

Victoria Management School

MMBA534 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Trimester One 2008

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

COURSE COORDINATOR

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PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR

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Class Times and Room Numbers

Lecture: Thursdays: 17:40-19:30 (RH LT3)

All-day Workshop: Saturday, 10 May 2008: 9:00-17:00 (Pipitea Campus)

This course has a 3-hour final examination. The examination period will be from 6-25 June 2008.

Introduction

The aim of this course is to provide participants with a working understanding of classic frameworks/models/theories in strategic management along with some of the latest thinking in this evolving area. Strategic Management provides an opportunity to integrate knowledge and insights gained from other subjects studied during the MBA programme. Successful strategy development utilises concepts and tools from a variety of business-related disciplines (such as economics, finance, accounting, marketing, organizational behaviour, human resource management, operations management and project management), together with conceptual and creative thinking, and a certain amount of intuition and experience, with the aim of creating effective action.

While it is difficult to teach people to think strategically and develop winning strategies, the likelihood of this happening is increased, I believe, if one has at one's disposal certain concepts, frameworks and techniques, together with a methodology for applying these, to formulate and implement effective strategies. Strategic management studies the linkages between an organization and its environment, its capabilities and resources, and the successful implementation of the chosen courses of action. However, the focus will not just be on designing/creating strategy. The course will also emphasize developing participants' ability to effectively communicate strategies and involve others in the process of developing

strategy and strategy processes. Critical consideration of both frameworks and assumptions underlying frameworks/strategies will be essential.

A specific focus in this course will be to provide students with a deeper theoretical understanding of how competitive actions and responses can be examined, assessed and developed. Thus, a key aspect in the learning for this course results from the use of a business simulation, Mike's Bikes. While learning the details of the simulation is important, the most substantial benefits and insights result from the ability of the simulation to bring together and model the effects of complex competing decisions. Groups, then, need to quickly reassess their situation and formulate appropriate strategies to address their own and competitors' objectives.

At the end of the course, participants should have, and be able to apply, a toolkit that will enable them to approach and structure any business situation and develop clear strategies for the organizations they work for. Skills will be developed by using frameworks and ideas to analyze real-world business cases from Asia, Oceania, Europe and the Americas. The case study approach will be used wherever possible to develop analytical skills, and to practice the application of concepts to complex situations where issues are often inter-related. The simulation will augment this strategy-in-action perspective.. The first individual assignment and the final exam will both involve analysis of a case study.

Programme and Course-related Learning Objectives

This course will provide students opportunity:

- to develop oral, written and IT-related communication skills
 - through active participation in class discussions which will utilise a seminar format that includes both formal and informal classroom debate
 - through the development and presentation of written reports, using narrative, rhetoric and diagrammatic and other schema as forms of presentation
- to develop critical and creative thinking skills
 - through exercises and assignments requiring analysis, evaluation, interpretation and synthesis
 - through self-reflection when reviewing your performance and decision-making during the business simulation
 - through debate and classroom discussion
 - through application of workplace experience to the materials covered in readings and seminars
- to develop leadership skills
 - through leading and contributing to the group exercises within the business simulation
 - through fulfilling spokesperson duties, reporting on the group's activities or ideas to a course director and other competing student groups

Overall Course Objectives

The course has several objectives, which include:

- understanding the major theories and concepts that frame thinking within the field of strategic management, particularly those underlying competitive advantage and industry dynamics
- improving competence in how to assess and apply these theories and concepts to business situations across a variety of organizational contexts
- examining contemporary issues associated with strategic management both globally and in New Zealand
- developing a broad perspective on how formulation and implementation processes can be combined to create more effective strategies and performance

Course-related Student Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of some major theoretical frameworks and concepts relevant to strategy situations
- use such frameworks to critically evaluate current strategies and propose updated strategies and alternatives for an organization
- develop an ability to communicate such recommendations to other group members and others outside the group
- recognize the importance of critical analysis, leadership and communication in understanding both your strategic position as well as competing positions

Expected Workload

Workload expectations for this course average at about 10 hours per week for the 12 teaching weeks and 30 hrs during the mid-trimester break. The workload in the weeks prior to the Saturday simulation is likely to be higher, including the simulation itself, group meetings, and discussions with the course coordinator. Availability for these activities is an essential aspect to completing the course successfully.

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.

