

School of Management

## **MGMT310 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Trimester 2 2012

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **COURSE COORDINATOR**

**Urs Daellenbach**

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Phone: 463 5732

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For other enquiries about the course, please initially contact the School of Management Reception, RH1022, 463 5397.

#### **Trimester Dates**

Teaching Period: Monday 16 July – Friday 19 October

Study Period: Monday 22 October – Thursday 25 October

(Monday 22 October is a public holiday, Labour Day)

Examination Period: Friday 26 October – Saturday 17 November (inclusive)

#### **Withdrawal from Course**

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 27 July 2012.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 28 September 2012. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an *'Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late'* including supporting documentation.

The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks.

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

Lectures – **Fridays:** 13:40 pm to 15:30 pm (RH LT 2)\*

Workshops – **Fridays:** 15:30 pm to 16:30 pm – Simulation preparation (RH LT 2)\*

\*see exceptions as per detailed lecture schedule (pg. 8).

#### **Course Content**

MGMT310 provides participants with an understanding of the theories relating to advantage, the range of advantages available to an organization, sources of any advantages and how particular strategies can

leverage these. It also addresses the likely impact and effectiveness of competitive moves and responses, and how the business environment (incl. aspects specific to New Zealand) affects the types and sustainability of advantages that are pursued for local, regional and global success.

At the end of the course, participants will have added to, and be able to apply, a more in-depth strategic toolkit that will enable them to approach and structure business scenarios and develop clear strategies for the organizations they work with and for. With a focus on designing strategies, the course will provide participants with an opportunity to experience both the process of deciding on a particular strategy as well as having to adapt to competitors' actions and responses.

## Course Learning Objectives

MGMT310, Competitive Advantage, has four learning objectives. On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Apply the various theories of strategic management to real-life case study situations. *This will be assessed in individual assignment 1 and the final exam.*
2. Analyze the various 'strategic tensions' and paradoxes in business. *(All assessments).*
3. Discuss and apply critical thinking to a wide range of strategic management issues. *This will be assessed in individual assignment 2 and the final exam.*
4. Understand the dynamic nature of strategies and advantages. *This will be assessed in individual assignment 2 and the final exam.*

## Course Delivery

Session content will vary during the trimester, including lectures, discussion of case histories or readings, and video material (see detailed schedule at the end of this course outline). The *twelve lectures, case studies distributed via Blackboard, and chapters in the textbook* are devoted to introducing the key issues and frameworks addressed with the course. Each lecture will be presented in the understanding that participants have done the assigned reading before the lecture. On occasion, guest speakers may illustrate the lecture material from their own perspectives in New Zealand organizations.

There are no tutorials for this course. Case studies will be covered in class sessions.

The *workshops* will serve primarily to introduce the business simulation software, *Mike's Bikes*. Some additional optional sessions will be held in the Railway station computer labs where the course lecturer will be available to answer questions related to the simulation.

## Expected Workload

Students can expect to spend 150 hours working on this course. That consists of approximately 30 hours of classes (lectures and workshops), full involvement in the Saturday simulation (8 hours), and a further 30 hours starting prior to the mid-trimester break and culminating with the all-day simulation. The workload will be greatest during the first two weeks after the mid-trimester break.

## Group Work

While courses with case analyses have a tradition of group collaboration, the majority of the assessment is still strictly individual. Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the nature of assignment questions. Please do not formulate shared responses to questions and do not loan out or borrow parts of or completed assignments. VUW takes plagiarism seriously and electronic checks, such as Turnitin.com, monitor across a class and against rote copying.

There is a significant group work component in this course associated with the simulation. Some of this group work is likely to require meetings outside of normal working hours (8:30am-5:30pm, Monday to Friday). While the final reports from the simulation must be written up individually, preparation for the simulation and development of a strategy/strategic plan will occur in groups. It is every student's

individual responsibility to develop an understanding of all parts of the simulation to assess how these factors contributed to their team's performance. Equitable contributions to the group's decisions during the simulation are expected.

## Readings

The required textbook for the course is *Grant, Robert M. (2010). Contemporary Strategic Analysis (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). J. Wiley & Sons Ltd. Chichester UK (ISBN 978-0-470-74710-0)*. The course will also involve case studies that will be distributed via Blackboard. Details about the simulation software and associated documentation will be posted on Blackboard.

## Materials and Equipment

The individual license fee for the Mike's Bikes software has been paid for by the School of Management. The software can be downloaded on to your own personal computer (see Blackboard for instructions) and has been installed for you in the Railway Station computer labs and one lab in Kelburn with 24-hour access.

