

MGT-400

Corporate strategy

Strecker Nanja

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 Session	Unauthorized
Semester	Winter
Exam	Fall
	During the semester
Workload	120h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Courses	3 weekly
Number of positions	50

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 and strategy from the perspective of top management.

Content***What is strategy (in a business context)? 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 and strategy 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 require to change the organization's internal capabilities, shift its position in the external environment, or lead the firm into an entirely new business.

Consequently, this course has been designed to introduce students to the different external and internal aspects of corporate and business strategy. For a significant 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:

- Discuss key concepts, models and tools of strategy, in a business context.
- Apply a few basic indicators of firm performance.
- Synthesize firm level information and facts.
- Assess / Evaluate firm level corporate and business strategies of real firms.
- Make strategic recommendations for a real firm, to the top management of a company.

Transversal skills

- 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 (2 waivers across entire course, per student)
Read material assigned for the course
Read and prepare case studies (individual)
Participate actively in class discussions and news presentations
Synthesize a (business) news article (team work)
Complete a group project (team work)

Assessment methods

Continuous assessment combining:
40% team project
35% midterm exam
15% classroom participation & contribution
10% news presentation

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.