

MGT 6685 Business Strategy

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Tucson/DMAFB
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TEXT:

Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases, 16th Edition, Arthur A. Jr. Thompson, A. J. Strickland III, John E Gamble, McGraw-Hill 2008, ISBN 13 9780073381244 (Check around, you may find it used)

PURPOSE:

Business Strategy is an applications course designed to integrate the concepts and information gleaned from various business specialties into a cohesive, overall management plan of the firm.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing the course, students will:

- understand the formulation and implementation of strategic plans;
- learn fundamentals of control and evaluation;
- be able to perform an analysis of competition;
- appreciate the role of the chief executive officer;
- improve individual skills in terse business writing;
- hone presentation skills; and
- improve team decision making capability.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Strategic planning is the least structured and most difficult task faced by an organization. Projecting market conditions, the actions of competitors, the advances of technology and the health of the economy are all uncertain tasks at best. The most effective way to simulate this situation in the classroom is through case analysis. Cases are derived from situations encountered by real firms in the business world. This class will focus on student preparation, presentation, discussion and critique of assigned cases. The instructor's role will be more moderator/referee and less lecturer than in most courses.

EVALUATION:

Evaluation will be done by a point system. Each assignment will have a maximum point value. You will receive points both as individuals and as a team. For team assignments, each member will receive the team score. For each assignment, I will give you a point score which will range from 1 to 10. This will be based on how your performance stacks up relative to the remainder of the class. Final course grades will be assigned on a curve with "natural" breaks determining the cut. Late assignments will receive a deduction of 2 points from the evaluated score. If you receive a "7" on your write up, and it is late, your grade will be "5". Depending on class size, I may assign a couple of group cases with presentations. In that instance, I will drop your worst case write up.

1. Seven individual case summaries	10	70
2. Final Exam Case(s)	30	30
TOTAL		100

MEET AT THE TROY LEARNING CENTER 5307 E. Broadway (just East of Target, North side of street)
5:30 PM – 10 PM Thursday Evenings + 1 Saturday 9 AM- 6PM

Jan 7	Read Chapters 1-6 & Lecture Case 20 Robin Hood (for discussion)
Jan 14	Read Chapters 7-12 & Lecture Case 2 Costco (Write-up Due) Case 23 Southwest Airlines - Discussion
Jan 21	Case 10 Nucor Steel (Write-up Due) Case 11 Video Game Industry – Discussion

- Jan 28** Case 12 Zune **(Write-up Due)**
- Feb 4** Case 27 New Balance **(Write-up Due)**
- Feb 11** Case 8 Coach Leather **(Write-up Due)**
- Feb 18** Case 28 Ryan Air **(Write-up Due)**
- Feb 25** Case 16 Sun Micro Systems **(Write-up Due)**
- Mar 4** Case 29 Foreign Suppliers **(Write -up Due) Review for Final**
- Mar 6** **(Saturday) Troy Requirements for Final Exam**
Students will have a 3 hour case with a multiple choice exam. (BlackBoard)
Multiple Choice General Business Exam on line. Details will be announced.

Submitting Case Write Ups

- Write up should be no more than 2 pages of single spaced text. □(no smaller than 10 point type)
- You should include SWOT, Porter's Five Forces, or other calculations, illustrations etc on other separate pages.
- I will accept Email write ups. □You may use WORD, WORDPAD, WordPerfect, OpenOffice or HTML □or put your write up in the text of the Email. Use the case title as the subject. Make sure your full name appears somewhere in the attachment!

Contacting The Instructor

- You may call me at home anytime between 9AM and 8PM. You may also e-mail me and I will get back to you as soon as I can.
- You may meet with me before or after class. Other times & places can be arranged at mutual convenience
- I expect to be out of town 1 day/week for medical procedures. I will keep you apprised.

THE CASE METHOD AND BUSINESS STRATEGIES

For many of you this will be the first case course you have taken. Unlike more traditional methods, case courses are less structured, have less formal lecture, and rely more on student initiative, participation and questions. You will control much of what goes on in the classroom. While I will have some lecture material, my primary role is as a discussion leader. I will assume various roles and functions like:

- **Maintaining Focus** - Many issues need to be explored in the discussions of the cases and principles. I may decide to exhaust one point before moving on to other points. Don't interpret this as meaning your contributions are unimportant.
- **Getting People Involved** - Everyone has an opinion and needs to express it to get the benefit of the course and to simulate strategic management in the outside world. Group exercises are a necessary part of real world strategic planning. It's not any easier out there than it is in class.
- **Facilitating Comprehension** - The nature of strategic management is pretty hazy. In many cases it will be more constructive to lecture after we have tortured a case. Trust me, this isn't easy to learn or teach. My methods may not seem traditional but they seem to work.
- **Playing Devil's Advocate** - The next best thing to arguing and winning is arguing and losing. I may champion unpopular or even irrational positions to challenge you and shake your resolve. Part of your evaluation is based on how well you meet the challenge.

