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THE ADAPTATION OF FLOUR MILLING BASED COMPANIES
TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

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This study focuses on five United States food processing companies, Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, ConAgra, General Mills, and Pillsbury, which are linked together by either a longstanding presence and/or large current participation in the flour milling industry. This study attempts to identify the critical junctures and environmental changes which forced these organizations to adapt, to explore the reasons behind the decisions, and to assess the results of these decisions. The primary framework for analysis in this study is the work of Michael Porter, particularly his concept of industry structure and evolution. Research was conducted in three steps. A survey of literature in both contemporary business policy/strategy theory and the history of the industry was initially conducted. Next, specific research was conducted to determine financial and economic characteristics for each organization. Finally, interviews were conducted with members of upper-level management of the selected organizations and with industry observers. Using this information conclusions were drawn about the business strategy and policy decisions of these five companies.