

Victoria Management School

## **MMBA 534 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

Second Trimester 2005

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

#### **Contact Details**

Brent Allred  
Email: [allred@business.wm.edu](mailto:allred@business.wm.edu)

#### **Class Times and Room Numbers**

Start Date: 31 August 2005  
Format: One four-hour session each week for six weeks.  
Lecture Times: Wednesday, 17:30 – 21:30.  
Location: RLWY129

#### **Course Objectives**

The objective of this course is to better develop the capacity to think strategically about an organization, its business position, and how it gains sustainable competitive advantages. This course is designed to expose graduate business students to the issues that influence the competitive behaviour and performance of firms. In this course you will build skills in conducting strategic analysis in a variety of industry and competitive situations. The course will involve analyzing and crafting business strategies through case studies and class discussion. By the end of this course, students will be better able to apply a manager's strategic perspective to the resolution of major business problems at different levels within the organization, with the goal of improving organizational performance.

This course relies heavily on the *case method*. This method facilitates a student's broad exposure to the multi-dimensional issues involved in the strategic management of different kinds of firms and the problems they face. In order for this method to be most effective and provide the greatest learning experience, active student participation is necessary and expected.

## Course Content

Lectures, case studies, assigned reading, and discussion are the main teaching methods used in this course. Each session will typically will comprise a mix of:

- lecture covering the theoretical aspects,
- case study,
- discussion.

Recommended and optional readings on each theme will be provided in the course materials on enrolment. Supplementary reading will also be provided as required during the course.

## Expectations & Course Policies

Some fields of study have well-defined problems, with “right” or “wrong” answers or solutions. This is not the case for strategic management. Strategic decision makers are constantly faced with complex situations, characterized by uncertainty and risk. The problems or opportunities for an organization are not always obvious and the alternatives for action are seldom clear. For this reason, students are encouraged to be thorough and creative in their analysis. While there may not be one “right” answer, there a big difference between excellent and poor analysis and the recommendations it leads to.

In addition to the expectation that students are adequately prepared for each case discussion, occasional written homework will be assigned, as indicated on the schedule. Each case will also have a set of questions intended to direct the class discussion. You should be thoroughly prepared for each case, regardless of whether or not it has been assigned as homework. Written assignments must be completed and turned in during the class for the day assigned. No late assignments will be accepted.

**Textbook:** *Competing for Advantage*, Hoskisson, Hitt, & Ireland, 2004, South-Western (ISBN 0-324-27158-1)

## Reading material

Reading material and cases will be identified and provided (either directly or through purchase). Additional material will be distributed at the lectures, and it is expected that participants will also research and access other materials independently.

## Assessment

A participant’s overall grade for this course will be determined as follows:

(A) Group Paper	35%
(B) Group Presentation	5%
(C) Individual Assignments (3X @ 15% each)	45%
(D) Class participation	15%

## Group Paper (35%)/Group Presentation (5%): Submission date 11 October 2005

The major deliverable for this course is the group project. Because of your busy work and personal schedules, I prefer that you to form your own groups instead them being assigning. Each group should consist of 4 - 5 students, resulting in 4 - 5 groups for the class. A list of team members and the company selected for your project is due on September 7, 2005.

For this project, I would like your group to identify an organization that is either one that a group member works for/with or is a well known public company in New Zealand. The benefit of selecting a company that a group member works with is that the application of course concepts becomes more than just an exercise and may prove useful to that organization. The downside comes with concerns of confidentiality and access to adequate information. If you choose a large public corporation, you may wish study the entire organization or focus on a specific business unit. Early on, you should ensure that you have access to key information on the organization that you choose.

The nature of this assignment requires that you will need to determine what the current goals and strategies of the company are, provide a critique of these strategies, identify issues confronting the organization, consider options for addressing these issues, and make recommendations based on the available options. Your analysis should consider the:

- history of the company
- current strategies and recent evolution of strategies
- financial performance
- core competences and strategic resources
- organization structure and inter-organizational relationships
- internal analysis
- environmental/industry analysis
- competitor analysis
- leadership style and organizational culture

The form of the final report should include:

An **Executive Summary** (1-2 pages) covering the scope and purpose of the report, together with major recommendations. The summary should be sufficient for the reader to grasp the main findings of the report and only require them to read the body of the report for additional details.

