that was used to analyze the software is presented below as a flowchart. The way we chose to pursue the analysis was to first analyze the target market the software was focusing on since the major part of the software construction is the user (i.e. the target market). The main classifications we focused on in the target market are the customers and the users. The customers are the buyers of the software, and the users are the actual people who use the software. In small companies both the user and the customer can be the same person, but in midsized companies the users are the people who utilize the software and enter data while the customer is the person who makes the decision to purchase the software.

The next step we took was to take a look at the marketing aspect of the company and the software. These included the aesthetics (visual appeal), branding (meaningful name), advertising, complimentary products and services, pricing and the online demo. The pricing has to be broken down for the user to understand where his or her money is being spent. The online demo was a major part of how we gathered information. We assumed that if someone was in the market for such software they would use the online demo to find a suitable software.

The product aspect was vital since most of the technical elements of the software are included in the category. Things like simplicity, ease of use, whether or not it is role based, and minimum system requirements are all important features that a user should consider while trying to find a suitable software. These aspects are not easy to determine as different systems can be easier for one set of users and can be totally different for a separate set of users.

The customer aspect of the software basically determined how well the company handled its customer relationship management. Good customer service is a very important aspect for users to consider when purchasing software and we believe that any company that has good customer service will be able to beat its competitors based on its behavior towards them. Additionally warranty and service bundle are important factors by which to rank a software. The service bundle offered along with the

purchase of the software can lead to better levels of customer satisfaction, and a warranty makes users more comfortable with system.

For a detailed criteria list, and an evaluation each software, refer to Appendix C & D.

Below is a flowchart which shows how we analyzed each competitive software.

