Cognitive maps can be defined as mental images and concepts that are built to visualise and assimilate information. Visualisation, the act of organising information in visual spaces, is applied to both spatial such as design and non-spatial tasks such as strategic planning. Memorising speeches often requires cognitive mapping of the subject. Cognitive maps are also referred to as mental maps, mind maps, schemata and frames of reference. Strategists may review their business environment by creating cognitive maps, which act as tools to process knowledge. The maps provide a coping mechanism under conditions of complexity and uncertainty. Two types of mental processes are employed to build cognitive maps. System 1 thinking is a rapid, intuitive, instinctive and automatic and System 2 thinking, which is slow, conscious, analytical and deliberate. In cognitive communities, the decision makers’ cognitive maps and strategic outlook provide the foundations for a common frame of mind that would influence how an industry evolves and develops. Cognitive maps do not always reflect reality and they are influenced by bias or misinformation. Cognitive inertia, unless re-examined by regular reviews of incoming information that refresh the strategists’ understanding of the business environment, can lead to the decline of the business.

Keywords
Cognitive map, mental map, mind map, cognitive communities

Link to publication