Course Outline

Course Code : BSP4701/BSP3701
Course Title : Strategic Management
Semester : Semester 1, Academic Year 2026-27
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Overview

This course seeks to develop the analytical skills as well as the action orientation that is required of a general manager who must cope with many challenges including complexity, uncertainty, and inadequate information. An important requirement of a general manager's job is the ability to think in a cross-functional and holistic manner because decisions that are optimal for a department or an individual business unit are often not in the best interests of the whole firm. Since following often-travelled strategic paths is unlikely to result in superior performance, creativity, and innovation, which can be exercised in the analysis as well as implementation (organizational policies), are critical to achieving success as a general manager as well.
The assigned readings and discussion sessions in the course will be supplemented by talks by managers and discussion of cases and contemporary events. But the ideas gained from the various sources can only be imbibed (and assimilated) with considerable reflection and practice. Hence, to enhance your learning, you are urged to prepare your own analyses of the cases assigned as well as the contemporary situations listed in the outline.

Course Objectives

After completing the course, the students should be able to:

1. Analyse and understand the environment that any firm operates in.
2. Learn to frame business situations and decisions from a cross-functional perspective.
3. Develop alternatives and choose among them based on their analyses of the costs, benefits, and feasibility.
4. Recommend an implementation plan for the chosen alternative while considering the sensitivities of the various stakeholders.

Assessment

Assessment Components	Weightage
Class participation (Individual)	30
Simulation (Group; based on performance/ score)	25
Simulation analysis and write-up (Group) (10) + Peer valuation (Individual) (5))	15
Final case analysis (in-person; individual)	30

Schedule and Outline (Please note that this schedule is somewhat flexible and we will change it as we go along)

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

- Participating in class is important to learning strategy through the case method. It allows you to discuss your proposed solution with peers. In the process, you can judge the clarity of your thoughts as well as your peers' reactions to your ideas. Attending as many classes as possible is important for receiving a good grade on class participation.
- You can miss two classes for legitimate reasons (e.g., work travel, job interview, sickness, etc.) Missing a third class might require you to incur a significant penalty on class participation. If you miss more than three classes, you will earn a failing grade **in class participation**.
- There may not be one correct answer to the question posed in the cases, though some answers may be more correct than others. T*he quality of supporting reasoning that you provide for choosing one alternative over others will be used to evaluate your contribution to the class discussion.* Class participation also means listening to other people and being sensitive to their points of view.
- Please read, in advance, the cases and the readings assigned for every class. If you are not prepared for any class, please let me know in advance so that I don't inadvertently embarrass you. Individuals and/or groups may be called on to present their analyses in class.
- Feel free to come and talk to me regarding any aspect of the course, including your individual performance or issues discussed in the class. Suggestions for improving the quality of class discussion are always welcome.
- Please note the following:
    1. To make the discussion more engaging, laptops or tablets are not allowed to be open during class.
    2. Handphones should not be used extensively during class since doing so is a signal that you think whatever is being discussed is unimportant to you. U**sing handphones extensively will incur NEGATIVE class participation points.**
    3. While sometimes you may need to step out (e.g., for a bathroom break, an important call, etc.), too many people going and coming in distract the other people. Please avoid it. If you have a reason to step out during a particular class, please let my TA (or me) know.
    4. My TA will track your signals of disinterest and the distractions you may be causing others. There will be no constant reminders that you should not do these things.
    5. Remaining enrolled in the class is taken as your acceptance of the above rules.
    6. Please note that negative behaviors can reduce your class participation score to 0 out of 30; effectively reducing the basis of grading to a max of 70 points instead of 100 points.
- For those who are either not native speakers of English or introverted, please see the video in the following link (two-part), which identifies a few interesting strategies you may be able to follow to increase your participation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxR47dUlKM0&list=PLl1eaoEX1fG-jtBYZw39Te5P942b78plF

- I believe in the saying: You teach some by what you say, teach more by what you do, but most of all, you teach most by who you are. I will always be on time, well-prepared and willing to hear from you (please make sure that you are not airing unfounded opinions; are ready to substantiate your arguments; have done research/ thinking before having a strong stand).

Readings

There is no textbook for the course. We will use a set of readings from the digital library instead, which are free of charge. Additionally, I will provide you a few links for articles. I think most of the books have unneeded baggage (stuff we are not interested in) and provide poor value (costs are disproportionately higher versus quality). But I can suggest the following books, if strategy as a subject excites you.

Type of book	Details
Textbook	Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases: Competitiveness and Globalization 13th Edition by Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland, and Robert E. Hoskisson.
Interesting but difficult to read	Good Strategy/Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters by Richard Rumelt, Sean Runnette, et al.
Simplified version of strategy from a well-known CEO	Playing to Win: How Strategy Really Works Hardcover, by A.G. Lafley (Author), Roger L. Martin
Strategy from an Economic perspective	The Art of Strategy: A Game Theorist's Guide to Success in Business and Life, by Avinash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff

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 doubts, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

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

Schedule

Class number	Topic
1	Admin issues and introduction to the course and a mini-case
2	Introduction to Lafley et al.'s broad strategy framework and the first box (Winning aspiration)
3	SWOT analysis, PEST analysis and a case Discussion (second box in the framework; Where to play)
4	Case discussion (1st half; continuation from previous class) + Application of the Five Forces analysis to the Food delivery industry
5	Catching up, strategic implications of the Five Forces analysis continued from previous class) + Simulation briefing
6	Catching up (if needed) + Generic strategies (Cost leadership and cases)
7	Generic strategies (continued): Differentiation, Focus/ Niche and Hybrid strategies
8	Blue Ocean strategies and strategic innovation
9	Capabilities and strategy with case illustrations (the fourth box in the framework)
10	Diversification strategy and cases
11	Strategy execution (of digital strategy) and a case (the fifth box in the framework)
12	Tools for managing a diversified portfolio of businesses and a case
13	Final Quiz (individual case analysis)

Note: Since the numbers in the first refer to the class number, recess week is excluded