SOM 498: Strategic Management (Section 008)
Semester: Spring 2012 (updated Jan 24, 2012)

Professor: Mahesh P. Joshi Ph.D.
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email: mpjoshi@gmu.edu; mpjgmu@gmail.com (preferred email)
Timings: 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm Tuesday
Location: Robinson Hall B113
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm or anytime by appointment


Cases for the class: available at: HBSP
1. Wii Encore? By Andrei Hagiu, Hanna Halaburda; Product#: 709448-PDF-ENG, Revision Date: Aug 25, 2011
5. IMAX: Larger Than Life By Anil Nair; Product # 909M19-PDF-ENG, Pub. Date: 05/15/2009

COMPETITION CASE: Reed Supermarkets: A New Wave of Competitors by John A. Quelch; Carole Carlson
The Website for discount purchase of cases is at HBSP and the exact link is provided below.
Coursepack link: http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/12482652

Recommended extra reading: Any business publications such as The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, BusinessWeek, Fortune, Forbes

Course Website Address: Blackboard 9.1 through “mymason” portal

Prerequisites: Students must have completed general education requirements and all core courses (i.e., SOM 301, ACCT 301, DESC 301, MGMT 301, FNAN 301, and MKTG 301)

Learning Goals and Objectives: This class integrates the specific core concepts you learned up to this point in the GMU and School of Management Curriculum. You will examine firms and industries from an historical and current economic perspective. Your analysis, both written and oral, will include the principles of finance, accounting, management, and marketing, with an emphasis on information technology as both the ‘glue’ that links the functional specialties together and as a driving force behind emerging business models. Understanding how the various functional areas fit together and determine the performance of the firm is the essence of this

Joshi Spring 2012 SOM 498 section 008 1
Joshi Spring 2012 SOM 498 section 008

A capstone course. You will also learn more traditional strategy concepts including: the strategy process, the role of top management, industry analysis, firm resource analysis, strategy formulation, including corporate and business level strategies, strategy implementation, innovation and growth.

Additionally, this course will refine your strategic thinking skills now, before you graduate. You will master and apply strategic management frameworks to current events and your final project. In addition to the course content, the class will help you further develop important skills: research skills, analysis, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, and team building.

The specific program learning goals linked to this class include:
- Our students will be effective communicators.
- Our students will have an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Our students will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and effective teams.
- Our students will be critical thinkers.

The objectives for this course are:
- To familiarize students with the current literature of strategic management.
- To understand the complexities and challenges of multi-functional organizational problems.
- To focus attention on strategic issues confronting contemporary businesses.
- To facilitate the development of strategic thinking; and
- To further refine research, analytical, critical-thinking, problem-solving, team building, and communication skills.

**Approach to Learning**

This course is designed to be centered on active learning -- discussion and application -- rather than the traditional lecture-regurgitation format. Research strongly suggests, and our teaching experiences corroborate, that active learning is more effective and more interesting than traditional lecture-based teaching methods. Successful active learning requires a major investment from both students and faculty. You will need to study the assigned readings before each class, do a fair amount of thinking and writing, and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. You should become a partner in the learning environment, which means asking questions, sharing your reactions, giving feedback to your colleagues and instructor, and staying on top of the workload. We will invest time and energy to help you attain your goals for the course, and work with you to develop your skills and abilities (more like a coach than a traditional lecturer). This approach requires more work from all of us, but the long run benefits warrant the extra effort.

We will use a combination of lecture, discussions (case based as well news items based) during most class periods. For each topic area, we will usually discuss the strategic management frameworks prevalent in different industry environments first. Then, we will devote class time to the application of these frameworks using both current events and your selected projects as a context.

**Student Responsibilities:** You should enjoy taking advantage of opportunities in this class to develop your analytical and strategic thinking abilities and polish your communication skills, so that you can graduate from the School of Management with confidence in your talents. Is this going to be hard? Yes. Are you going to get a significant return on your investment? We think so. As your instructors, we will create an environment that maximizes your potential to thrive in this course. As such, you should plan to spend a significant amount of time on this course and make
sure that you are in a position to succeed - i.e., not trying to overload credits, not working 60 hours a week and trying to go to school full time. In other words, we expect that school is your first priority. If you have any questions about whether or not this is a reasonable time to take this course, given your competing non-school responsibilities, your instructor will be happy to sit down with you before the drop/add date to determine if you are in a reasonable position to succeed. Put simply, you are responsible for providing yourself enough time and energy to succeed in this course.