Readings

The **required** textbook is: Angwin, D., Cummings, S., & Smith, C. (2007). *The Strategy Pathfinder: Core concepts and micro-cases*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Some other handouts/case studies will be distributed at the beginning of the trimester or in class.

Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	Weight	Date
1	Individual Case Analysis	15%	4 April 2008
2	Business Simulation - Strategic Plan - Simulation Performance - Analysis/Multi-year Report	5% 5% 25%	1 May 2008 10 May 2008 23 May 2008
3	Final Examination	50%	6-25 June 2008
	TOTAL	100%	

1. Individual Case Analysis

Date: Friday, 4 April 2008 (by 5pm) Marks: 15%

Each student should prepare a written summary of what they believe to be the key issues and learning points following an analysis of Royal Air Maroc [(RAM) see textbook, pp. 84-87, 113-115]. Your case analysis should be no more than 1500 words. The analysis should be restricted to the details provided in

the textbook (any additional material needs to be fully referenced). It should address aspects related to the macro-environment and industry terrain faced as well as the corporate and business strategies employed. How is RAM positioned relative to the key competitive forces and pressures it faces?

Students will prepare two copies of each assignment, keeping the second copy for their own reference and for use during the course. Students must also keep an electronic copy of their assignment. Your written report must be an individual submission.

A printed copy of the case analysis should be handed in to the course director (RH929), the MGMT Administrative Assistant (Luisa Acheson, RH919) or the VMS Reception 10th Floor RH by **5.00pm on Friday April 4**. If necessary, e-mail a copy of your analysis to indicate when it was completed but ensure that you hand in a printed copy as soon as possible.

2. Business Simulation

Business Simulation – The business simulation is normally completed in groups of preferably 2 (maximum 3, group membership to be finalised in the third week of class). By the third week of class, you will receive a copy of the software for Mike's Bikes. This software contains both a single-player version and the multiplayer internet version that will be used later in the trimester. The Single Player version allows you to analyze the effects of your decision in a situation where there is one competitor whose strategy remains relatively consistent. The Multi-Player version incorporates the effects of competition and will be used for the actual simulation where you compete against other groups in the class. The simulation will involve 8-10 years (rollovers) of simulated competition. The majority of the simulation will occur on 10 May, where new decisions will need to be made every hour or so. **Please make sure you are free to participate from 9am-5pm on Saturday 10 May 2008**. An introductory session and practice rollovers will precede the simulation itself.

Strategic Business Plan (5% Group assignment) – due *in class 1 May 2008*, your group will need to e-mail a strategic business plan for your company (up to 2500 words) to urs.daellenbach@vuw.ac.nz. A key aspect in developing your plans is that the actions set out be coordinated and consistent so that they support your firm's intended strategy. Your strategic plan should address all functional areas as well as your company's overall approach to competing in your industry. Be sure to set out concrete (measurable) goals for your chosen strategy overall, as well as each functional area. Without these it will be difficult to write up your annual report. Plans will be assessed on their feasibility, consistency (internally and externally) as well as the extent to which they consider how competition may affect the company's future actions. Feedback on your business plan will be provided between 2 May and 7 May, so please book a time when your group can meet with me during those days.

You will have a chance to incorporate this feedback for the first rollover of the actual simulation (Wednesday 7 May at 6pm). The second rollover will occur at 6pm on Thursday 8 May. All remaining rollovers will occur at regular intervals between 9am and 5pm on Saturday 10 May.

Work on the plan should be allocated evenly within the group, as equal marks will be given to all members for the business plan and company performance (unless there is clear evidence of unequal contribution). Procedures to help facilitate equal contributions will be discussed during the course.

Company Performance (5%) – 5% of your final grade will be based on your company's performance in terms of a range of factors such as how much appreciation in share price and market value was generated, and the extent to which your group is able to achieve other objectives you set in your business plan. Performance relative to other companies in your industry will naturally play a key role in how your company is assessed, but will not be the only basis on which performance is judged.

Multi-year Report (25%) – Drawing on your intended plan and the results of the simulation, each student should produce an individual report that summarizes their group's progress over the simulation timeframe, identifies why your company did well/poorly relative to targets and competitors, indicates when and why your strategy was changed, and discusses the future plans of your firm. This means that you can still produce an excellent annual report even if your group's strategy did not prove completely

successful against your competitors. Word limit: 2500 words. Due on Friday 23 May by 5pm at the VMS 10th Floor reception (note: the reception closes at 5:15pm). The final write up of your report constitutes “individual work”.