An **introduction** that covers the scope and purpose of the report in more detail (including terms of reference), a brief overview of the organization, the methodology used in compiling the report, a discussion of any limitations to the report and an overview of the rest of the report.

A discussion of the **major strategic issues** confronting the organization. This may include an overview of the methods of analysis used to identify the strategic issues. Only the details of the important issues arising from the analysis should be included in the body of the report. Details of any analysis could be contained in appendices. Remember that not all issues are strategic!

Analysis of the **general and industry environment**, as well as an **internal company analysis**.

A discussion and evaluation of the **alternatives for future strategies** for the organization. Strategies should be both realistic and implementable. While this is followed with recommendations, remember that you are preparing the report for the Board to make a decision. They will be interested in which course of action you suggest, but ultimately it is up to them to make the decision. So make sure the other alternatives are reasonably analysed in the event they choose not to follow your recommendations. Your recommendations must be justified. Significant issues involved in implementing each of the options, particularly the recommended strategy or strategies, must be considered.

**Appendix.** The use of the various strategic management models and tools can be extremely helpful for this report. Include an appendix to include exhibits utilizing relevant concepts, models and

tools. These exhibits should be referenced in the body of the report and should be used to provide greater insight and information to the reader.

There is a wide variety of databases and other sources of information from which to draw to undertake your project. These include articles in business magazines and newspapers, stockbroker reports, company or organization annual reports and published company histories.

This project will worth 40% of your overall grade and is due on 11 October. On this date, your group will also be given 25 minutes to make a presentation to the *Board of Directors* (15 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for Q&A). All students in the group are expected to contribute in the presentation. Class members not in the specific group will serve as the board of directors and may be asked to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the presentation. The paper and presentation are worth 35% and 5% of your final grade, respectively, (for a total of 40%).

In an attempt to address concerns that may arise regarding adequate contribution from all group members, each member will complete an appraisal form after the project's completion. For this appraisal, each team member will allocating contribution scores across the other members for both the paper and presentation. The input from the group members may raise or lower an individual's grade on the group project. This appraisal is a zero sum exercise, so the overall average grade of the group will remain the same. While the appraisal system is included to help overcome free rider concerns, I would prefer that any issues and concerns be addressed during the process, rather than afterwards. It is critical that while the group is working on the project, that expectations are clearly communicated and understood to all members. This should result in satisfactory contributions on the part of all members and a better end result.

**Individual Assignments (3 @ 15% each for a total of 45%) – Executive Brief  
Due 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> September (Check Provisional Schedule of Lectures and Assignments)**

You will be asked to submit three executive briefs for specific cases. The nature of these briefs will be detailed in class and are each worth 15% of your final grade.

**Class Participation (15%)**

Class participation plays a major role in the learning experience and your grade, and is expected from all students. Appropriate participation requires that you are not only in attendance, but have read the assignments and prepared any questions assigned for the specific class period. Due to the limited number of class periods, missing even one day can have a significant negative effect on your comprehension of course material and on your participation grade. Excellent preparation and thinking will be obvious through the contributions made in class. The *quality* of the contribution is more important than the *quantity*. Shallow or weak contributions may be detrimental to your participation.

Specific cases are to be prepared and discussed in accordance with the schedule in this syllabus. To receive maximum credit for participation, you must be thoroughly prepared for and contribute substantively to the discussion. Your grade in this class will be significantly influenced by your contribution to case and class discussions. For each day discussion you will be assigned a score between 0 and 5 points. 0 points corresponds to not being in attendance for that session. *Non-participants* are given 2 points for simply attending the specific class period, without any contribution to the discussion. *Adequate contributors* receive 3 points and represents satisfactory preparation with a limited number of comments that may provide insight. *Strong Contributors* earn 4 points for contributions that reflect thorough preparation, provide good insight, and may influence the direction of the discussion. *Outstanding contributors* are awarded 5 points and are given to individuals that exhibit great insight and leadership during the case discussion and present arguments that are well supported and persuasive. The participation portion of your grade should

not be ignored, since it represents 15% of your final grade, and will be based on the nine case discussion days during the course.