The course primarily uses a combination of lectures, class discussions, case analyses; and group/individual assignments. The structure of this course is to achieve simultaneous learning and enjoyment. In other words, with my efforts and your inputs you will learn a great deal and have fun doing it. The more you are willing to contribute to the class, the more you will get out of the course. We will together create a jovial atmosphere while achieving and maintaining rigorous academic standards.

**Assignment policy and Special Accommodations:** All assignments and exams must be handed in on schedule. Late assignments and missed exams will drop a letter grade for every day they are late. You are to work only with your team members on the team assignments, not with other members of the class or anyone else. Team members will receive the same grade, but if the team feels a particular student(s) did not adequately contribute, please do not include his/her name on the assignment. That student will be given an individual assignment to be assigned by the Professor. A team member evaluation form will be posted on the BlackBoard site and you are required to turn it in prior to final project. I will be willing to handle team problems up to 8th week of the semester.

**Honor Code**
You must be familiar with this, but we expect you to know and follow the GMU honor code. ([http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039&returnto=search#Honor](http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039&returnto=search#Honor)).

Specifically, we expect that:
A. Though, the tests will be open book, seeking help of others through any communication method is not permissible during the course of tests.
B. You will complete original work for this class. Research is important, but you must cite all your sources for all papers and presentations in this course. You may not paraphrase or quote without proper reference. You may not use materials prepared for other courses. You may not use material prepared by other students in the same or other sections of this course, past or present. You can feel free to ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes original work and what constitutes plagiarism.
C. In order to insure equity across sections of 498, electronic means will be used to check originality of work. Written projects must be submitted to “SafeAssign” prior to submitting them to the professor.

**Grading Policy**
Your learning in this course will be evaluated in several ways. This course takes a mastery-based approach to learning, and, logically, to the evaluation of your performance. You must demonstrate that you understand and can apply course concepts and skills in order to pass the course. We will help by providing detailed feedback and providing resources to maximize your opportunities to learn.

Grading Weights and Scale:
Test 1 (phase 1 & 2) 20 A = 93-100 C+ = 77-79.99  
Test 2 (cumulative) 25 A- = 90-92.99 C = 70-76.99  
Class participation 10 B+ = 87-89.99 D = 60-69.99  
Practice Case 5 B = 83-86.99 F = 59 and below  
Industry Report 10 B- = 80-82.99  
Firm Report 15  
In class case presentation 15  
Total points 100

**Tests: (20+25 points) - Individual**  
The course exams will consist of short essay, which are in the form of “True or False sentences”, as well as application of news items. You have to provide justifications based on cases, current news items, text book and class discussions. Students will be required to apply concepts and frameworks from assigned readings and cases and in-class discussions. More details will be listed on the Blackboard.

**Class Participation: Individual (10 points)**  
Since this course is a discussion and case-based course, your participation is critical to the learning experience. Much of the learning that will take place in this class comes from the chance to express ideas, listen to what others have to say, and discuss these ideas in order to develop your critical-thinking skills. To do this you must prepare all assigned materials and participate in the in-class discussions, exercises and assignments. Please note, every class your participation will depend on bringing a current news item that connects to a concept to be discussed in class as well as being well prepared for the assigned reading in the class. Grades for class participation will depend on both the quality and the frequency of participation. Students will be called upon randomly to answer questions pertaining to the readings. GMU catalog states the following on attendance policies for graduate and undergraduate classes:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important to the individual student and to the class as a whole. Because class participant may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

**Class participation: Group (5 points)**  
There are 6 cases assigned in the class and each student team must submit ONE case analysis (1000 words maximum) prior to the case being discussed in the class and present to the class. Each submission CAN earn your team up to five points towards group class participation grade (practice case presentation).

**Team Selection:**  
Select your own teams of five students (including yourself). Since diversity and close coordination is a key part of management in dealing with complex, multi-functional organizational challenges, please consider complementary functional expertise and individual schedule and location for ease of coordination. Extensive use of Blackboard and email is highly recommended for completing team based tasks. Instructor may insert or remove certain students from any team to balance the background of the team.
Industry and Firm Reports: (Bio-Technology Firms) (10+15 points)
Both reports will be completed in teams. The industry report consists of researching and analyzing an assigned industry. The firm report consists of researching and analyzing an assigned firm in the industry. Each reports must be typed and not exceed 3000 Words Maximum, excluding exhibits. The reports will be broadly evaluated on incisive analysis, the application of appropriate concepts and frameworks, the logic of arguments (qualitative and quantitative), and presentation (professionalism, persuasion, clarity, flow, spelling, grammar, etc). Exhibits are highly recommended to enhance the text. Graphics, tables, and bullets will help to make points in the most concise way and to clarify issues discussed in the text. Exhibits should be germane to the analysis and arguments, and should be referenced as appropriate in the text. Note, however, that the point of the information presented in the exhibits must be covered in the writing of the report. Please make sure all appropriate materials are referenced, use a broad range of references, and provide current and complete references (title, source, date, etc.). Each team should have its report analyzed for plagiarism issues on the Blackboard via SafeAssign that will be activated prior to the due date.

