Critical Timelines of Real-World Companies
The following pages offer a selection of critical timelines (CTLs) that represent different companies as players across different markets-as-a-game. Each CTL identifies the game dimension in terms of the geography of the game and the process. The process includes product, technology or innovation, as defined from the discussion in the book — consumers do not buy products but functionalities or characteristics. For example, in the case of Starbucks, the process is the ‘coffee experience’ or for Geely, it is the technology acquired from Volvo. It could simply be the product, as in a can of Pepsi, but a broader definition facilitates a richer dataset of signals.

Each CTL was constructed during the case preparation at the MBA Workshops and the team affiliations for each case are credited in the Acknowledgements. The cases are a representative sample of analysis and include Apple, Geely, HSBC, Microsoft, Nissan, Nokia, Pepsi and Starbucks. In each case, the game dimension \( G \) is defined with respect to geography and process and a time period of five years. The objective is to identify a pattern in the signals and identify the near-rival — that competitor in the sum of competitors who is more likely to react first.

A game, \( G \), occurs when Player A acts and Player B reacts. A sub-game, \( g \), occurs when a sequence of moves appear reversed as Player A reacts to Player B. The sub-game can be observed in both the Microsoft and Pepsi CTLs. The decision tree in the Nissan case allows us to define an extensive form of the game as observed. The HSBC case includes the causality with the share price performance. Further examples of the casual link between CTLs and key performance indicators (KPIs) can be found on [www.patrickmcnutt.com](http://www.patrickmcnutt.com) in the icon ‘eLearning and Games Academy’.

The pattern observed provides an insight into the player’s strategy set, that is, the sequence of moves in the market-as-a-game. If the pattern observed is only a pattern of price signals, a Bertrand pattern has been observed; if the pattern does not include price signals, a Cournot pattern is observed. The research commitment can be intense; over three days of gathering market intelligence, each group assembles the collected intelligence into a CTL and presents a hypothesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Price (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>iPhone announced</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>BlackBerry 8800 Curve announced</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Curve launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm announced</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm launched</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm launched</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm launched</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm launched</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>BlackBerry Storm launched</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- The timeline shows the key events in the competition between Apple and RIM in the smartphone market.
- Prices are listed for select models.
- The timeline covers the years 2006 to 2009.

**Events:**
- iPhone announced
- BlackBerry 8800 Curve announced
- BlackBerry 9000 Curve announced
- BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched
- BlackBerry Storm launched
- BlackBerry 8820 Curve launched
- BlackBerry 9000 Bold launched
- BlackBerry Storm launched

**Prices:**
- 599 USD
- 199 USD
- 299 USD
- 199 USD
- 49 USD
## A1.2 — Geely vs TATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GEELY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JUL</strong></td>
<td>Acquired Volvo for US$1.8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
<td>Set target price of IG at US$2,250 at Beijing Motor Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAN</strong></td>
<td>Unveiled Nano electric car in the United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOV</strong></td>
<td>Launched Eagle Cross Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APR</strong></td>
<td>Announced the Gleagle and IG concept at Shanghai Motor Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APR</strong></td>
<td>Launched Eagle Panda minicar at Beijing Auto Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TATA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEP</strong></td>
<td>Announced plans to sell Nano in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. More than 50,000 cars sold since. Launched Nano Plus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
<td>Announced Nano electric car at Geneva Motor Show 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAR</strong></td>
<td>Sought injunction to prevent imitation of Nano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAR</strong></td>
<td>Jaguar Land Rover acquired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JAN</strong></td>
<td>Nano unveiled at Ninth Auto Expo in Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
<td>Signed 90-year land lease to build Nano car plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A1.3 — Nissan vs Toyota (Decision tree)

I = Infiniti (Nissan)
L = Lexus (Toyota)
KPI = 1
Concept car announced in April 2012