### **Victoria MBA Grading Standards**

#### *Victoria MBA - Excellent Category*

A (80.0 – 84.9%) to A+ (above 85.0%): The quality is performed to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master's level.

#### *Victoria MBA - Very Good Category*

B+ (70.0 – 74.9%) to A- (75.0 – 79.9%): The quality is performed at a high standard. Students have reached a level which clearly exceeds "competency".

#### *Victoria MBA - Good Category*

B- (60.0 – 64.9%) to B (65.0 – 69.9%): The quality is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent in respect of this quality.

#### *Victoria MBA - Satisfactory Category*

C (50.0 – 54.9%) to C+ (55.0 – 59.9%): The quality is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to "fail" the student on this quality.

#### *Victoria MBA - Unsatisfactory Category*

E (0 – 39.9%) to D (40.0 – 49.9%): The quality is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed in this respect

### **Individual Work**

While the Victoria MBA programme has a tradition of study group collaboration, there are important elements in the assessment process that are strictly individual. Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the nature of the assignment question. Please do not work together to formulate a response and do not loan out your completed assignments.

### **Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices**

#### Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student Administration Office

The Student Administration Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications.

#### Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce & Administration and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office, will be open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm during Trimester 2, offers the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- FCA Student Administration forms (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

## **General University Policies and Statutes**

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

## **Student Conduct and Staff Conduct**

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct).

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct).

## **Academic Grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances).

## **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

*'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.*

## ***Plagiarism is not worth the risk.***

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct ([www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

*Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html).*

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz). The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

### **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Co-ordinator, or Associate Dean who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at [www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/) or email [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz).

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz).

### **Maori and Pacific Mentoring programme (Manaaki Pihipihinga)**

This is a free programme of mentoring for Maori and Pacific students doing first year courses within the Faculty of Commerce and Administration. Weekly one hour mentoring sessions: drafting and editing assignments/discussing any questions that you might have from tutorials or lectures and going over every aspect of essay writing, either in small group sessions or on a one-to-one basis.

This includes:

- A computer suite hooked up to cyber commons for students to use to produce their assignments.
- Regular skill-based workshops with a learning adviser from Student Learning Support Services.
- Networking with other Maori and Pacific support groups throughout the university.

For more information please contact:

Melissa Dunlop, Programme Coordinator

Ph: 463 6015 or Email: [Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz)

## PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF LECTURES/ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignment</u>
1	31 Aug.	Introduction & Overview How to analyze a case Read: <i>What is Strategy</i> , Michael Porter (Harvard Business Rev.). <i>Are You Sure You Have a Strategy?</i> , Hambrick and Fredrickson (Academy of Management Executive). Strategic Management and Competitiveness (Ch. 1) The External Environment (Ch. 3)
2	7 Sept.	Case Analysis & Discussion: Growth at Hubbard Foods The Internal Environment (Ch. 4) Business Level Strategy (Ch. 5)
3	14 Sept.	Case Analysis & Discussion: Southwest/JetBlue ( <b>Executive Brief Due</b> ) Corporate/Level Strategy (Ch. 7) Acquisition and Restructuring Strategies (Ch. 8)
4	21 Sept.	Case Analysis & Discussion: Walt Disney ( <b>Executive Brief Due</b> ) Innovation and Corporate Entrepreneurship (Ch. 12) International Strategy (Ch. 9)
5	28 Sept.	Case Analysis & Discussion: The Golden Arches in India ( <b>Executive Brief Due</b> ) Corporate Governance (Ch. 11) Strategy for non-profit/governmental/non-traditional organizations)
6	5 Oct.	Group Presentations Strategic Leadership (Ch. 2)/Organizational Structure Course Wrap-up