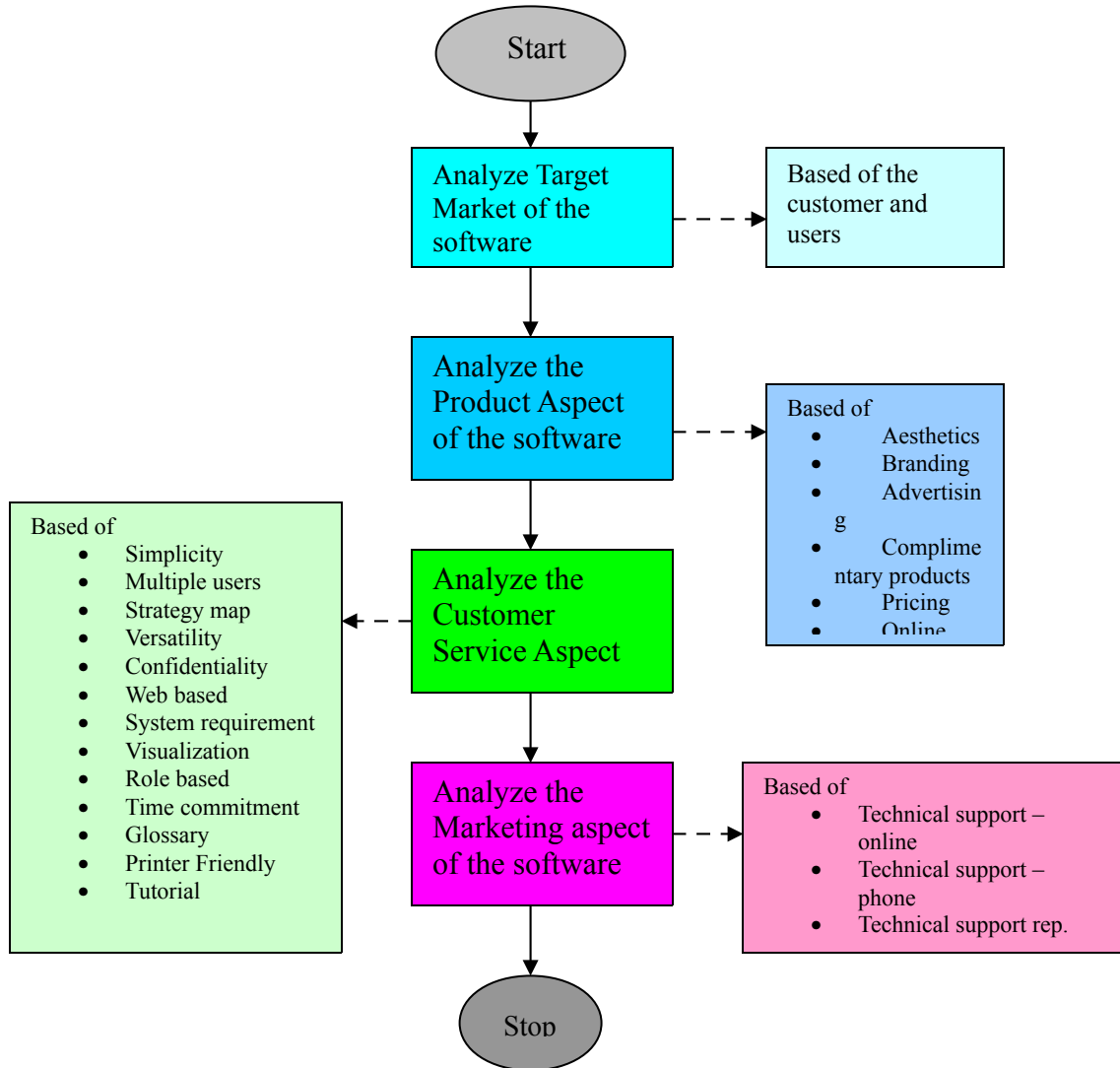


Figure 4 Evaluation process of software

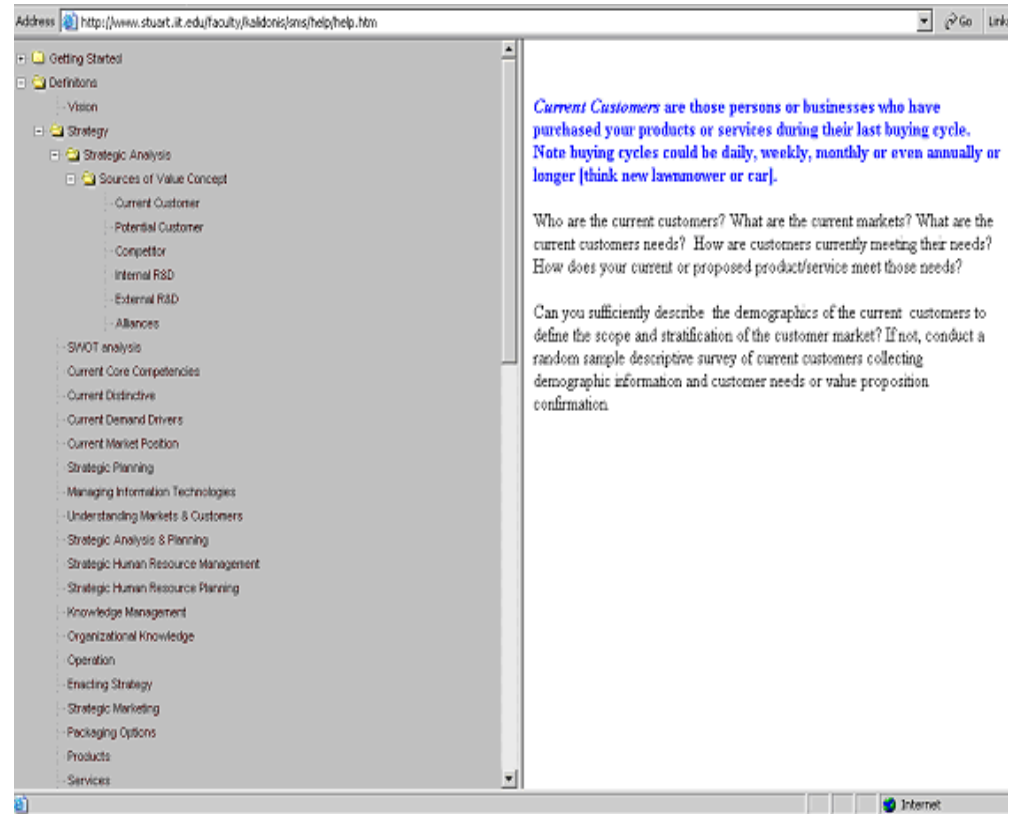
## 4.2 Software Review Guide

Our group, with the recommendation of Randy Rollinson of Mappware, has identified seven competing software: Mappware, ithink, Strategymap, iDashes, Virtual CEO, Elevator, and Active Strategy. We identified some of the characteristics of the software based on the criteria list that is attached at the end of this report (see Appendix C). The following is a review for each software including company information, and product overview, which is based on the criteria list. Overall ratings for each software are calculated through mean scores, and a graph with the mean score can be referred to in Appendix E. Print screens are also available to allow users to have a clear view of each software.

Contact Info	<p>IPRO 357 Spring 2003 No logo available</p> <p>Stuart Graduate School of Business Suite 420 556 W. Adams Street Chicago, IL, 60661</p> <p>Phone: (312) 371-8190 Email: <a href="mailto:pistrui@stuart.iit.edu">pistrui@stuart.iit.edu</a></p>
Product(s)	Strategic Management System Version 1.0
Target Market	Medium-sized closely held enterprise, Fortune 1000 companies, not-for-profit organizations, small companies
Product Overview	<p>The SMS was developed by a group of IIT students, and is based of an enhanced version of the Balanced score card system. The software, at the moment, is free and is available at the following website <a href="http://www.stuart.iit.edu/faculty/kalidonis/sms/">http://www.stuart.iit.edu/faculty/kalidonis/sms/</a></p> <p>The software has many interesting features and its target market is an area that is neglected by other management software companies, and therefore is potentially a very profitable enterprise. The software itself is easy to use and does not require a high-end system. It has two basic views, the first being a strategy map and the second being the strategy view. It is web based, and thus has a portability advantage for users. This software also has a very up to date and complete glossary. The main weaknesses of the software are the</p>

lack of graphics in the output and unreadable format of the reports  
Below are three screenshots of IIT SMS software:

\*These screenshots were taken from the IIT SMS website available at  
<http://www.stuart.iit.edu/faculty/kalidonis/sms>



