

External Information Sources

The tool External Information Sources is a tool that can be used in the alignment cycle. Its aim is to gather information that can be useful to the formulation of a company's e-strategy. External sources contain information on the company's environment.

[Gerry Johnson](#) and [Kevan Scholes](#) provide a framework for understanding the environment of organisations, this framework are organized in a series of layers.

Macro Environment

A tool to analyze the macro environment is the [PESTEL framework](#). The PESTEL framework can be used to identify future trends in the political, economic, social, environmental, technological and legal environment. For a company the PESTEL framework is relevant, because it gives insight on the environment.

Industry

For most organization there will be competition within their industry or sector. The [Porters Five Forces Framework](#) can help in identifying the sources of competition in an industry or sector.

Competitors and markets

An industry or sector may be too-general level to provide for a detailed understanding of competition.

There are two concepts:

- [Strategic groups](#)
It helps to understand who are the most direct competitors and it identify potential threats and opportunities.
- [Market segments](#)
Understanding of the market is crucial, because success or failure of an organization are concerned with how well they understand the customer needs and are we able to meet those needs. So this concept can be useful in identifying similarities and differences between groups of customers or users.