## Assessment Requirements

A student's overall grade in the course will be determined in the following manner:

Assignment	Title	Weight	Date
1	Individual Assignment 1 Case analysis	15%	August 23, 2012 by 3:30 pm
2	Group Assignment Mike's Bikes Strategic Plan	10%	September 17, 2012 by 3:30 pm
3	Individual Assignment 2 Mike's Bikes analysis	25%	October 4, 2012 by 3:30 pm
4	Final Examination	50%	26 Oct. - 17 Nov. 2012
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 1. Individual Assignment 1 (15%). Due date: August 23 2012 by 3:30pm

A case study and questions will be distributed in the workshop on August 10. You will be asked to analyze the case and write a report using the concepts and frameworks introduced in MGMT310. In answering the questions, please make sure that you translate the material into your own words. This is an individual assignment and it is expected that you will write up the report separately. Details on assessment criteria will be handed out with the case questions and case.

Length: 1200 words (see note on word limits below)

### 2. Strategic Business Plan (10%) (group assignment: 4-5 students per group)

The business simulation will be completed in groups of 4-5 people. You should form groups as soon as practicable, and in the third week of class those not in a group will be assigned one by the course lecturer. Your group will need to decide on a strategy to be implemented during the simulation and will need to execute and adjust that strategy. The simulation will involve 8-10 simulated years of competition (a practice period is scheduled to familiarize you with the software starting September 10). The majority of the simulation will occur on Saturday, September 22 (or Friday September 21 with the entire class' agreement), where new decisions will need to be made every hour or so.

By **3:30 pm on September 17**, your group will need to write up and hand in a strategic business plan for your company (approximately 1500-2000 words). Your group should be prepared to present a preliminary business plan (3-5 minutes) if called on during class on September 14. You will have a chance to revise your plans based on the discussion from that session. The strategic business plans (10% of your final grade) show your company's *intended* strategy for the simulation – thus, they are

likely to deviate from the strategy/actions actually implemented once you have to adapt to competition and performance results. The plan should highlight the key targets of your intended strategy so that you can re-assess these later to determine if your strategy was successful in the multi-year report (individual assignment 2).

**3. Individual Assignment 2 (25%) Multi-year Report. Due date: 4 October 2012 by 3:30pm**

Drawing on your intended plan and the results of the simulation, each student will then individually produce a multi-year report that briefly summarizes your company's progress over the simulation timeframe, clearly identifies why your company did well/poorly, indicates when and why your strategy was changed, and how these decisions were expected to alter your competitive situation. It should also briefly discuss the future plans of your company given the situation it is in at the end of the simulation.

Length: 2000 words (see note below on word limits)

**4. A closed-book 3-hour examination based on a case study and essay questions (50%).**

The examination is worth 50% of the total marks available for this course. It is closed book 3-hour examination. You will be required to answer questions about a case study that will require you to draw on readings and frameworks covered in the course. All sessions during the course are examinable.

Students who enrol in courses with examinations are obliged to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period. The final examination for this course will be scheduled at some time during the period from Friday 26 October – Saturday 17 November (inclusive).

*Note: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCom programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.*

### **Handing in assignments**

Assignments should be placed, in hard copy form, in the MGMT310 box (no. 25) on the Mezzanine floor of Rutherford House by the due time on the due date. All Hand-Ins should have: an Assignment Cover Sheet stating your name, the course name, tutorial number and day/time, assignment name and number, a word count and due date (see attachment and Blackboard for an electronic version). Please put page numbers on each page.

Assignments received after the due time/date will be deemed to be late, and must be handed to an Administrator in RH1022 (The School reception is open between 9am and 5pm) where your assignment will have the time, date and signature noted on the front cover by the person receiving it.

Students must also have an electronic copy of their work available that will need to be submitted electronically on Blackboard.

### **Penalties**

- (i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 2 of the marks available (marks available means what the assignment is worth, i.e. a 20% assessment is marked out of 20) for an assignment submitted after the due time on the due date for each part day or day late. (for example if an assignment is out of 20 and the assignment receives 50% then one day late means the mark will be out of 18 and the student will receive 50% of 18). Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received more than 7 days after the due date

will not be accepted and the student will automatically fail the Mandatory Course Requirements.

- (ii) Course Outlines provide a signal to students of forthcoming workload, dates of submission, etc, and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties. Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, in advance, to the Course Coordinator and Garry Tansley ([garry.tansley@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:garry.tansley@vuw.ac.nz)), providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

All such applications must be made before the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, e.g. a medical certificate, or counsellor's report clearly stating the degree of impairment, and the dates the illness or event prevented you from undertaking your academic studies. This can be applied retrospectively.

