

MGT-400

Corporate strategy

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Energy Management and Sustainability	MA1, MA3	Opt.
Management, Technology and Entrepreneurship minor	H	Opt.
Managmt, tech et entr.	MA1, MA3	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	4
Withdrawal	Unauthorized
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	120h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Courses	3 weekly
Number of positions	60

It is not allowed to withdraw from this subject after the registration deadline.

Summary

Why are some firms more successful than others? This is the fundamental question of strategy. A key concern of managers is the complex and uncertain relationship between the firm, its strategy, its performance and its environment. You study competition from the perspective of top management.

Content***What is strategy? And why are some firms more successful than others?***

These are the two key questions this course will give answers to, within a business context.

This course is designed to study competition from the perspective of top management. A principal concern of managers is the relationship between a company, its strategy, its environment and the firm's performance. This relationship is complex, uncertain, and always changing. Top managers shape and guide this relationship, making strategic decisions that change the organization's capabilities, shift its position in the environment, or lead the firm into a new business. Consequently, this course has been designed to introduce students to the different aspects of strategic decision-making. For the most part, we will tackle the complexity and ambiguity of strategic decision making through discussions of case studies that provide rich descriptions of situations that are faced by real companies that either fail or succeed. In addition, various external speakers (company representatives) will discuss their company's strategy and challenges with you. In class, I will act as moderator, questioner, and lecturer to help you gain a better understanding of firms' strategy, their formulation, and implementation. By actively participating in class discussions, you will sharpen your own insights, and those of your classmates.

Keywords

corporate strategy, business strategy, competitive advantage, firm performance

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Examine concepts, models, and tools of strategic analysis
- Analyze concepts and tools of strategic thinking to identify cause-effect relationships
- Synthesize firm level information and facts to support or reject cause-effect relationships
- Assess / Evaluate firm level corporate and business strategies of real firms

Transversal skills

- Resolve conflicts in ways that are productive for the task and the people concerned.
- Keep appropriate documentation for group meetings.
- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.
- Summarize an article or a technical report.
- Make an oral presentation.
- Give feedback (critique) in an appropriate fashion.
- Evaluate one's own performance in the team, receive and respond appropriately to feedback.
- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Identify the different roles that are involved in well-functioning teams and assume different roles, including leadership roles.
- Take feedback (critique) and respond in an appropriate manner.
- Write a scientific or technical report.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking

Teaching methods

Reading and discussion of key theoretical frameworks; Group work: in and outside class; Case discussions; Guest lectures & discussions with company representatives.

Expected student activities

Attend all classes; read all material assigned for the course
Participate actively in class discussion and new presentations
Complete a group project (team work)
Read and prepare case studies (individual)
Synthesize a (business) news article (team work)

Assessment methods

Continuous assessment combining:
20% classroom participation & contribution
10% news presentation
30% midterm exam
40% team project

Resources

Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

No

Bibliography

Textbook: even though the course will not strictly follow the textbook noted below, the class will incorporate a lot of aspects from it. Hence, we strongly suggest you get a copy of this book and read the relevant chapter before each class. EPFL library should have some copies of this textbook, but you might want to get your own copy.

Textbook: Strategic Management, Frank Rothaermel, McGraw Hill Book Co.

Further class material will be through Moodle. Enrolment through Moodle is REQUIRED.

Please download all documents prior to each class and read as requested.

Ressources en bibliothèque

- [Strategic management / Rothaermel](#)