

**Peking University
HSBC Business School**

Strategic Management: 2013-2014 Module 3

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Course overview/ Description:

This course centers on the strategic vision of the firm. As such, we will build on your expertise in the functional areas of marketing, accounting, finance, and management. The concept of strategy in organizations has been used to explain the reason some organization fail, some succeed, and some do exceptionally well. In this course we will use readings and cases to examine current business theories and issues as we work to better understand the complexities of business strategy.

It is of great importance that you understand that while there are clear issues that we will be addressing there may not be a “right” answer. Because of this there will be multiple “right” answers to the cases and questions we face during our time together in this course. This will be a good experience in being able to discuss and work together in industry and my evaluation of your work will be in line with this. Much of my evaluation will be based on what you do with the information, whether the solution is logical and fits the given situation, and how you would implement your strategy. The skills that can be learned in this class are not only essential for general managers to learn, but for consultants and entry-level managers from all disciplines, especially given an increasingly competitive environment.

Experiential learning is especially important and it is not always possible to learn strategy formulation and execution through traditional classroom situations. You will find that good students are not always good managers as the situations can be very different. One of the other areas that is key to this course is communication. Being able to effectively communicate will benefit you in any endeavor you take on. Being an excellent communicator will help you excel in your career. As communication is something that can continually be worked on I plan to help each of you to more effectively present and convey your ideas.

Learning Objectives:

1. Integrate knowledge and apply analytical techniques from various disciplines, including finance, accounting, management, marketing, and economics. The goal is to identify and analyze strategic issues and develop solutions in the form of implementable plans with the purpose of developing and sustaining competitive advantage.
2. Understand the nature of strategic competitiveness and develop the ability to analyze the competitive environment facing a firm, assess the attractiveness of the industry and isolate potential sources of competitive advantage and disadvantage.

3. Discriminate among the types of data that general managers need to evaluate alternative scenarios. Develop logical, coherent and persuasive analyses for a desired course of action. Consider how to effectively implement plans within the constraints imposed by the complex behavior of individuals within organizations.
4. Adoption of the “big picture” top management approach that considers the entire organization and its environments. (Complex thinking and multiple perspective skills)
5. Develop the ability to analyze an organization and its environments to find or create competitive advantages. (Cognitive problem solving ability and decision making skills)
6. Sharpen communication and relationship skills. (Image and people management)
7. Simulate, as much as possible, behavior consistent with business settings. (Consistent and frequent performance feedback on learning, showing me what you know, and working effectively with others.)
8. Enable you to learn management consulting tools and frameworks

Methods of Learning:

1. Team collaboration
2. Written analysis, oral presentation, class participation
3. In class activities: Management consulting tools and frameworks
4. Exams, simulation performance, and peer evaluation (360 degree evaluation)

Required Texts:

Ireland, Hoskisson, and Hitt, *The Management of Strategy: Concepts, International Edition*, 10th Edition.

Grading:

Strategic Challenges Project (team) – 30%

Exam – 25%

Case Write-Ups (individual) – 25%

Professionalism, Participation, and Peer Evaluation (individual) – 20%

Teamwork:

Team skills are in high demand in the business world. Contribution to team success is a measure of your individual abilities and your relational skills. It will be important that you get to know your team well and that you are upfront with your team about your strengths and weaknesses. For this course, teams will be formed in the first few classes and teamwork will account for 30% of your grade. Play to your strengths by dividing the workload among you and using each member’s individual resources. There are resources/skills such as leadership, organization, researching, writing, speaking, publishing, and time to mention a few. Use them to your advantage. The instructor will assign students to teams based on building diversity within the team using majors, work experience, international exposure, or any other factor that seems pertinent. Team composition is meant to reflect real life experiences of teams with varying skills and membership not of your choosing.

For this course you will also evaluate your teammates. To garner the best possible team peer evaluation, it will be necessary for you to know what your responsibilities are and to execute those for your team. It is imperative that you communicate often, attend meetings, complete your assignments on time, and help lead the team to success. Be sure to use each team member's resources as you would in any organization. It isn't necessary for every member to work an equal amount in every area. Peer evaluations will reflect the amount of effort put forward by each team member in total. Peer evaluations will be used to adjust each individual's score for the team projects. I will also ask for feedback of your teammates participation in the course in general. This will provide me with another set of reviews to my own and hopefully provide you with teammates who encourage you to participate in class.