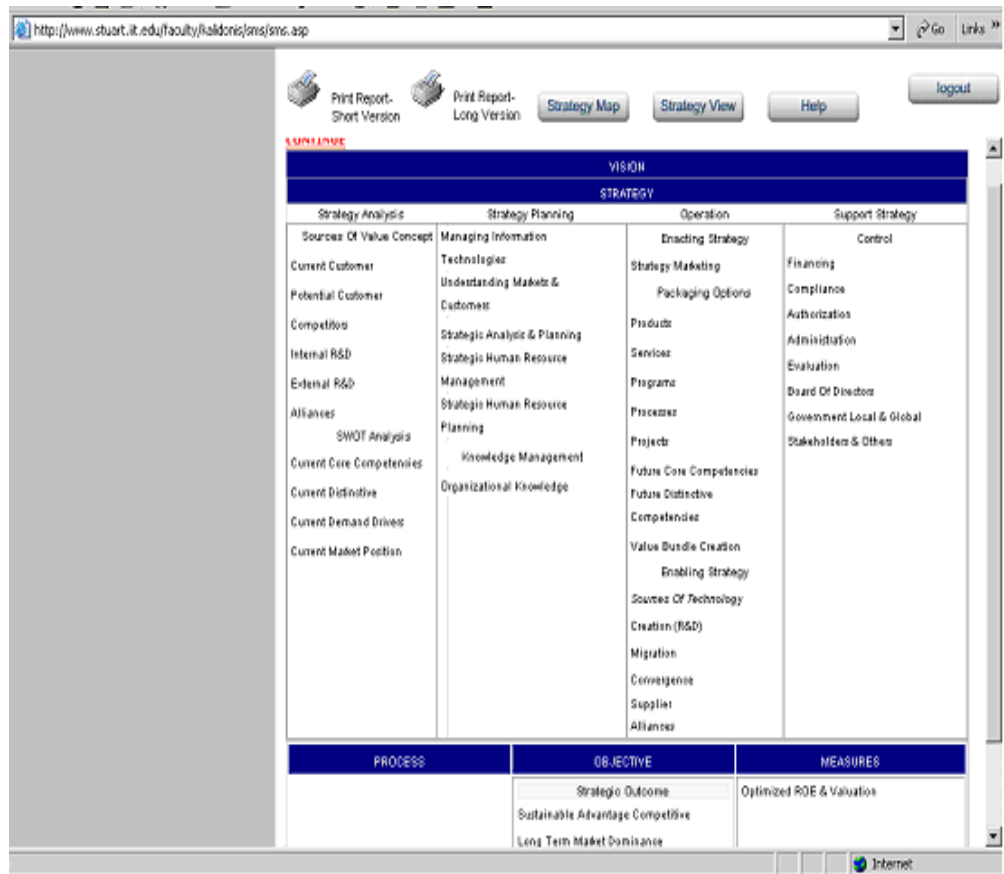
*The glossary*

http://www.stuart.it.edu/faculty/raidonis/sms/sms.asp

Print Report: Short Version    Print Report: Long Version    Strategy Map    Strategy View    Help    Logout

VISION			
STRATEGY			
Strategy Analysis	Strategy Planning	Operation	Support Strategy
<b>Sources Of Value Concept</b>	<b>Managing Information Technologies</b>	<b>Enacting Strategy</b>	<b>Control</b>
<u>Current Customer</u>	<u>Understanding Markets &amp; Customers</u>	<u>Strategy Marketing</u>	<u>Financing</u>
<u>Potential Customer</u>	<u>Strategic Analysis &amp; Planning</u>	<u>Packaging Options</u>	<u>Compliance</u>
<u>Competitors</u>	<u>Strategic Human Resource Management</u>	<u>Products</u>	<u>Authorization</u>
<u>Internal R&amp;D</u>	<u>Strategic Human Resource Planning</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Administration</u>
<u>External R&amp;D</u>	<u>Knowledge Management</u>	<u>Programs</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
<u>Alliances</u>	<u>Organizational Knowledge</u>	<u>Processes</u>	<u>Board Of Directors</u>
<b>SWOT Analysis</b>		<u>Projects</u>	<u>Government Local &amp; Global</u>
<u>Current Core Competencies</u>		<u>Future Core Competencies</u>	<u>Stakeholders &amp; Others</u>
		<u>Future Distinctive Competencies</u>	

*Strategy map with no data entered*



Strategy view

Contact Info

LBL Strategies  
**LBL STRATEGIES, LTD.**  
 8700 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue  
 Suite 800 S  
 Chicago, IL 60631

Phone: (773) 714-2370  
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 Email: [info@lblstrategies.com](mailto:info@lblstrategies.com)

Product(s)

Mappware  


## Target Market

Medium-sized closely held enterprise, Fortune 1000 companies, not-for-profit organizations, small companies (based of company strengths)

## Product Overview

The Mappware software is robust and effective and was created to help companies focus on strategic management. Although it is a very well made software, it suffers from some flaws that prevent it from reaching its true potential. The strengths of the software are that it incorporates a multiple user environment to get data and uses anonymity to encourage users to input data. The software also supports hierarchy, as is present in any company, by dividing users into different categories. The categories being group leader, team member, and guest. The group leader can manage and see the user input. He can also make this information available to guests. The team members can anonymously enter data, and guests can view the data made available by group leader.

The main weakness in the software is the lack of a glossary. Another weakness arises from the fact that the company has not been able to identify its target market yet, and thus is not focusing its marketing to any particular group. The company also lacks a vision and a mission, which are vital to the future development of the software. The company has three pricing packages, but there is no breakdown of the prices to justify the cost to the customer.

Although the company provides tutorials on request, it does not offer any online tutorials to its potential clients. This could be a major area of improvement for the company as it could easily place a limited working demo of their software online for customers.

Below are two screenshots on the Mappware software:

\*These screen shots were taken from the LBL strategy website demo. They are available on <http://www.mappware.com/mappware/demo.asp>

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**mappware.** Helping organizations focus, make better decisions & grow.

Next Previous Close this window

**Main menu**

MAPPware end-users include:

- the **Team Manager** who guides the strategic planning process by defining the workplan, consolidating input from team members and managing timelines. The Manager has the authority to add other users and define their roles.
- **Team Members** are active contributors to the strategic planning process. They provide valuable input at every stage, from the environmental scan to helping define the company vision, mission and goals.
- **Guests** can login to MAPPware and view information that the Team Manager has made available.

This is the Team Manager's main menu.

Move your mouse over the blue text for a description of each area.

**Welcome Elizabeth.**  
 You are currently logged on as a Team Manager for Carey Custom Manufacturing - Carey Custom Manufacturing

**Message board**

Hello Team, Welcome to the CCM Planning Process. Please let me know if I can be helpful as you work with our team. Liz Carey

**Update message**

Home Back Help Logout

**Getting organized**  
 Establish timelines and identify products/services for your organization's strategic planning process.

**Forum**  
 Manage topics and participate in an anonymous discussion to address important team issues.

**Environmental scan — External analysis**  
 Gather information about the external environment, including opportunities and threats.

**Environmental scan — Internal analysis**  
 Gather information about the internal environment, including strengths and weaknesses.

**Strategic direction**  
 Formulate the strategic plan.

**Operating plan**  
 Implement the strategic plan.

**Reports**  
 View progress.

**Administration & communication**  
 Administer the system and communicate with the team.

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*Team leader's main page*

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**mappware.** Helping organizations focus, make better decisions & grow.

Next Previous Close this window

**Reports**

MAPPware has more than 3 dozen reports that allow the Team Manager, team members and guests to keep abreast of the state of the planning & management process.

This report shows the first part of the Prioritized SWOT: as each member of the team ranks their top five opportunities and threats, MAPPware calculates a score that reflects the consensus of the team's priorities. Very high scores show strong consensus. Low scores show weak consensus.

