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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF STARTUPS IN THE CONDITIONS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Strategic management of startups in the context of digital transformation has become particularly relevant in the framework of profound structural changes occurring in the global economy under the influence of digital technologies. The digitalization of business processes, the spread of platform-based models, the development of artificial intelligence, cloud services, big data, and automated analytical systems transform both the external environment in which enterprises operate and the internal logic of strategy formation and implementation. In these conditions, startups act not only as subjects of innovative activity but also as active agents of the digital transformation of the economy [1].

Unlike traditional enterprises, startups operate under conditions of high uncertainty, limited financial and human resources, unstable demand, and the absence of established market positions. This determines the specific nature of strategic management, which must be flexible, adaptive, and oriented toward rapid hypothesis testing. In a digital environment, a startup's strategy cannot be viewed as a rigid long-term plan; instead, it becomes a dynamic system of decisions that is continuously adjusted based on data analysis, changes in consumer behavior, and evolving technological trends [2; 3].

Digital transformation significantly changes the approaches to forming competitive advantages. Previously, strategic advantage was largely based on material assets or production scale, whereas today decisive factors include the speed of innovation, access to data, digital competencies of the team, and the ability to integrate new technologies into the business model. In this context, strategic management of startups involves developing scalable business models capable of rapidly adapting to the growth of the customer base and entering new markets. Platform and ecosystem business models become particularly important because they generate network effects and enable accelerated scaling.

In the context of digital transformation, the role of analytical tools in strategic decision-making processes is significantly increasing. Data-driven management becomes the foundation of startup governance because it allows continuous monitoring of key performance indicators, forecasting consumer behavior, assessing risks, and adjusting strategy in real time. The use of digital dashboards, automated business analytics systems, and machine learning algorithms contributes to more evidence-based strategic decisions and reduces the influence of subjective factors.

An important component of strategic management in startups is innovation risk management. The rapid pace of technological change, the emergence of new competitors, and the continuous evolution of consumer expectations create an environment in which strategy must incorporate a scenario-based approach and flexible resource planning. Strategic flexibility is implemented through iterative product development processes, the use of a minimum viable product (MVP), rapid testing of market hypotheses, and the possibility of strategic pivoting when market conditions change.

Another important aspect of strategic management of startups in the context of digital transformation is the use of flexible management methodologies that allow companies to adapt quickly to market changes. Modern startups widely apply iterative approaches to product development, such as Agile and Lean methodologies, which enable rapid testing of business ideas and continuous improvement of products based on customer feedback. These approaches make it possible to reduce uncertainty and accelerate the process of achieving product-market fit, which is critically important in highly competitive digital markets.

Digital technologies also create new opportunities for scaling startup activities and entering international markets. The development of digital platforms, online marketplaces, and global digital infrastructures allows startups to reach customers worldwide with relatively limited resources. This significantly reduces barriers to market entry and enables even small innovative companies to compete at the global level. As a result, strategic management of startups increasingly focuses on global scalability, digital marketing strategies, and the creation of network effects that strengthen competitive advantages.

Thus, strategic management of startups in the context of digital transformation is characterized by a transition from traditional hierarchical planning models to flexible, data-driven, and ecosystem-based approaches. The effectiveness of startup development is determined by the ability to combine the innovativeness of a business idea with strategic adaptability, digital competencies of the team, and the systematic use of modern management technologies. Strategic adaptability, data orientation, and integration into digital ecosystems form the foundation of long-term competitiveness for startups in the modern economy.

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