Strategic Challenges Project:

It is highly important that you are able to both understand and articulate the challenges that face a firm in seeking and sustaining a competitive advantage. Your team paper will describe the environment of your firm, explain the challenges the environment creates, and explicate on the possible changes in the environment. You will then explain the internal environment of the firm and how the resources and capabilities the firm has would allow them to compete in this environment. Your team should then provide both short- and long-term recommendations for the firm. Throughout this paper your team will be expected to utilize the frameworks and techniques discussed in class. You will need to provide me a 1-page memo with your company choice and preliminary challenges they face a few weeks in. I recommend that you chose an industry that you have knowledge of and don't forget you can contact the firm to try and get information as well. The company should be 1) listed in the United States and 2) more than five years operating history. However, the company should not be 3) a holding company, 4) a highly diversified firm, or 5) a celebrity (e.g., Microsoft, 3M, and so on). You won't have all the information you need. The essence of this project is you will have to figure it out on your own! The firm should be listed. This report should be 10-15 typed pages, not including cover, bibliography, and supporting tables and figures.

The class will end with an oral presentation of the case. Presentations are expected to last approximately 15 minutes with another 5 minutes allotted for questions and discussions. Class members earn participation points on presentation days. Presentations should use PowerPoint. If you use a computer presentation, arrange your equipment needs and come to class early to set up. It is also highly recommended that you prepare backup material/equipment as I have seen many (including my own) presentations thwarted by equipment failures. Practice. Know your material. I do not want you to read your presentation and put the class to sleep. Make your material fit the time constraint. Anyone who spends more than 20 minutes will receive a penalty. Both the instructor and the audience will be evaluating your presentation. **AGAIN, there will be a penalty for exceeding the time limit.** Class members will be evaluating your performance in the oral presentation and will be assigning a grade to each team. I will use this in my assessment of overall performance. For calculation purposes you may assume that I will average the class evaluation and give it 10-20% weight (of the oral presentation) in my calculations.

Individual Work:

You will also be evaluated on work that you do yourself. This will account for the other 70% of your grade.

Exam:

The final exam will consist of essay questions and will be comprehensive. More information will be provided at that time.

Case Discussion and Write-ups:

In this course we will follow the extensive list of high-level schools using the case method. You will be asked to write short analyses for cases during the course. These write-ups are due at the start of class as they are designed to help facilitate discussion. You will be asked to follow the following format in general (some cases may not require all parts of this or be better suited for a slight modification of the format):

- 1) Introduction – A short summary of the challenges in the case
- 2) Analysis – An analysis of the environment and organization included financials
- 3) Options – A short summary of the possible options
- 4) Recommendations and Implementations – Your chance to provide suggestions

Professionalism, Participation, and Peer Evaluation:

Because of the nature of this course it is important for you to be prepared for each class. This will provide you with the most benefit and will also provide the most benefit for your classmates. Being prepared will allow you to keep up with your classmates in discussion and provide your experiences and insight. You must attend class in order to participate fully. While professionalism is not a tangible and measureable attribute there are some key points. This does not mean that you should not speak until spoken to or that you should not challenge my ideas or the ideas of your classmates. You should however maintain a respectful atmosphere for everyone to pursue their ideas. Also, please be upfront with your team. You may want to set some goals and put plans in place to deal with issues that may come up along the way. You are always welcome to come to me if issues arise in your group but it will be a far better experience if you have the communication paths set up to deal with these ahead of time. I also expect you to treat my class as you would a job, keeping in mind the expectations that stem from that.

Course Schedule:

This is a general guide as the schedule may change at any time. Notification will be given of any changes. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to talk to your classmates about any assignments or schedule changes.

CLASS 1 – Introduction to the Course 1/1

CLASS 2 – Strategic Management 1/2

CLASS 3 – Strategic Management 2/2

CLASS 4 – The Environment 1/3

CLASS 5 – The Environment 2/3

CLASS 6 – The Environment 3/3

CLASS 7 – Strategy 1/5

CLASS 8 – Strategy 2/5

CLASS 9 – Strategy 3/5

CLASS 10 – Strategy 4/5

CLASS 11 – Strategy 5/5

CLASS 12 – Governance 1/2

CLASS 13 – Governance 2/2

CLASS 14 – Entrepreneurship 1/2

CLASS 15 – Entrepreneurship 2/2

CLASS 16 – Presentations 1/2

CLASS 17 – Presentations 2/2

CLASS 18 – Summary and Conclusion 1/1

FINAL EXAM - TBA