Crystal Reports ActiveX Views - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by EarthLink Network, Inc.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

1 of 1

Preview

**Prioritized Opportunities and Threats**

**Carey Custom Manufacturing**

Voting Team Members  
 David Carey  
 Elizabeth Carey  
 Frank Carey  
 George Walker

Opportunity	Category
• Break more into the medical market - in particular with medical/pharmaceutical companies that have manufacturing plants in Midwest.	Market Penetration
• Technological advancements for better customer service and quicker turnaround	Market Penetration
• Develop proprietary products to grow sales domestically and internationally	Market Penetration
• Market stamping and assembly services	Market Development



Threat	Category
• Foreign competition — price	Short Term
• Slow economy	Long Term
• Auto industry keeps tightening its rules for suppliers and shrinking the profit margin squeezing us	Short Term
• Home appliance manufacturing industry (electrical) is continuing to be sent overa China and East Europe	Medium Term
• Costs of investing in new machinery in such a tight market.	Medium Term
• Without a level playing field in the way of international trade, we can't compete on	Short Term

Done

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*Opportunities and threats analysis*



	<p>High Performance Systems, Inc.</p>  <p>46 Centerra Parkway Suite 200 Lebanon, NH 03766-1487</p> <p>Phone: (603) 643-9636 Fax: (603) 643-9502 URL: <a href="http://www.hps-inc.com/index.htm">http://www.hps-inc.com/index.htm</a></p> <p>ithink Strategy ithink Analyst</p>  <p>NetSim Creator 2.0 (complementary)</p>
Contact Info	
Target Market	Business related fields (i.e. profit and non-profit organizations)
Product Overview	<p>The <i>ithink</i> software comes in two permutations. The simpler version is called <i>ithink</i> Strategy. The more technical version is called <i>ithink</i> Analyst. <i>ithink</i> Strategy provide a very broad set of features that will enable users to develop and communicate high-quality simulation models. <i>ithink</i> Analyst has the capabilities to deliver more advanced features while <i>ithink</i> Strategy provides a good deal of basic functions that can help users build an informative flowchart strategy map.</p> <p>The flowchart that is used to build the strategy map gives the user the flexibility to create any possible scenario a company could face, and see a simulated flowchart diagramming the aspects of the organization that are affected as a result of the scenario. Users can input other non-physical factors, such as weather and human, into the model for a more complete scenario.</p> <p>The flexibility, however, comes with a price. It is no easy task to learn to draw a complete model that makes sense. The learning process can take up as much time as a one-semester class, and not to mention the user manual that is as thick as a textbook. Overall, it will take too much time to learn to fully utilize this software. It could only be used in classrooms, or those executives who are willing to spend the time to learn this software.</p>

StrategyMap.com, Inc.



Contact Info

StrategyMap.com, Inc.  
401 North Wabash, Suite 536  
Chicago, IL

Phone: (312) 832-1140  
URL: <http://www.strategymap.com>

Product(s)

StrategyMap™  
Refocus™  
ScenerioMap™

Target Market

Midsized to large corporate companies

Product Overview

StrategyMap first uses Refocus™ to help define strategies for each company's needs, and then uses StrategyMap™ to create a strategy map which gives the company a clear view of where they are heading. If a company leader wants to plan for a possible scenario, ScenerioMap™ can help simulate it and predict what will happen.

The biggest strength this software has is the flexibility the company provides to its users. The software can be customized in areas of:

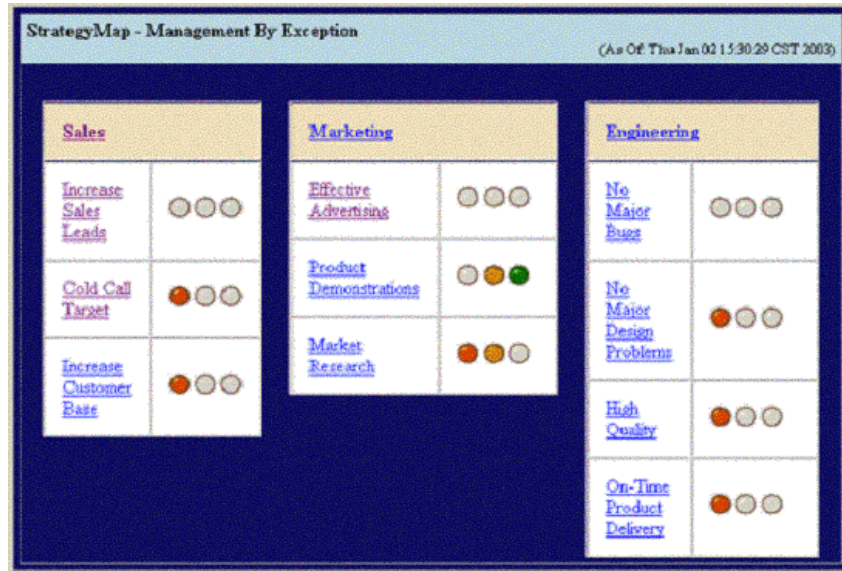
- Monitoring
- Performance Management
- Customized Products
- Data Acquisition
- Project Tracking

Unlike Windows, Linux users can change the layout of the whole system according to personal needs. In addition to this, the company provides training sessions on how to tweak the software, thereby increasing the user-friendliness of the system.

However, due to lack of information on the actual software, we cannot determine how the actual software really works and the flaw in it.

