In July 2013, Market Force Information released the results of a new study in which over 6,000 Americans ranked their favorite supermarkets in a variety of categories. Trader Joe’s ranked No. 1 overall.1 Consumer Reports ranked Trader Joe’s the second-best supermarket in the country in 2012.2 One year earlier, Fast Company named Trader Joe’s the 11th most innovative firm in the U.S.

3 Hundreds of people waited in line for the doors to open on March 22, 2013 at the grand opening of Trader Joe’s in Columbia, South Carolina. Local police directed traffic, and people hunted for parking at nearby businesses because they couldn’t find a spot in Trader Joe’s parking lot.4 Customers arrived at 3:00 a.m. on June 29, 2012, to line up for the opening of a new Trader Joe’s in Lexington, Kentucky.5 That same scene played out at new store openings around the country. Job seekers flooded the firm with applications when they learned of a new store. Meanwhile, retail experts marveled that the quirky grocer generated much higher sales per square foot than any of its rivals.

With all that success, Trader Joe’s had attracted imitators. Tesco, the world’s third-largest retailer, had launched a chain of small neighborhood markets in the western United States. The British firm appeared to borrow extensively from the Trader Joe’s concept with its Fresh & Easy stores. In April 2013, Tesco announced that it was withdrawing from the U.S. market, hoping to find a buyer for its approximately 200 stores. The British retailer recorded a $1.8 billion loss associated with its failure in the U.S. market.

1. Trader Joes
   1. **what essential skills, competencies and capabilities will be critical in order for Trader Joe’s to survive or thrive in the future?** Why? Support your analysis with evidence and reasoning linked to appropriate knowledge.
   2. **Identify critical gaps in the skills, competencies and capabilities that Trader Joe’s currently has versus what you think they will need in the future.** Think about how Trader Joe’s can bridge that gap. If Trader Joe’s were to hire you as consultant to provide strategic direction in what specific skills, competencies, and capabilities the company should invest in or acquire (and how), which would you emphasize as critical and why?
2. The Weather Company
   1. If you were on the board of directors at The Weather Company in 2013, would you approve the proposed strategy? Why, or why not?
3. People Operations at Mozilla
   1. How would you describe Mozilla’s cultural and organizational DNA? What, specifically, about the way Mozilla enacts strategy and executes its business plan provides it with such depth?
   2. What do you think are the lessons from Mozilla for other knowledge-based organizations, especially in terms of strategy execution and the involvement of people throughout the organization?
   3. What are the critical challenges that Debbie Cohen faces as Chief of People at Mozilla, specifically in terms of strategy execution and alignment? What should she do to meet these challenges, and why?