3. Final Examination

Date: 6- 25 June 2008

Marks: 50%

The final examination is worth 50% of the total marks available for this course. It is closed book 3-hour examination. Essay style answers are expected. You will be assigned a case to study and asked to answer three questions about the case that will require you to draw on different theories covered in the course. All book chapters covered during the course are examinable.

Handing in assignments:

Assignments (not due on the day of a scheduled class) should be dropped off at RH929 during the day or at the 10th Floor VMS Reception on Rutherford House (prior to 5:15pm when the VMS reception closes). Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived in case the original assignment goes missing. Failure to do so will jeopardise any claim by you that your work was submitted in the rare cases where your work goes astray. An electronic copy may be e-mailed to the course director as proof of completion time, but a printed copy must also be handed in for marking.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To meet Mandatory Course Requirements, students are required to:

- a. Participate and contribute equitably to all group work aspects associated with the business simulation;
- b. Submit the individual multi-year report on the business simulation; and
- c. To obtain at least 40 per cent (i.e. 20 marks out of 50) of the final examination marks available.

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 5% of the total marks available per day of lateness. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. A “zero” mark will be applied. In the event of unusual, unforeseen circumstances (e.g., serious illness, family bereavement), students should discuss waiver of the penalty with the course coordinator prior to the deadline date.

Victoria MBA Grading Standards are as follows:

Excellent Category

A- (75-79%) to A (80-84%) to A+ (85% and above): The learning is demonstrated to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master’s level.

Very Good Category

B+ (70-74%): The learning is demonstrated at a high standard. Students have reached a level that clearly exceeds “competency”.

Good Category

B (65-69%): The learning is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as fully competent.

Satisfactory Category

B- (60-64%): The learning is demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent.

Marginal Category

C (50-54%) to C+ (55-59%): The learning is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to “fail” the student.

Unsatisfactory / Failure Category

E (0-39%) to D (40-49%): The learning is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed.

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/research/reference/referencingguides.aspx>).

Communication

Information on course-related matters will be announced at class and posted on the **Blackboard** website at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. It will be crucial for you to regularly check Blackboard for messages, announcements and materials.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty’s Student and Academic Services 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. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

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

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building on the ground floor (EA005). This counter is the first point of contact for :

- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty’s website www.victoria.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

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. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

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

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 6015. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.

Lecture and Reading Schedule – MMBA 534

Week	Date & Time	Topic	Reading	Case Studies
1	28 February	- Course introduction - Strategy defined	— pg. v-xiii	All from Angwin et al. (2007) <i>6:1 Schumacher's success</i>
2	6 March	- The macro environment	Chap. 1	<i>1:6 Thinking of the Future</i> <i>1:7 Olympics, SARS ...</i>
3	13 March	- Stakeholders and governance - Corporate character	Chap. 2 Chap. 7	<i>2:6 Merry Men and Virgins</i> <i>7:7 Natural History</i>
4	20 March	- Industry environment	Chap. 3	<i>Michael Hill Jeweller*</i>
5	27 March	- Corporate strategy	Chap. 4	<i>4:2 A Conglomerate by ...</i> <i>4:4 easyEmpire</i>
6	3 April	- Positioning	Chap. 5	<i>Swatch*</i>
	4 April	*** Individual Case Analysis due ***		
7	10 April	- Living strategy	Chap. 6	<i>6:8 Emergence</i>
Mid-Trimester break				
8	1 May	- Competitive Advantage, Interactions and Responses		<i>handout + case*</i>
	1 May	*** Mike's Bikes Strategic Plan due ***		
	2-7 May	*** Group meeting to discuss strategic plan ***		
9	8 May	- Preparation for Simulation		
	10 May	*** All-day Saturday Simulation (9am-5pm) ***		
10	15 May	- Internationalizing strategies - National/Cooperative Advantage	Chap. 8	<i>8:6 Burgers and cola</i>
11	22 May	- Navigating strategic change	Chap. 9	<i>9:2 The awakening giant</i>
	23 May	*** Individual Simulation write-ups due ***		
12	29 May	- Sustainability/business ethics - Maverick strategies - Course review	Chap. 10 Chap. 11	<i>ASUStek Computer*</i>

* these readings will be handed out during the course