Below is a screenshot of the StrategyMap software:

\*The screenshot were taken from StrategyMap.com's website available at <http://www.strategymap.com>



Basic strategy map overview

\*This layout can be customized according to each company's need and interest

Contact Info

iDashes, Inc.



iDashes, Inc.  
1169 Pittsford-Victor Road, Suite 200  
Pittsford, NY 14534

Phone: (585) 387-0070  
Fax: (585) 387-8997  
URL: <http://idashes.net>

Product(s)

ExecDash



econDash (complementary)



projectDash(complementary)



Target Market

Large corporate companies, consulting firms, small companies (ExecDash Basic)

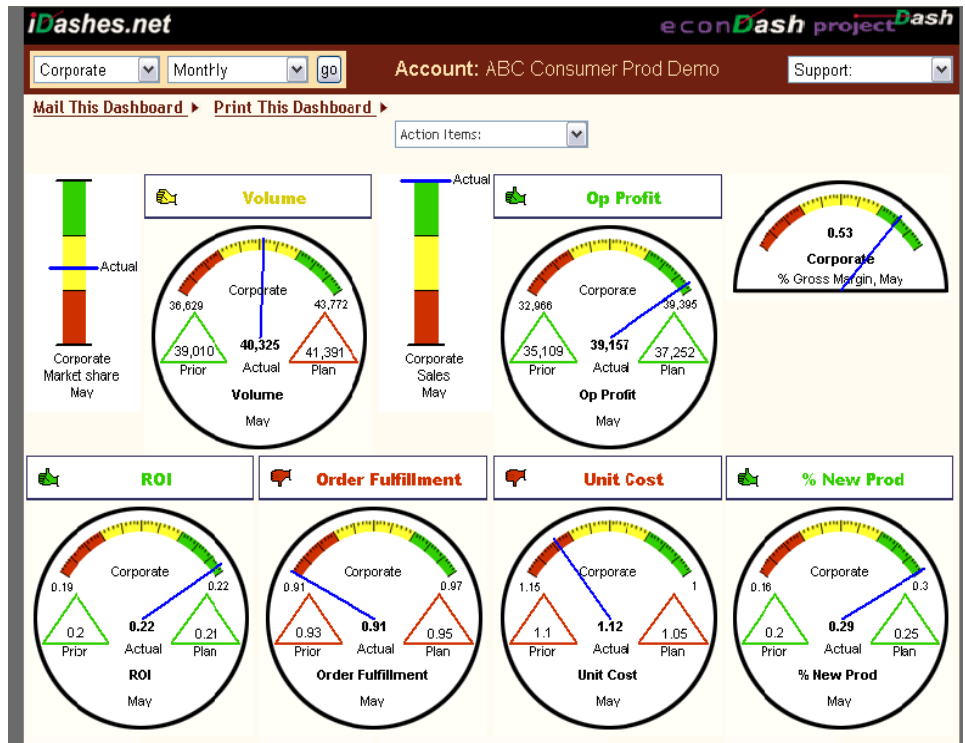
Product Overview

All three products, ExecDash, econDash, and projectDash, combines into a package that will be sufficient for any organization that need to do strategic planning. While strategic management is the focus of ExecDash, projectDash layout responsibilities and deadlines in an organized and easy to track format. Finally, econDash can be used to find the latest information relating to United States' economy, in particular, focusing on critical performance data. ExecDash Basic, a run-down version of ExecDash, is available to small companies.

The most amazing aspect about ExecDash is its graphs. Ranging from a dashboard that summarizes one of the company's critical elements to line graphs that plot out trends, ExecDash outrun all the other softwares in terms of visual representation of data. The layout of ExecDash can best be explained in one word, levels. The user can select the Master Dashboard to view the company's overall score for all its critical elements or he/she can go more in-depth and choose to see numerical data based on business transactions, inputted yearly, monthly, daily, or hourly. This makes the software very easy to use and simple to learn. It should be noted, however, that the user could be information-overloaded if he/she is not used to so much graphs at once. While ExecDash do provide numerous graphs, the software requires Microsoft Office 2000 to support all this. This is a requirement that our target market would not be able to fulfill.

Below are two screenshots from the iDashes-execdash software

\*These screenshots were taken from a personal demo and can be acquired upon request from the company.



Monthly overall analysis

Subject:

Date Initiated: 1/23/2002

Date Due (mm/dd/yy):

Updated By: ThePresident, Robert

Date Completed (mm/dd/yy):

Assigned To:

Send Pre-Notification:  days prior to due date.

Supervisor:


Action Item Description:

Status:

Action Item History

Date Updated	Date Due	Description	Status	Assigned To	Supervisor	Updated By	Date Closed
6/27/2002	12/2/2002	Create new system for tracking actions.	update - all is looking fine	Harper, Dan	Roy, Mike	ThePresident, Robert	

Description of assigned strategic objective(s)

	<p>Virtual CEO, Inc.</p>  <p>Virtual CEO 27128A Paseo Espada, Suite 1521 San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675</p> <p>Phone: (949) 248-2404 Fax: (949) 248-2413 URL: <a href="http://www.virtualceo.com">http://www.virtualceo.com</a></p>
Contact Info	
Product(s)	Virtual CEO
Target Market	Large corporate companies, non-profit, government agencies, educational, consultants
Product Overview	<p>Time is money from a businessman's point-of-view. In this case, Virtual CEO hits the bull's-eye right on the spot. The user need only to fill in a bubble survey, with choices like not applicable and strongly agree, and then bar graphs are created with numerical analysis and explanation on the side. This time saving assessment is possible due to the structure of the bubble survey. The questions within the survey are based on 234 best-practice statements, and are measured against a seven-point interval scale. The responses are then processed through the Virtual CEO diagnostic program resulting in mean scores. These mean scores are then used to output graphs, as well as determine the organization's position in various areas. Thus, the bubble survey does not only save time, it is also very easy to use.</p> <p>In spite of this, Virtual CEO's weakness is that it is not role-based. Role-based is a crucial factor in a software like Virtual CEO because it allows the people who have expertise in a certain aspect of the company, for example the operations supervisor, to contribute their knowledge and experience. Due to Virtual CEO's non role-based characteristic, the assessment thus becomes biased by one person's limited perspective of the company.</p> <p>Below are two screenshots from the Virtual CEO software:</p> <p>*These screenshots were taken from a personal demo and can be acquired upon request from the company</p>



