

School of Management

MGMT310 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Trimester 2, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

An exploration of strategies and sources of competitive advantage, including generic competitive strategies, multi-point competition, the resource-based view of the firm, and the sustainability of advantage. Also considered will be the evolution of competitive capabilities over time (particularly in the New Zealand context), and implications for stakeholder relationships.

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. (*All assessments*).
2. Analyse ‘strategic tensions’ and paradoxes in business situations. (*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.*

Course Content

MGMT310 provides participants with an understanding of the theories relating to competitive and cooperative 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.

Trimester Dates

Teaching Period: Monday 11th July – Friday 14th October

Study Period: Monday 17th October – Thursday 20th October

Examination Period: Friday 21st October – Saturday 12th November (inclusive)

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 22nd July 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 23rd September 2016. 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 or [online](#).

Names and Contact Details

Dr Urs Daellenbach

Room: RH905, Rutherford House

Phone: 463 5732

Email: urs.daellenbach@vuw.ac.nz or

Website: www.victoria.ac.nz/som

Office Hours: Fridays 11am-12 noon (RH905) or by appointment

Administrator, Misa Ito

RH 1022, Rutherford House

463 5397

misa.ito@vuw.ac.nz

Class Times and Room Numbers

Tuesdays:	Lecture	12:40	to 14:30	RHLT2
Fridays:	Workshop	12:40	to 13:30	RHLT2 (1 st 6 weeks: July 11-August 19)

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*, with *case studies distributed via Blackboard*, and *associated preparatory readings* are devoted to introducing the key issues and frameworks addressed within the course. Each lecture will be presented in the understanding that participants have done the assigned reading before the lecture. Lectures will only briefly review reading content and then add/extend it to cover additional frameworks and perspectives. On occasion, guest speakers may illustrate the lecture material as it applies in New Zealand organisations.

There are no tutorials for this course. Case studies will be covered in class sessions and should be read before the lecture.

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

Readings

A reading list of articles and chapters has been compiled to suit the specific topics in the course. These can be accessed via the Talis Aspire reading list on Blackboard. 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.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of at least 50%, students must:

- 1) obtain at least 40 per cent of the marks available (i.e. 20 marks out of 50) for the final examination, indicating that some key course learning objectives have been achieved;
- 2) equitably contribute to the preparation and implementation of the group assessment (strategic plan) and groupwork (simulation), including being present for the 15-20 September simulation decisions. While the final write-up from the simulation is individual, all group members need to

participate in the generation of the data (via input into decisions) that forms the basis of their analysis.

If you believe that exceptional circumstances may prevent you from meeting the mandatory course requirements, contact the Course Coordinator for advice as soon as possible.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Expected Workload

Students can expect to spend 150 hours working on this course. That consists of approximately 30 hours of classes (lectures and workshops), 30 hours class and workshop preparation, a further 30 hours in preparation for the simulation (starting prior to the mid-trimester break), full involvement in the simulation decisions (approx. 20 hours), and 40 hours completing assignments / exam preparation. The workload will be greatest during the first three weeks after the mid-trimester break, but can be spread across other weeks if students organize their efforts early on.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

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

	Assessment	Weight	Due Date
1	Individual Assignment 1 Case analysis	10%	17 August 2016 by 3:30 pm
2	Group Assignment Mike's Bikes Strategic Plan	10%	12 September 2016 by 12:30 pm
3	Individual Assignment 2 Mike's Bikes analysis	30%	7 October 2016 by 3:30 pm
4	Final Examination	50%	21 Oct. - 12 Nov. 2016
	TOTAL	100%	

1. Individual Assignment 1 (10 marks). Due date: 17 August 2016 by 3:30pm

A case study and questions will be distributed via Blackboard on 7 August. 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 your report separately. Details on assessment criteria will be distributed with the case questions and case.

Length: 1000 words (see note on word limits in Penalties section)

2. Strategic Business Plan (10 marks) (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 the trimester those not in a group will be assigned one by the course lecturer. Your group will need to get together to decide on a strategy to be implemented during the simulation and will need to attempt to execute and then adjust that strategy. The simulation will involve 8-10 simulated years of competition (a practice run is scheduled to familiarize you with the software starting 5 September). The majority of the simulation will required decisions to be entered online between Friday 16 September and Monday 19 September, sometimes every few hours. **Numerous decisions will need to be**

made/entered on Saturday 17 September so please keep this date clear of other commitments.

By **12:30 pm on 12 September**, your group will need to write up and hand in a strategic business plan for your company (approximately 1500 words). Your group should be prepared to present a preliminary business plan (3-5 minutes) if called on during class on 13 September. You will have a chance to revise your plans based on the discussion from that session. The written strategic business plans (10% of your final grade) map out 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 when writing up the report (individual assignment 2).

All students in the group will receive the same grade for the strategic plan unless group members did not contribute equitably to the formation and write-up of the plan.

