

Course Outline

Course Code : BSN4714
Course Title : New Opportunities From Market Failures
Semester : Semester 1, Academic Year 2025/2026
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Overview

To create new business opportunities from market and business failures. The purpose of this course is to ensure students understand and apply the following in re-inventing failed businesses:

- The major reasons for business failures (eg: economic market conditions, changing regulations, lack of demand, easy product switch, evolving competition, organizational incapability, etc)
- Global cases of business failures with lessons learned (eg: Kodak, GM, Atari, Nokia, Borders, etc)
- Diagnostic of key failure elements with financial and stakeholder (eg: customers, supply chain, shareholders) impact
- Elements of a turnaround strategy (immediate and longer term) based on goals, requirements, financial and organizational impact
- The tools and methodologies required to successfully restructure an existing failure into a new profitable venture

Course Objectives

Learning objectives include:

- Understanding the reasons for business failures based on market conditions, operations, product type, customer base and financials
- Conducting in-depth analysis and learning from failed global and local business cases
- Diagnostic and prioritization methodologies for assessing and mitigating business failures
- Building a business failure containment plan (eg: cash management, customer data analysis, organizational impact, etc)
- Building a turnaround strategy (eg: new revenues, reduced costs, redefined organization, capital management, operational efficiencies, marketing/sales approaches, competitor oversight, etc)
- Defining key elements of a turnaround 100 day plan (eg: new product elements, financial restructuring, operational & organizational changes, customer acquisition/retention, key metrics, stakeholder communication)
- Developing business, financial and stakeholder communication plans with relevant metrics to assess the impact of the turnaround plan on a go-forward basis for future investment/funding

General Guide & Reading (e.g. Case preparation guide, project report guide, main textbook & supplementary materials, etc)

The following books on a range of topics, while not required, are highly recommended:

1. Meltdown: Chris Clearfield, Andras Tilcsik
2. How I Almost Blew It: Sidharth Rao

3. ClusterPhuck: Leading At the Speed of Stupid: Dr Gregory L. Cotton
4. Enron: The Rise and Fall: Loren Fox
5. Billion Dollar Loser: The Epic Rise and Spectacular Fall of Adam Neumann and WeWork: Reeves Wiedeman
6. Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup: John Carreyrou, Will Damron
7. When Genius Failed: Roger Lowenstein
8. Reversing the Slide: James B. Shein

Assessment

Assessment Components	Weightage
Class Participation (individual)	20%
Final Report and presentation document (team)	50%
Final physical presentation (individual)	30%

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own” (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubt, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

About me . . .

Mita Natarajan has over 35 years of experience in building new ventures across the US, Europe and Asia. These ventures have included several that have listed in public markets and been sold as well. Her background also includes being on the fund raising side as well as running funds that invest in new and sustainable ventures. Her academic qualifications include a Masters degree from Harvard University. She currently also is CEO of an early stage biopharma company.

Schedule and Outline

Lesson/ Week	Date	Topic	Chapter	Activity (preparation / cases & assignments / follow-up readings & resources)
Week 1	Mon 11 Aug- Fri 15 Aug	Understanding reasons for business failures Learning from failed global and local business cases		
Week 2	Mon 18 Aug- Fri 22 Aug	Diagnostic and prioritization methodologies for assessing and mitigating business failures		
Week 3	Mon 25 Aug- Fri 29 Aug	Building a business failure containment plan		
Week 4	Mon 1 Sept- Fri 5 Sept	Building a business turnaround strategy		
Week 5	Mon 8 Sept- Fri 12 Sept	Defining key elements of a 100 day turnaround plan		
Week 6	Mon 15 Sept- Fri 19 Sept	Developing business, financial and stakeholder communication plans Detailing relevant tracking metrics for future investment needs		
Recess Week	Sat 20 Sept- Sun 28 Sept			
Week 7	Mon 29 Sept- Fri 4 Oct	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Identify a failing business venture/idea Detail immediate reasons for business venture failure		
Week 8	Mon 6 Oct-Fri 10 Oct	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Utilize methodologies to diagnose in detail reasons for business venture failure		
Week 9	Mon 13 Oct- Fri 17 Oct	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Build a business venture failure containment plan		

Week 10	Mon 20 Oct- Fri 24 Oct	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Define key elements of a 100 day turnaround plan		
Week 11	Mon 27 Oct- Fri 31 Oct	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Develop business, financial and stakeholder communication plans		
Week 12	Mon 3 Nov- Fri 7 Nov	Business restructuring fieldwork (with ongoing interaction with professor) within and outside of class time Detail relevant metrics for future investment needs		
Week 13	Mon 10 Nov- Fri 14 Nov	Final idea presentation (by teams)		