VIRTUAL CEO<sup>®</sup>  
INCORPORATED

Mission, Vision & Competitive Advantage/External Assessment

Core Competence

Human Resources

Assessment Statements

N/A Don't Know Strongly Disagree

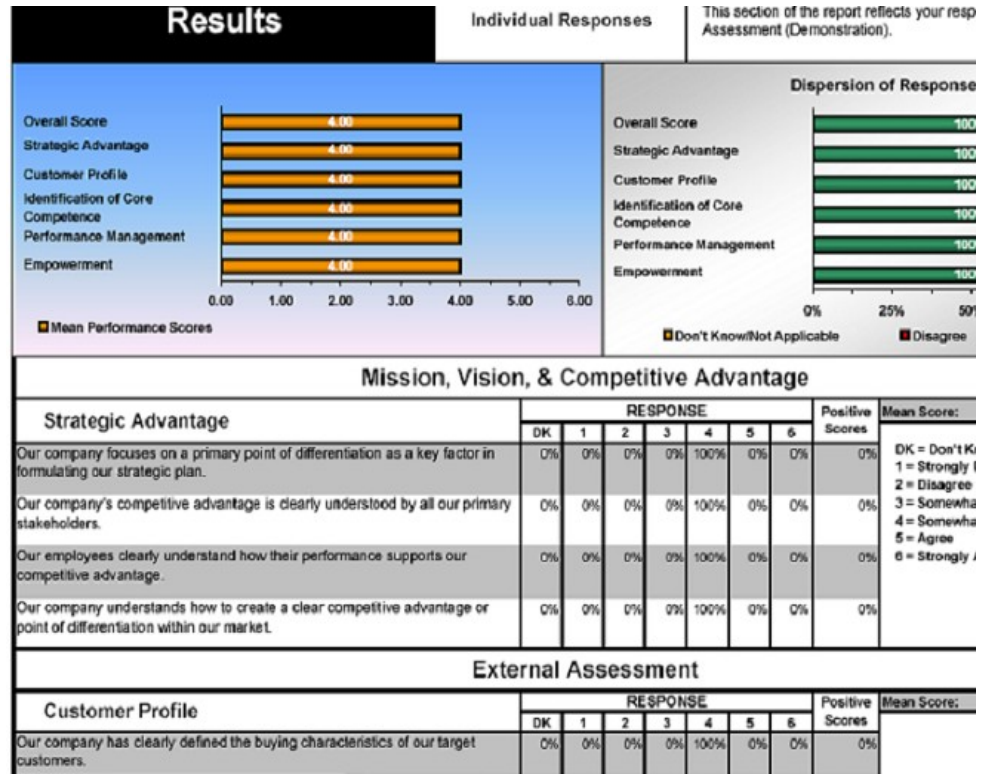
1. Our company focuses on a primary point of differentiation as a key factor in formulating our strategic plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Our company's competitive advantage is clearly understood by all our primary stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Our employees clearly understand how their performance supports our competitive advantage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Our company understands how to create a clear competitive advantage or point of differentiation within our market.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Our company has clearly defined the buying characteristics of our target customers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Our company has clearly identified all issues that would discourage customers from purchasing our products or services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Our company has defined the ideal methods of distribution that our target customers prefer when buying our products or services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

0% Complete

Submit and Continue >>

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Bubble Survey



Outputted graphs with explanations

Contact Info

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Product(s)

Elevator  
**Elevator**™

Target Market

CEOs and executive teams of the Global 1000, large middle-market companies



## Product Overview

Elevator, like SMS, is a service-oriented software that depend mostly on the consulting services.

It has a very good multiple-user support, and a very good role-base function (see Table 2). The administrator, in which most of the time is the company's CEO, can easily set the accessibility of information for each user. This is extremely important because it involves a company's security and confidentiality.

The setback, however, is that FourthFloor consultants always have to be present in the meetings, where they sit with the top executive managers to come up with a customized Progress Window. Progress Window is the dashboard for Elevator, where strategies and business commitment are laid out. Customizing the whole software to fit the company normally takes a few weeks or more. The applicability of strategies is low because company's success is based on the task completed, not on how strategies are implemented.

The pricing that comes with Elevator can be costly, depending on how many meetings are set, and how long it takes to come up with the customized software. The layout of the software can be a model for SMS.

Below is a screenshot of the Elevator software:

\*The screenshot was taken from the Forth Floor Consulting website available at <http://fourthfloor.com>

The screenshot displays the Elevator software's Progress Window. At the top, the 'elevator' logo and 'www.fourthfloor.com 4FL' are visible. The navigation bar includes 'Overview', 'Progress Window', 'Vision', and 'Research Center'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Business Commitment (Owned):** A table with columns for Status, Strategy, Business Commitment, and Notes. It lists several tasks with status indicators (red X for 'Off Track', green up arrow for 'On Track') and action buttons like 'details' and 'plan'.

Status	Strategy	Business Commitment	Notes
Off Track	Expand our market reach through relentless expansion of products and services. (Tom Smith) 4/15/01	A. Engage 5 new Professional Services clients by 6/1/01 and 15 more by 12/31/01. (Ariel Smith) 3/26/01	
On Track		B. Capture pull-through implementation engagements on 60% of all development projects each quarter. (Tom Jacobs) 3/16/01	
On Track		C. Launch 1000 clients by 6/1/01. (Tom Jacobs) 4/15/01	
On Track		D. Get 50 prospects in the pipeline by 6/1/01. (Randy Mack) 4/15/01	Currently at 28.
On Track	Deliver Results: Be exceptional in everything we do. (Tom Jacobs) 4/15/01	A. Formalize engagement and project management methodologies by 3/31/01. (Walter Thomas) 4/15/01	
- Key Measures:** A table with columns for Last Year, Target Current Year, YTD (Actualized), and Variance to Target.

	Last Year	Target Current Year	YTD (Actualized)	Variance to Target
Revenue	\$10,201,301	\$15,000,000	\$17,402,103	\$2,402,103
EBIT	\$1,402,597	\$3,000,000	\$3,592,406	\$592,406
% Utilization	62%	75%	80%	5%
% Product Revenue	90%	85%	89%	4%
Client Satisfaction Index	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Risks:** A table with columns for Description and Mitigation.

Description	Mitigation
Market pressure on Dot Coms has negatively impacted pipeline.	Refocus sales efforts on Fortune 1000 market.
Intense competition.	Reformulate product.

The interface also features a status bar at the bottom with icons for 'On Track', 'Off Track', 'Completed', 'Problems', 'Deferred', and 'Manually Set'. The footer includes 'Copyright 2000 Fourth Floor Consulting, Inc.' and navigation links for 'WHITE PAPER' and 'JOIN MAILING LIST'.

