

Course Outline 2017

BUSINESS 304: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT (15 POINTS)

Semester 1

Course Prescription

A case-based course that focuses on analysing and responding to complex organisational situations from a general manager's perspective. The processes of strategizing, the impact of organisational contexts and the subsequent strategic tensions are explored so as to understand the adoption of various strategic practices.

Programme and Course Advice

At least 30 points at Stage II and at least 15 points at Stage II in Management, International Business or Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Restriction: MGMT 302

The purpose of Strategic Management is to help pull together the different theories and skills you have acquired on your business studies-based educational journey. The course specifically adopts the perspectives of the general manager, as they tend to be acquainted with all of the functional areas within an organisation. This course is case-based, and requires you to prepare and discuss cases in class. *In order to do well in this class you need to participate in the class discussions.*

Goals of the Course

In line with the views of de Wit & Meyer, this course seeks to develop your understanding of strategy in three key areas:

- *Knowledge.* To encourage the understanding of the many, often conflicting, schools of thought and to facilitate the gaining of insight into the assumptions, possibilities and limitations of each set of theories.
- *Skills.* To develop the ability to define strategic issues, to critically reflect on existing theories, to creatively combine or develop theories where necessary and to flexibly employ theories where useful, to clearly articulate their analysis and its implications.
- *Attitude [Abilities].* To install a critical, analytical, flexible and creative mindset which challenges organisational, industry and national paradigms and problem solving recipes.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course it is expected that the student will be able to:

1. explain the nature of strategy;
2. identify a company's strategy in terms of its content, process, and context;
3. distinguish between activities in a company that are strategic and those that are operational;
4. describe the strategic tensions and their corresponding strategic perspectives;

5. know the main sources of each of the tensions, and their main proponents;
6. formulate linkages between each of the tensions;
7. illustrate the implications of each pole of the tensions as they apply to a company or case;
8. employ the concepts and tools of strategy in order to construct a strategy;
9. present an oral justification for a strategy or aspects of a strategy;
10. evaluate the quality of a proposed, or actual, business strategy;
11. develop and justify appropriate assumptions in order to deal with the complexity and ambiguity experienced by companies; and
12. describe his/her stance and approach to the process of strategy.

Content Outline

This course gives a broad overview of the essential aspects of strategic management at a local, national, and international level. The most fundamental distinction made in the field of strategy is between strategy process, strategy content and strategy context. These are the three dimensions of strategy that can be recognized in every real-life strategic problem.

- **Strategy Process:** The manner in which strategies come about is referred to as the strategy process. Stated in terms of a number of questions, strategy process is concerned with the how, who and when of strategy - how is, and should, strategy be made, analysed, dreamt-up, formulated, implemented, changed and controlled; who is involved; and when do the necessary activities take place?
- **Strategy Content:** The product of a strategy process is referred to as the strategy content. Stated in terms of a question, strategy content is concerned with the "what" of strategy - what is, and should be, the strategy for the organisation and each of its constituent units?
- **Strategy Context:** The set of circumstances under which both the strategy process and the strategy content are determined is referred to as the strategy context. Stated in terms of a question, strategy context is concerned with the where of strategy - where, that is in which organisation and which environment, are the strategy process and strategy content embedded (de Wit & Meyer, 2005, p. 5).

In practice, these three 'threads' of strategy are tightly interwoven, and to some extent the course seeks to unravel them so they might be better understood. Nevertheless, strategic management is an integrative processes; see for example Ohmae (1982), an extract of which is in the text book. It is somewhat illusionary to split up the course in to "bite size pieces" in the hope that they will form a coherent whole and the end of the course. Thus, whilst a list of topics is provided, they cannot be simply mapped on to individual weeks. The approach adopted in the course is to develop your understanding of the topics (albeit at different rates and by different amounts) each week.

Weekly topics:

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	What is strategy?
Week 3	Strategic thinking
Week 4	Strategy formation
Week 5	Strategic change
Week 6	Organisational purpose
Week 7	Business level strategy
Week 8	Corporate level strategy
Week 9	Industry context
Week 10	Strategy innovation
Week 11	Organisational context
Week 12	Review & Written case analysis

Learning and Teaching

Strategy isn't something an organisation has, it is something people do (Jarzabkowski, 2005). Thus, we centre our approach to teaching strategy on 'doing strategy' by spending most of our time together discussing strategy as it applies to a number of cases. However, it is important that you know the theory that supports many of the ideas upon which strategy is built. Consequently, this course has two facets - a weekly test (to ensure that you have studied the assigned readings) and a weekly case discussion period (to develop your ability to apply the ideas about which you have read). This means that you should have studied the assigned readings before taking the test. The purpose of the test is to help you stay up to date with the readings, obtain regular and rapid feedback on how you are doing in the course, and lay the theoretical basis for the subsequent case discussion. After the test, there will be a discussion of the ideas and issues raised by the readings.

The focus of the second class session will be the exploration of the issues raised by the readings in relation to a given case. Since participation accounts for a significant percentage of the final mark, attendance at these discussion sessions is highly recommended. Achieving a high grade for the course is only possible by high quality participation during the discussions.

Managers typically have little time to read, and even less time to write. They accomplish most of their communication orally. You have to learn how to do analysis effectively and communicate it efficiently. The case discussions are chances for you to practice convincing your peers that your approach has insight and value for the given managerial challenge.

Teaching Staff

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Learning Resources

The textbook upon which this course is based is:

de Wit, B., Meyer, R., Smith, P. & Erakovic, L. (Eds.). (2015). *BUSINESS 304 Strategic Management*. (1st ed.). NZ: Cengage Learning.

This book is available either as a printed version or as an ebook. The printed edition is available through UBS. To purchase the eBook, please do the following:

- Visit <http://www.cengagebrain.co.nz>
- Enter the print book ISBN in the "search" bar at the top of the page: 9780170366564
- Select the VitalSource eBook on the right of the page, and "add to cart"
- Then simply follow the prompts to purchase.

Note: This text book is significant revised from the version used in previous years. It contains all of the readings required for the course, together with the cases that will be used.

Assessment

This is an internally assessed course, which has two main types of assessment as shown below:

Assessment	Approx. weighting	Learning objectives	Notes
Weekly quiz	40% (best 8 x5%)	Objectives 1-7	In-class; Weeks 2-11
Class Discussion		All learning objectives	In-class; Weeks 2-11
• A/Oral	40%		In-class; Week 12
• B/Written*	20%		
Total	100%		

**The written case analysis is a compulsory assignment. Failure to attend this session will result in the DNC grade (DID NOT COMPLETE). A medical certificate is required if you are absent. The written case analysis is worth 20% of your course mark.*

Inclusive learning

Students are urged to discuss privately any impairment-related requirements face-to-face and/or in written form with the course convenor/lecturer and/or tutor

Student feedback

Your feedback is valuable to us. We will use it to improve the course content and our facilitation of the course. At the end of the course you will be asked to complete the course and teaching evaluations.