Introduced concept car

I

No reaction
CV = 0

L

Launched car
CV ≠ 0

I

Launched car earlier

I

Retained production plan

I

No reaction
CV = 0

L

 Entered market (FMA)
2

L

 Entered market
0

No Entry
0

Entered market
0

No Entry
2

No Entry
2

Entered market
−1

 Entered market
0
A1.4 — Nokia vs Samsung

**NOKIA**

- **APR** 2010: Launched free DRM with music
- **MAR–APR** 2010: Announced acquisition of Novarra and MetaCarta for mobile Web browser and location search services
- **FEB** 2010: Announced new mobile operating system, MeeGo
- **OCT** 2009: Ovi store launched
- **JUN** 2008: Launched N1208 at RMB269
- **NOV** 2008: Launched N1202 at RMB300
- **MAY** 2008: Announced expansion into Internet business
- **OCT–JUL 2008** 2007: Acquired Navteq for digital mapping data
- **MAY** 2007: Launched N1200 at RMB350
- **OCT** 2007: Launched N1112 at RMB499
- **AUG–OCT** 2007: Acquired Loudeye for online music service
- **SEP** 2007: Launched N1110 at RMB699

**SAMSUNG**

- **SEP** 2010: Galaxy S series launched
- **MAY** 2009: Apps store launched
- **FEB** 2009: Launched E1100 at RMB299
- **JAN** 2008: Launched E1100 at RMB320
- **MAR 13** 2008: Launched C168 at RMB440
- **FEB** 2007: Launched C128 at RMB690
- **NOV** 2006: Announced entry into low-end market in China

**Timelines:**
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
A1.5 — HSBC vs RBS (Time lag between key events for near rivals in the game)

- Badly scarred by banking crisis, RBS was forced to make the first move and signalled cost leadership strategy.
- HSBC followed suit.
A1.6 — Microsoft vs Google

**G1 MAIN GAMES**

A. Google joined the search business
   B. Microsoft entered search business
      A. Google extended services and features
         B. Microsoft joined alliance with Yahoo!
            Sub-game joins main game

**g1 SUB-GAMES**

A. Microsoft launched first-generation mobile operating system
   B. Google developed Android platform and offered it as a free product; formed Android alliance
      A. New product development by Microsoft: Windows phone
         B. Google signalled acquisition of Motorola
            Newborn
               Newborn

   A. Microsoft teamed up with Nokia to offer Windows phone
      B. Nokia fighting ship? Moonshot?
A1.7 — Pepsi vs Wahaha (Game G1)

- Launched new Tropicana Juices
- Invested $1 billion in new plants
- Invested $2.5 billion over three years
- Announced alliance with Tingyi
- Finalized alliance with Tingyi
- Invested $1 billion in new plants
- Finalized alliance with Tingyi
- Invested $1.5 billion in beverages over three years

2007

- 5.8%
- G1

2008

- 6.0%

2009

- 5.6%
- RTD Tea production ceased

2010

- 5.1%
- RTD Tea production ceased

2011

- 4.4%
- Announced 100 new stores

2012

- 7%

Percentage of market share

Labeled segments:

- Pepsi
- Wahaha

Legend:

- G1
- G2
A1.8 — Pepsi vs Coca-Cola (Sub-game g1)

**PEPSI**

- New management structure
- Announced alliance with Tingyi
- Sponsored US pavilion at EXPO 2010
- Invested $2.5 billion over three years
- Invested $1 billion in new plants
- Announced sponsorship of Chinese team at 2008 Olympics

**COCA-COLA**

- Invested $4 billion over 3 years
- Construction of 41st bottling plant completed
- Sponsorship of EXPO 2010
- $2.4 billion bid for Huiyuan blocked
- Announced investments of $3 billion
- Announced sponsorship of 2008 Olympics

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Percentage of market share
A1.9 — Starbucks vs Nestlé

**Starbucks**

- **20 SEP**: Verismo launched at US$199–399
- **JUN**: K-Cups launched
- **15 MAR**: Verismo signalled
- **FEB**: VIA instant coffee launched
- **FEB**: Schultz rejoined as CEO and signalled focus on innovation

**Nestlé**

- **2012**: VUE signalled at US$130–700
- **2011**: Zenius, Aguila launched
- **2010**: Launched four machines for the first time
- **2009**: Coffee, capsule focus signalled
- **2008**: Pixie launched at US$229
- **2007**: Nestlé is already in the instant coffee and machine business

15 JAN: Sold K-Cups via Green Mountain

Coffee, capsule focus signalled

2007: Schultz rejoined as CEO and signalled focus on innovation

FEB: VIA instant coffee launched

2011: Launched four machines for the first time

2010: Coffee, capsule focus signalled

2009: Pixie launched at US$229

2008: Nestlé is already in the instant coffee and machine business

FEB: VUE signalled at US$130–700