This chapter demonstrates the use and value of the WRAP process in building strategies that are both relevant to the company’s strategic objectives and realistic in relation to the targets and priorities already determined.

The purpose of strategy is to bring sufficient focus into the activities of an organization to enable it to best achieve the objectives or goals that it desires. A corporate strategy can be understood as a prioritized set of rules or guidelines aimed at overall corporate benefit within which functional or subsidiary sub-strategies can be utilized to maximize or optimize the return on their individual sets of activities. In broad terms, most strategies fall into two categories. The first can be described as portfolio strategies dealing with a combination of widely differing business areas, and the second as competitive strategies con-
cerned with specific business areas. Within these categories the actual strategic approach can vary dramatically. It may take the form of a prescriptive strategy, which closely defines the specific ways in which strategy development can take place. For example, a prescriptive approach may demand that all business growth take place organically, or that global expansion be driven solely by acquisition. Strategy development can also be open, making use of a process which defines the rules or guidelines for development but allows variable approaches that depend on the circumstances in which the organization operates.

The WRAP process is a means of defining priorities and does not predetermine the nature of strategies to be developed, but instead allows the required strategic concepts to evolve from its informed description of the corporation’s capabilities, requirements, and priorities in an international context. It incorporates information about corporate activities, resources, culture and business style with identification of the competitive and cultural challenges that the company faces, or is

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**Figure 9.1 Chinese Walls**

Times were tough in the engineering business and to help its members, one of the engineering trade associations devised a program in which a group of member companies would be taken through the principles of strategic marketing and assisted with the development of strategies to focus their marketing efforts in a European country. The group included both manufacturers and importers. Being members of the same trade association, their products tended to relate to a specific segment of the engineering sector and thus, in many cases, to compete with each other. This gave rise to concerns about two key issues, the first being the maintenance of absolute confidentiality of corporate information and the second on how much real differentiation there could be between strategies effectively focused on the same segment and the same buyers for the same or similar products. For the consulting firm appointed to implement this program, responding properly to the first concern was straightforward as client confidentiality is both an inbred instinct among professionals and an absolute requirement for membership of their professional institutes and associations. For the second the concept of ‘Chinese walls’ was introduced in which that which might be spoken or discussed within the confines of the consultants’ office would not be heard or acknowledged by individual consultants dealing with potentially competitive companies.

Strangely enough, this works and is probably based on the ability of the human brain to compartmentalize and file information in a little drawer marked ‘not to be opened before Christmas.’. But it was ultimately unnecessary, because initial discussions with the companies found that they all held different market positions, had different objectives for the strategic program based on different sets of priorities, and operated within different corporate environments. This ensured that each strategy developed was strongly differentiated from the others, and each company could proceed to implement its own strategy to achieve its own objectives.