Case Competition: Case presentation and participation competition (15% Team)
You will make the presentation during two events if your team is chosen to advance. First, you will make your presentation to the class and your instructor for a grade (April 10), which accounts for 15% of your final grade. The two top teams will be chosen to advance to the SOM Case Competition. The top teams will use the feedback from class students the in-class presentation to develop a final presentation, to be given during the case competition to a panel of business professionals (April 20th, 2012).

In class case analysis for the competition: The presentations must not exceed 15 minutes and all team members must be part of presentation. All teams must provide a copy of their PowerPoint slides on the assigned date – which cannot be changed. The presentations will be evaluated based on a specific set of criteria that will be listed on the Blackboard site. These criteria will focus on issue such as: identification of key issues facing the case company, validation of why they are key issues (qualitative and quantitative), did recommended strategies address the key issues, validate why recommended strategies would work (qualitative and quantitative), and presentation (professionalism, persuasion, enthusiasm, clarity, flow, spelling, grammar, etc). Support your arguments with facts and when data or information is missing, make reasonable assumptions, which you can articulate and defend. Presentation of the logic applied in deriving your choice and recommendation is the most critical element to your report and presentation. You should use the same criteria for preparing for the case competition if you team is selected.

Please Note: NO Professors are allowed to coach advancing teams after the in-class presentations are made. The case competition is a single elimination, two-round competition. The best teams will make their presentation twice on April 20th (Note: because this is not a class day and advanced arrangements to have the afternoon hours available should be made NOW – against that you have no class on April 17th). You may be eligible for extra points if you answer a few questions concerning the case competition on April 20th. More details will be posted on Blackboard.
### PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting #</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments and Class Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Jan 24</td>
<td>In class Exercise, Introduction to Strategy Management Team formation &amp; assignments</td>
<td>Read current business news stories, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Jan 31</td>
<td>Introduction to strategy, Industry analysis How to analyze a case, library resources</td>
<td>Ch. 1, Ch. 2 Read current business news stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Feb 7</td>
<td>Case 1: Encore Wii? Industry Analysis</td>
<td>Ch. 1 and Ch. 2 Continued Every one reads the case Read current business news stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Feb 14</td>
<td>Internal analysis of a firm Evaluation of resources Sources of competitive advantage</td>
<td>Ch. 3, Ch. 4, Ch. 5 Read current business news stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Feb 21</td>
<td>Internal analysis of a firm (continued) Case 2: TiVo 2007: DVRs and Beyond Case 3: Lan Airlines in 2008: Connecting the World to Latin America</td>
<td>Continue with Chapters 3,4,5 Every one reads both cases and two teams (for each case) make the presentation of the case and provide the report. Read current business news stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>6: Feb 28</td>
<td>Feb 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;: Phase 1 &amp; 2 of First Test</td>
<td>Up to chapters 5 and three cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Mar 6</td>
<td>Update on Industry report Feedback First Test</td>
<td>Industry Report Due on March 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 12 to 18</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break No classes</strong></td>
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<td>8: Mar 20</td>
<td>Vertical integration Case 4: Apple Inc., 2008</td>
<td>Ch. 6, Two teams make the presentation of the case and provide the report. Read current business news stories Last Day to resolve team problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>9: Mar 27</td>
<td>Corporate diversification Organizing to implement diversification Case 5: Imax</td>
<td>Ch. 7, Ch. 8 Two teams make the presentation of the case and provide the report. Read current business news stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>10: Apr 3</td>
<td>Case 6: Monforte Dairy Strategic Alliances and M&amp;A</td>
<td>Ch. 9, Ch. 10 and Ch. 11 Every one reads the case Read current business news stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Apr 10</td>
<td>All teams present Case: Reed Supermarkets (April 10) Winners announced</td>
<td>All eight teams turn in their PPT for the case presentation April 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: April 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>No class on April 17. Instead everyone is present for case competition on April 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13: Apr 24</td>
<td>Strategic Alliances and Merger and Acquisition Review of case competition and preparing for Second test.</td>
<td>Firm analysis due Apr 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: May 1</td>
<td>May 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;: Phase 1 &amp; 2 of Second Test</td>
<td>Cumulative test. Be familiar with chapters, cases and in class discussion</td>
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