As a student you have a different sort of responsibility in a case class. You will be part of a synergistic, self learning process. As a result you have some additional duties:

- **Participate in class!** - Reading the material and listening is not enough. This isn't rocket science (it's probably harder). Ask questions, offer views, feel free to tactfully disagree with anybody (even me). Remember, this is your money. You need not speak on every point, but you should contribute when you have something to add. Part of the education is in group dynamics.

- Be prepared - You will not pick this up by osmosis. Do the reading and prepare the cases.
- Keep an open mind - As a group, you know more about the subject than I do. You should try to maintain a balance between sticking to your guns and considered alternative perspectives. The final analysis will be an amalgam of class perceptions.

CASE ANALYSIS

Case analysis is much like business in the real world. You will have too much or too little information. Important information may be buried in a sentence, an exhibit or implied. Your job is to identify the key strategic issues in each case. In most, a decision is required. In others, there may be only be a history lesson. Defining the problem/decision to be made is half the battle. Like in the real world, there are no "right" answers -- only convincing arguments. There is no cookbook for case preparation or for strategic management. All I can offer you a suggested methodology for attacking cases:

- Allow yourself adequate time to analyze the case. Probably two to four hours will be needed. Read each case at least twice. Once for an overview, the second to prepare some notes.
- Adopt the right time frame. Usually, this will be the time at the end of the case. Try not to get caught up in "knowing what happens". Just because a decision was made doesn't make it right.
- Identify the decisions and strategic issues. What needs to be decided? What are the basic alternatives? What are the time, money, people and political constraints?
- Use your business knowledge and common sense. You probably have some other course work and maybe some life experience. You might even read newspapers, magazines or books. Don't be a afraid to integrate your knowledge.
- Make a decision! You should come up with a decision and an argument to support it.
- You should prepare written notes for cases to be discussed in class. Even though you don't turn in a formal write-up, you will be responsible for knowing the key issues. I enjoy humiliating the unprepared.

BUSINESS WRITING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Winston Churchill was once asked to give a speech. He asked "How much time do I have to speak?" When asked why that was important, Churchill replied, "If I have 5 minutes, I'll need a week to prepare. If I have two hours, I'm ready now." Churchill summarized the essence of effective business information management--people exist in the system to MAKE JUDGEMENTS! I assign one page summaries because they are hard to do. My experience suggests that effective business communications has a pyramid structure. Less is preferable to more. Don't give me a page if a sentence will do. Don't give me 20 pages if one page will do.

For your case write ups, assume that I know all the details about the case and that I have read it thoroughly. Your write up should be a recommendation for action try to focus on:

1. What is the current situation?
2. What decisions need to be made?
3. What are the options?
4. What should be done?

You may feel free to use any format you are comfortable with, but make it attractive and readable. (No want-ad type with one-tenth inch margins!) Personally, I like bullet lists, outlines and tables. You need not fill two entire single-spaced pages if you can do it in less space. You may include a few pages of charts, graphs or numerical analysis, Porter or SWOT to support your position. I suggest that you take your notes from the second reading and try to boil them down to about a page handwritten by discarding and merging facts. Then go to the computer and flesh out the write up.

Absence Policy:

Students receiving financial assistance are required to attend classes according to the regulations for financial assistance benefits in addition to those regulations required for the course.

Academic Misconduct:

The student Standards of Conduct can be found in the 2007 2008 student handbook, the Oracle, and describes Troy University policy concerning more than just plagiarism. Other issues include falsification of information, cheating, criminal activity, etc. Instances of misconduct will be handled as noted in the Oracle.

Additional Services:

Troy University supports Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which insure that post secondary students with disabilities have equal access to all academic programs, physical access to all buildings, facilities and events, and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability. Eligible students, with appropriate documentation, will be provided equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic skills and potential through the provision of academic adaptations and reasonable accommodations. Further information, including appropriate contact information, can be found at the link for Troy University's Office of Human Resources at <http://www.troy.edu/humanresources/index.html>.