Progress Window™ for Elevator

## ActiveStrategy



### Contact Info

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### Product(s)

ActiveStrategy  
Balanced Scorecard Dashboard Edition  
Balanced Scorecard Deployment Edition  
Balanced Scorecard Enterprise Edition

### Target market

Large corporate companies

## Product Overview

ActiveStrategy is currently the best software out of the eight software that we evaluated. They have a very unique software layout with graphs constantly presented beside the data. They have a navigation bar with a space for user name, and depending on the user, certain priority is given. And with the navigation bar, users can start from where they stop, or even go to any part of the strategy map. ActiveStrategy's target market is large corporate companies, with this, they charge customers ranging from \$55,000 to \$1,000,000. They constantly upgrade their software (twice a year) to keep up with this ever changing market and customers' needs. Despite the graphs and convenience of browsing the software, quite a lot of time is needed to complete the whole strategy map. This is, however, a common weakness among strategic management software (see Appendix D under Time Commitment). And part of their pages cannot be printed out according to the users' need.

ActiveStrategy provides seminars and trainings, and also tutorials to assist new users to better utilize their software. Demos can be requested online through email.

Below is a screenshot from the ActiveStrategy software:

\*The screenshot was taken from a personal demo and can be acquired upon request from the company.



### 4.3 Super Software Template - Perfect Management Software

To develop the best possible management software we looked at the software that were commercially available, and listed down their best attributes. At the current time we consider that a combination of the best aspects of these software would be the best way to make a super software for strategic management. Listed below are the features and the names of the companies that have applied them. Utilizing the information given below, we should be able to come up with a revision to the software in the next IPRO that has most of these features.

Software	Software Aspect	Remarks
Active Strategy	Promotion	Advertised in magazines and newspapers
Active strategy	Branding	The name adds values to the software package
Active Strategy	Service Bundle	Has the most comprehensive service package.
iDashes	Applicability of strategy map	Strategy map is easy to use and work with
iDashes	Tutorial	Most comprehensive tutorial
iDashes	Visualization	Best Visualization of data.
ithink	Glossary (layout)	Best layout of the glossary
Elevator, Mappware	Multiple user support	Many users can use at one time.
Elevator	Role Based	Different levels of accessibility of information (for confidentiality purpose)
Mappware	Warranty	Warranty is offered on the software
SMS	Glossary (content)	Most comprehensive Glossary present.
SMS	Update versions	Constantly being updated
StrategyMap	Strategy map customization	Most customizable output.
Virtual CEO	Bubble survey	Efficient way to get data from user
Virtual CEO	Esthetics	Best overall look to the software
Virtual CEO	Promotion	Advertised in magazines and newspapers
Virtual CEO	Time commitment	Least amount of time spent to get out put
Virtual CEO	Tutorial	Comprehensive tutorial

Table 2 Super software template

Besides these features, the perfect software would have a minimum system requirement of Windows 95 and needs little hardware support. We would like it to run on a Pentium 1 machine with 64 Mb of ram and dialup connection to the internet. Online demo of the software would be highly attractive to customers, but it is also the easiest way to have the software plagiarized. This however, can be turned from a threat to an opportunity (see product overview of the competition review section). A good mix between information provided and information withheld would be the most advisable approach to developing an online demo of the software. At the same time excessive paranoia is not beneficial and will prevent the company from reaching its true potential.

StrategyMap appears to have the best strategy map customization available to the users. This allows the user to see multiple formats of the data output by the system there by making it easier for different members of the organization to get at the information they need in a format they feel comfortable with. StrategyMap provides some special training to teach their users on how to customize the whole software according to each company's needs.

ActiveStrategy has good promotion& branding of its software. It advertises in magazines that are widely read by CEO's and management consultants, and thus gets its name out in the market very efficiently.

iDashes has a very simple strategy map that can be implemented in the easiest way. It makes the process of understanding the strategy map very simple, and therefore effective. This software also uses very high end visualizations to get information to the users. Besides these features, the tutorial layout is very well done. (for further information see screen shots in the Product Overview)

Elevator has the best role based approach of any of the software reviewed and it emphasizes multiple user support. Its multiple users' flexibility is the best among the software we evaluated.

Mappware is the only company that we know of that has a warranty service along with the software. We feel that this helps the customer feel more secure while purchasing the software. Besides that, Mappware ties with Elevator in providing multiple user support.

The current strengths of the SMS is that it is constantly being updated and therefore is getting better every semester. Besides this, it has the most complete and up to date glossary of any of the software reviewed.

Virtual CEO is by far the best software reviewed, and is a prime example of how a strategic management software should behave. The bubble survey it uses is the easiest way to get information from users, and it also cuts down on the amount of time the user has to spend on the system making it a very efficient tool. They have a very good tutorial available making it easy for a potential customer to decide whether or not the software is appropriate for their company. This software also does a good job in utilizing graphics to enhance its look, although making it harder for slower machines to respond well to it.

## 5. Proposal for Next IPRO Team

In its current position SMS is primarily used as a tool by the consultant to get feedback from the client company. It does nothing more than taking the data from the company and reproduces it in a report form. The process of collecting data is the task that is accomplished by the software. The main focus of the service is the consulting. Without the service, all the SMS does is to lay out what the user typed in under each category e.g. products, services, internal R&D, etc. and present it in a table form. What the user sees is only the text he/she typed in, no processed feedback what so ever is presented.

During the first part of the semester the software evaluation group thought that the SMS software should move towards giving processed feedback to the users. Our current team thought that this could easily be done over the course of a semester. But recent insight into the process of analyzing data and giving feedback has made us realize that the development of such a software would take a longer time then justified by the profitability of the outcome. Most of the companies that we would compete with if we to create such a software, already have been in this area for a very long time and they have highly evolved software. Competing against them would be a very difficult task indeed. The opportunity we see for the SMS software is that most of these evolved software's do not require consultant services and therefore are not attractive for the consultants to use. A client company would ideally buy a software packet from these companies and use it to identify and fix problems within the company itself. Our software has the opportunity to get the human element back into this consulting cycle, giving both the software and the consultant equal opportunities to profit. The strength of this system is that the client benefits both from the continuous presence of the software and the experience and guidance of the consultant.