- (iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement or other exceptional events), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the Course Coordinator and Programme Manager as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (v) The ability to write in an economical style is a skill that is valued in both academic and business settings and therefore word limits should be strictly adhered to. +/- 10% is acceptable. Beyond that, a penalty may be applied.

## Grading Guidelines

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments and the exam:

A+	excellent performance in all respects at this level
A	excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
A-	excellent performance in many respects at this level
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance at this level
C+, C	work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
D	poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
E	well below the required standard
K	failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment. Note this is a failing grade.

## Policy on Remarking

Every attempt is made to ensure that the marking is consistent and fair to students.

Students may ask for their written work to be remarked. A different lecturer will do the remarking and provide comments. The original marking sheet is removed to ensure the process is independent.

Application for remarks must be made within 5 days after the marks are available. To apply for a remark, type out a request for re-examination of assessed work clearly stating which sections (criteria listed in the mark sheet) you wish re-examined. Write on why you think the mark does not, in your view, fairly reflect the quality of your work. Hand this with your assignment into the following place:-

- Pipitea Campus – the Reception Desk on Level 10 Rutherford House where your assignment will have the **time, date and signature** noted on the front cover by the person receiving it.

## Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce 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. Assignments that draw on other material need to include a full set of references (unless otherwise noted in the assignment guidelines).

## Mandatory Course Requirements

To meet the Mandatory Course Requirement, students are required to:

- 1) obtain at least 40 per cent of the marks available (i.e. 20 marks out of 50) for the final examination;
- 2) submit the individual written case study assignment; and
- 3) equitably contribute to the preparation and implementation of the groupwork (strategic plan, simulation), including being present for both the possible group presentation and the Sept. 22 simulation day; and

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirement for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" grade.

Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, regardless of whether the mandatory course requirement has been satisfied or not.

Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements will be posted on Blackboard.

## Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details made available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

## Communication of Additional Information

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. Please also ensure that your student e-mail is for as Blackboard only loads vuw-allocated student e-mails.

## Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

**For the following important information follow the links provided:**

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### General University Policies and Statutes

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study)

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>

The University's statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx> (See Section C). Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx)

**AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support**

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx)

**Faculty of Commerce Office**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fcom/studenthelp>

**Te Putahi Atawhai**

**Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/tpa/>

Lecture Schedule – MGMT 310 – 2012 – in RH LT 2 – starting at 1:40 - Fridays

Week	Date	Topic	Workshop
1	20 July	<b>Course Introduction, the Pursuit of ‘Value’</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 2 Goals, Values and Performance</b> review Ch. 1 The Concept of Strategy	
2	27 July	<b>Analyzing an Industry</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 3 Industry Analysis</b> Case study: pick a competitor from the telecommunications sector in NZ and gather as much information as you can on their strategy and performance	Yes
3	3 August	<b>Resources and Capabilities</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 5 Analyzing Resources and Capabilities</b> <b>Ch. 6 Developing Resources and Capabilities</b> Case study: NZ Merino Clothing Industry	Yes
4	10 August	<b>Competitive Strategies: Cost Leadership</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 8 Nature / Sources of Comp. Advantage</b> <b>Ch. 9 Cost Advantage</b> Case study: Kiwibank	Yes
5	17 August	<b>Competitive Strategies: Differentiation</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 10 Differentiation Advantage</b> Case study: Pizza Industry in Wellington	Yes
6	24 August	<b>Management Systems and Advantage</b> Read: pp. 197-203 <b>Management Systems for Coordination and Control</b>	
<b>27 August to 7 September: Mid-Trimester Break</b>			
7	14 September	<b>Business Landscape, Rivalry and Evolution</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 11 Industry Evolution and Strategic Change</b> Review Ch. 13 Competitive Advantage in Mature Industries	Yes
8	21 September	<b>Review session for simulation</b>	
9	28 September	<b>Developing Advantage through Cooperation</b>	
10	5 October	<b>Advantage in Industries of the “New Economy”</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 12 Technology-based Industries and the Management of Innovation</b> Case study: Snappy Snaps	
11	12 October	<b>Competitive Advantage for New Zealand Businesses</b> Reading: <b>Ch. 15 Global Strategies and the Multinational Corporation</b>	
12	19 October	<b>Course Review and Final Examination Preparation</b> Review: Ch. 18 Current Trends in Strategic Management	

All chapters refer to the course textbook: R.M. Grant (2010), *Contemporary Strategy Analysis*.





**School of Management**

**MGMT 310 Individual Assignment Cover Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read and understood the university policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.  
I declare this assignment is free from plagiarism.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Extension of the due date (if applicable)*

**Please attach a copy of the note authorising your extension.**

Date extension applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted until: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted by \_\_\_\_\_