

MGT-400

Corporate strategy

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

Language of teaching	English
Credits	4
Withdrawal Session	Unauthorized Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	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. Study competition and strategy from the perspective of top managers.

Content***What is strategy (in a business context)? And why are some firms more successful than others?***

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 participants 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.
- 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 and teach/present a (business) case study (team work)
Complete a group project (team work)

Assessment methods

Continuous assessment combining:
30% team project
40% midterm exam
20% team case study presentation
10% in class participation/discussion

Resources

Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

No

Bibliography

Textbook: the course will incorporate subjects from various textbooks and will not rely on a single book for the course. EPFL library should have some copies of these textbook and others on strategy/management and you are free to get your own as well. Some suggestions of three below.

Textbooks:

- Contemporary Strategy Analysis, Robert M. Grant, Wiley
- Strategic Management, Frank Rothaermel, McGraw Hill Book Co.
- Corporate Strategy: Tools for Analysis and Decision-Making, Puranam and Vanneste

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

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

Case studies will be provided through The Case Centre.

Ressources en bibliothèque

- [Contemporary Strategy Analysis / Grant](#)
- [Strategic Management / Rothaermel](#)
- [Corporate Strategy / Puranam](#)

Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/MGT-400>