The software evaluation team feels that the whole consulting package should be offered to the client companies and not just software. This way we can maximize the learning and growth potential for all the parties involved. Software has not yet evolved to the point where it can understand the dynamics and hierarchy within a company and therefore it cannot give a comprehensive analysis or solution to a company's problems. We feel that the SMS software should focus more on how to help consultants identify problems within a company. We also feel that the development of the software should be focused on developing a user-friendly and robust system. We should try to make the system more secure and give the user more options of viewing the input data. What we should not do is try to make the software do complex evaluations of the input data. This should be left to the consultant helping the company identify and find solutions to the problems. The main issue that we see with this is that the software will then be only as good as the consultant who analyzes the data from it. This is problem with no easy solution but another way to look at it is that the software is also as good as the data input by the user. So in either case we cannot hope to solve the problems by software development. The solution to these problems will have to be based on the user and the consultant.

What SMS should do in the future will be try to make the software more customer-oriented. The interface of the software should be visually pleasing. The website should be easy to use, and important features should always be easily accessible. Besides being very user-friendly, the layout of the report should be changed for easier reading and

understanding. If possible, the output should be represented in graphs (e.g. flowchart) and rank the importance of each category in terms of impact and performance. However, to give this output, we would need to reconstruct the structure of the system. After producing the flowchart, we can use *ithink*'s capability to work out a list of scenarios to help the user to predict the future, and thereby coming up with the best strategy that may change future threat into opportunities. (For more information on the best aspects of the evaluated software please see appendix D)

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## Companies

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## Appendix B – Activity Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Output &amp; Deliverables</b>	<b>Hours Spent</b>
6/2/03	Introduction/Overview Introduction to BSC & SMS software	Course Syllabus, Evaluation, Guidelines, Reading, Demo	3 hrs
6/4/03	Assignment 1 Discussion Project Plan development	1-2 page write up of readings, Establish teams, Captains, and Spokesperson, student SMS demos	3 hrs
6/9/03	Mappware.com presentation Project Plan development Problem Statement/Research Questions	Meet with Mappware Project management team, draft Project Plan outlines, Q&A	3 hrs
6/11/03	LACC presentation Project Plan development Primary Objective/Sub Objectives	Meet with LACC consultants, finalize Project Plans due 6/13	3hrs
6/12/03	Pick up Mappware Documents at Stuart Business School Read documents	Summary for each software due 6/16 include: 1) Strength 2) Target Market 3) Questions/Comments	5 hrs
6/16/03	Meet 10pm to discuss about Project Plan & come up with a Criteria List to which the software will be analyzed Assign sections of the Project Plan report, as well as which software to analyze for each member (2 software each)	Criteria List with rating scale, Project Plan sections due 6/19, software evaluations due 6/22	3 hrs
6/18/03	Meeting with System Redesign in class to share information/insights Evaluate Mappware	Draft Mappware evaluation	2 hrs
6/19/03	Meet 12 noon to combine sections of the Project Plan Redefine the Criteria List Evaluate SMS	Final Draft of Project Plan Draft SMS evaluation	5 hrs
6/22/03	Meet 9pm to work on Power	Draft Power Point	

	Point presentation Review & discuss software evaluations	presentation	3 hrs
6/23/03	Short Power Point presentation and Q&A session	Power Point presentation	3hrs
6/24/03	Meet 3pm to work on revised Final Project Plan, Power Point presentation, & Mid Term Progress Report	Revised Final Project Plan, Power Point presentation	5 hrs
6/25/03	Power Point presentation	Power Point presentation	3hrs
6/26/03	Meet 3pm to work on Mid Term Progress Report	Mid Term Progress Report	6hrs
6/27/03	Meet 3pm to evaluate all the software in-depth as a team Develop an example of how different software can be integrated together into a super software Develop an example of how SMS can be synergize with other software	Software evaluations Example of a super software Example of how SMS can be synergize with other software	4 hrs
6/30/03	Review & Project Improvement Workshop	Refocused objectives, list of CSFs, outline of final deliverables including dates	3 hrs
7/2/03	Open Meeting-Development Workshop	Focused on specific team needs, draft sections of final reports	3 hrs
7/7/03	Module and Working Group Activity Update & Progress Reviews	Q&A discussion, project reviews	2.5 hrs
7/8/03	Midterm Progress Report and Project Plan revision	Finalized Midterm Progress Report and Project Plan	5 hrs
7/9/03	Open Session-Module-Group meetings Work on Team Power Point Presentation	Individual meetings Team Power Point Presentation	3 hrs
7/10/03	Meet 1pm to work on 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft Final Report	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft Final Report partly finished	5hrs
7/11/03	Meet 12noon to proof read 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft Final Report Turn in Final Report for proof read	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft Final Report	4 hrs
7/14/03	Work on Team Power Point Presentation	Team Power Point presentation, cover any key issues/questions	1.5 hrs

7/15/03	Meet 2pm to work on 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft Final Report and Team Power Point Presentation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft Final Report, Team Power Point Presentation partly finished	3hrs
7/16/03	Revise 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft Assign responsibilities for Team Power Point Presentation, Poster, & Final Report Turn in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft Report for proof read	Revised 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft	3 hrs
7/17/03	Meet 3pm to work on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Draft Final Report, Team Power Point Presentation, team Poster contents	3 <sup>rd</sup> Draft Final Report, Team Power Point Presentation, Poster contents	5 hrs
7/18/03	Meet 1:45pm at Fourth Floor Consulting	Evaluation on Elevator™	1.5 hrs
7/19/03	Meet 2:30pm to work on Poster	Poster	5 hrs
7/21/03	Meet 3pm to practice Team Final Presentation, revise Poster	Revised Poster	2 hrs
7/23/03	Submit Final Deliverables, Presentations	Submit Final Report, Web page, Poster, & Practice Final Presentation	3 hrs*
7/24/03	IPRO Day Stuart Business School	Final Presentation & Poster Session Business, 4-6pm	2 hrs*

\*estimated time