Course: MBA 678: Strategy and Organizational Leadership  
Spring 2011  
Thursdays 7:20-10:00 pm, Founders Hall 466, Arlington Campus.  
Instructor: M. Yasai  
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E-mail: myasai@gmu.edu  
Office: Enterprise Hall 219  
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The primary objective of this course is to provide you with skills that are useful in developing and implementing strategies. The course introduces you to a number of conceptual frameworks and methodologies for diagnosing business conditions, design of strategies, and evaluation of strategic alternatives. The first part of the course focuses on analyzing industry characteristics, competitive settings, and firms' resources and capabilities. The focus will then shift to problem identification, design and evaluation of strategies.

The course relies heavily on case studies where you are given an opportunity to apply concepts and test effectiveness of theories. Class discussion of cases is an important part of one's analysis and synthesis of the material and enables you to gain greater insights and to develop a deeper level of understanding. We ultimately strive to sharpen your analytical and critical thinking-abilities.

Learning goals

- To improve analytical decision making.
- To integrate various functional disciplines.

Objectives

- To familiarize 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.
● To further refine analytical, critical-thinking, and communication skills.

Assignments

A) Three written case reports on designated cases. Each report will be five pages double spaced typed (excluding tables and charts presented in appendices). Case reports are to be prepared by teams.

B) An industry project that is designed to enable you to apply all concepts learned to an industry and a company of your choice. Industry reports are to be prepared by teams. The report should include an assessment of the current company strategy, assessment of its industry environment, appraisal of internal resources and capabilities, evaluation of strategy and its performance, and recommendations for changes in strategy if deemed necessary. This report will be fifteen pages double spaced (excluding appendices). Formats for written reports and the industry project will be provided in due course.

Assignment policy

All assignments and exams must be handed in on schedule and in-class (no e-mails). 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 outside this section. 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. At the same time, please be fair and provide ample communication and time. That student will be given an individual assignment to be assigned by the Professor.

All work should be the original product of those turning in the assignment and uphold the University’s Honor Code. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Class Participation

Due to the central role of case analysis and discussion, a major and important part of your learning in this course will take place in the classroom. Therefore, regular class participation is essential and contributes toward your final grade.
Grading Weights and Scale

Final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project report</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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A = 93-100
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B  = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C  = 70-76
D  = 60-69
F  = 59 and below

Course Materials

Required

Cases: Harvard Case packet
Use the following link to purchase your cases:

http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/8487705

Recommended

Any business publications such as the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Fortune, Forbes, Economist, Financial Times, Harvard Business Review, etc.
MBA 678: Strategy and Organizational Leadership schedule

Jan. 27  Introduction

Feb. 03  Goals, Values and Performance

Case #1 Wal-Mart in 2003

Readings:
Chap. 1 The Concept of Strategy
Chap. 2 Goals, Values, and Performance

Feb. 10  Industry Structural Analysis

Readings:
Chap. 3 Industry Analysis: The Fundamentals
Chap. 4 Further Topics in Industry and Competitive Analysis

Feb. 17  Firm’s Resources and Capabilities and Sources of Competitive Advantage

Case #2 Cola Wars Continue: Coke versus Pepsi in 2006

Readings:
Chap. 5 Analyzing Resources and Capabilities
Chap. 6 Developing Resources and Capabilities
Chap. 7 Organizational Structure and Management Systems

Feb. 24  Analysis of Competitive Advantage

Case #3 Airborne Express (Written Report)

Readings:
Chap. 8 The Nature and Sources of Competitive Advantage
Chap. 9 Cost Advantage
Chap. 10 Differentiation advantage

Mar. 03  Industry Evolution
Case #4 Apple Computers in 2006

Readings:
Chap. 11 Industry Evolution and Strategic Change
Chap. 12 Technology-based Industries and the Management of Innovation

Mar. 10

Competitive Advantage in Mature Industries

Case #5 Samsung Electronics (Written Report)

Readings:
Chap. 13 Competitive Advantage in Mature Industries

Mar. 17

Spring Break

Mar. 24

Mid-Term Exam Case: Case #6 TBD

Mar. 31

Dialectics Approach to Strategic Planning

Apr. 07

Applications of the Dialectics

Case #7 Webvan

Readings:
Chap. 14 Vertical Integration and the Scope of the Firm

Apr. 14

Global Strategies

Case #8 Haier: Taking a Chinese Company Global (Written Report)

Readings:
Chap. 15 Global Strategies and the Multinational Corporations

Apr. 21

Management of Multi-business Corporation

Case #9 Newell Company: Corporate Strategy

Readings:
Chap.16 Diversification Strategy
Chap.17 Managing the Multi-business Corporation
Chap.18 Current Trends in Strategic Management

Apr. 28  Final projects due and Project Presentations
May.05  Final projects due and Project Presentations