3. Individual Assignment 2 (30 marks). Due date: 7 October 2016 by 3:30pm

Drawing on your intended plan and the results of the simulation, each student will then individually produce a report that briefly summarizes your company's progress over the entire 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. Theories and frameworks from earlier in the course should be applied in supporting your analysis.

Length: 2000 words (see note on word limits in Penalties section)

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

The examination is worth 50% of the total marks available for this course. It is a 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.

Examinations

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 following period:

Friday 21st October – Saturday 12th November (inclusive)

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is up to 5% of the marks available (see Assessment section for marks) 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 30, then one day late means that 1.5 marks would be deducted for every day late.* Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late. E-mailing a copy of a late assignment and uploading it to Blackboard can help to establish when the assignment was completed.

In all cases, if you are (or think that you might be) late in submitting an assignment, please contact the course coordinator as soon as possible. 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 of their 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.

Students who are unable to submit on time should, whenever possible, make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work and/or for waiver of a penalty, in advance, to the Course Coordinator, providing documentary evidence (e.g., medical certificate) of the reasons of their circumstances.

Finally, 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 (+5% is likely within the spirit of the word limit guidelines). Beyond that, a penalty may be applied or the marker may simply not include the extra words when assessing the grade.

Handing in assignments

Assignments should be placed, in hard copy form, in the MGMT310 box (no. 24) on the 1st floor of Railway West Wing by the due time on the due date. All Hand-Ins should have: an Assignment Cover Sheet (Annex A) stating your name and student ID, the course name, a word count and due date. Please put page numbers on each page.

Assignments handed in after the due time/date will be deemed to be late, and must be given directly to a staff member at the School of Management Reception – RH1022 (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. If not handed to an Administrator (e.g., slid under a door after hours), the time and date will be recorded as when the Administrator first discovers the assignment.

Students must also retain an electronic copy of their work that will need to be uploaded on Blackboard within one week following the due date.

Remarking

Please refer to Section 9 of the [Assessment Handbook](#) and discuss this with the Course Coordinator in the first instance.

Group Work

While courses with case analyses have a tradition of and encourage group collaboration as part of learning, the majority of the assessment in MGMT310 remains strictly individual. Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the assignment questions. Please do not formulate shared responses to questions and do not loan out or borrow parts of draft / completed assignments. VUW takes plagiarism seriously and electronic checks, such as Turnitin.com, are used to monitor across the 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 company performance. Equitable contributions to the group's decisions across the simulation are expected.

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 submitted to Turnitin. A copy of submitted materials will be retained 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.

Materials and Equipment

The course involves extensive use of a computer simulation. The software for this simulation will be made available to students early in the trimester and in some university computer labs (Pipitea and Kelburn). While the software works best on Windows-based computers and has an Excel spreadsheet component, in past years students with Apple computers have managed to use it equally effectively. There is an online web-based version of the software now too.

Student feedback

Student feedback has typically centred around the amount of work associated with the simulation but also how useful this experience has been for those engaging in it. In recognition of this workload, tutorials for the course have been replaced with workshop hours and optional sessions where questions about the simulation can be answered. Some students commented that case studies on the food and beverage industries made them hungry. I typically try to have a debrief session after the simulation with some food and drinks.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

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

The course involves case studies that will be distributed via Blackboard. Details about the simulation software and associated documentation will also be posted on Blackboard. Any additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students via Blackboard, and urgent messages via email to all class members student email addresses. An SNS site may also be used during the simulation.

Link to general information

For general information about course-related matters, go to <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>

Note to Students

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 academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

Lectures (RH LT2) Tuesdays 12:40-2:30pm – 2016 – Workshops (RH LT2) Fridays 12:40-1:30pm

Week	Date	Topic	Workshop
1	12 July	Course Introduction, the Pursuit of ‘Value’	Intro 15 th July
2	19 July	Industry vs. Firm Advantage	Finance 22 nd July
3	26 July	Resources and Capabilities	Operations 29 th July
4	2 August	Competitive Strategies: Cost Leadership and Differentiation	No Workshop
5	9 August	Business Models	Marketing 12 th August
6	16 August	Management Systems and Advantage Assignment 1 due August 17	R&D 19 th August
21 August to 4 September: Mid-Trimester Break			
7	6 September	Business Landscape, Rivalry and Evolution Strategic Plan due August 12	No workshops
8	13 September	Review session for simulation !!! SIMULATION !!!	after mid- trimester break
9	20 September	Developing Advantage through Cooperation	
10	27 September	Advantage in Industries of the “New Economy”	
11	4 October	Competitive Advantage for New Zealand Businesses Assignment 2 due October 7	
12	11 October	Course Review and Final Examination Preparation	

Reading and Case details for this schedule can be found on Blackboard.



School of Management

MGMT 310 Individual Assignment Cover Sheet

Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Date Due: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Word count: _____

*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 _____