

CORPORATE STRATEGY

International MBA IMBA-EN SEP-2024 S-STR

Area Strategy

Number of sessions: 15

Term: Concentrations

Category: regular

Language: English

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Jose Antonio Martinez's professional life has always been spinning around strategy; as a business consultant, he has helped top executives from different industries and competitive landscapes to turn their companies into high performance businesses. And throughout these years, his experience has led him to a logical, but not always so evident, conclusion: "STRATEGY is not about complex theories or frameworks; it's something we all use more often than we think, in so many aspects of life, although we may not be aware of it. It's about bringing order out of chaos, it's about collecting all that mess of ideas, facts and pieces of knowledge, and providing them with a structure and sequence which let us decide WHERE WE WANT TO REACH and HOW WE WANT TO DO IT".

Jose Antonio enjoys teaching and considers that a Master Program provides the perfect environment to open up high value discussions and exciting opportunities to share knowledge as well as create new one. "In the classroom, the discussion goes back and forth between theory and practice. The students learn from the professor and from each other, but at the same time, the professor can deduct new theories by the help of students: from their individual experiences, their reactions to the theories, and from their ideas and insights. Our job as management scholars is to understand and explain the business world, to create knowledge that improves productivity and efficiency in the business world, and spread this knowledge back to the business world".

Academic Background

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, University of Deusto, Spain
Executive MBA, IE Business School

Teaching and Academic Experience

Adjunct Professor of Strategy Department, IE Business School
Adjunct Professor of Strategic Management, University of Deusto
Coaching and training in leading Spanish and multinational corporations

Office Hours

Office hours will be on request. Please contact at:

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SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on corporate strategy analysis and how to build a corporate advantage. In this course we will examine the main theoretical frameworks and analytical tools that help top management to analyze, formulate strategies and make decisions at the corporate level. We will study the main decisions that define where the firm competes (e.g., diversification, vertical integration and internationalization) as well as decisions regarding the modes of entry (e.g., M&A and alliances).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

During the course students will be exposed to the analysis of complex management situations that require a multidisciplinary approach from the perspective of top management.

Through the discussion of cases and related readings, the course focuses on corporate strategy analysis and how to build corporate advantage in our global economy. The main theories, models and tools within the field of strategy will be covered with a strong emphasis on its application to real settings. We will use the tools that help top management analyse the business environment, formulate strategies and make decisions at the corporate strategy level.

Our goal is to develop a winning strategy and to build a successful organization. This is a tough job. So let us begin with the most obvious fact: every organization is different. From this simple fact we can derive something quite useful for us as strategists: different firms in the same industry will have different strategies. Now let us ask why.

A key reason is that the management teams evaluate differently the competitive environment and hence decide on different strategies. Yet success does not depend solely on selecting a winning strategy: the achievement of results depends as well on the effectiveness of management. We must ask ourselves why one firm builds a strong, adaptive organization capable of creating and responding to competitive strategy, while a second firm patches together an organization that stumbles from initiative to initiative.

To sum up, the course, which develops along five main blocks, aims at helping students:

1. To root the analysis of businesses in frameworks that will ease the identification of their key features. Students should be able to determine whether a business is attractive or not.
2. To conceive business strategies that may be applied to real life business. Students should be able to justify the merits of different strategic initiatives using the same kind of arguments that a manager would use.
3. To understand the sources of corporate advantage or disadvantage of a particular business. Students should be able to propose initiatives aimed at strengthening or developing resources and capabilities.
4. To understand when collaboration initiatives with other firms for specific projects can be convenient or dangerous for a company. Students should be able to implement strategic decisions, such as mergers, acquisitions and divestitures.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor's main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

Learning Activity	Weighting
Lectures	30.0 %
Discussions	50.0 %
Group work	20.0 %
TOTAL	100.0 %

AI POLICY

In today's world, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is changing how we work, study and, in general, how we get things done. However, in the context of this course, the use of GenAI is not permitted, unless it is otherwise stated by the instructor. The use of GenAI tools would jeopardize the students' ability to acquire fundamental knowledge or skills of this course.

If a student is found to have used AI-generated content for any form of assessment, it will be considered academic misconduct, and the student might fail the respective assignment or the course.

PROGRAM

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

SESSION 1 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lecture: Introduction to Corporate Strategy.

Article: *From Competitive Advantage to Corporate Strategy (HBS 87307-PDF-ENG)*

PART 2 - DIVERSIFICATION

SESSION 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lecture: Diversification Strategies.

Technical note: *Strategies of Related Diversification (HBS 705481-PDF-ENG)*

Technical note: *Strategies of Unrelated Diversification (HBS 705480-PDF-ENG)*

Technical note & tutorials: *Corporate Divestitures: A Synthesis (STR020073-U-ENG-WOD)*
(Optional)

SESSION 3 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Related Diversification

Practical Case: *Samsung Electronics in 2004: Conquering the Wireless Digital World (HBS SM129-PDF-ENG)*

SESSION 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Unrelated Diversification

Practical Case: General Electric's Corporate Strategy (HBS TB0383-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 5 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Vertical Integration.

Practical Case: Coca-Cola in 2011: In Search of a New Model (HBS 711504-PDF-ENG)

PART 3 - INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES

SESSION 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lecture: Opportunities & Challenges in the International Playground - Globalization and Country Differences.

Technical note: Distance Still Matters: The Hard Reality of Global Expansion (R0108K-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lecture: International Strategy Definition

Technical note: Managing Differences: The Central Challenge of Global Strategy (HBS R0703C-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

AAA International Strategies.

Practical Case: Philips versus Matsushita: The Competitive Battle Continues (HBS 910410-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 9 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

AAA International Strategies.

Practical Case: Netflix: International Expansion (HBS W16236-PDF-ENG)

PART 4 - EXPANSION MODES

SESSION 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Lecture: Diversification/International Strategy Implementation - Expansion Modes

Technical note: The Resource Pathways Framework: Solving the "Build, Borrow, or Buy" Growth Dilemma (HBS 9497BC-PDF-ENG)

SESSION 11 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Strategic Alliances

Practical Case: Hisense's Internationalization Dilemma: Co-Operation with Loewe (HBS W17633-

PDF-ENG)

SESSION 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

M&A Operations.

Practical Case: The Walt Disney Company and Pixar, Inc.: To Acquire or Not to Acquire? (HBS 709462-PDF-ENG)

PART 5 - FINAL GROUP PRESENTATIONS & EXAM

SESSIONS 13 - 14 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Final Group Presentations

SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

Final Exam

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Class Participation

Before each session, the students should read the case and materials assigned for the day. Participation is an essential element in this course. To participate effectively, it is necessary to have read carefully and formed a sound opinion about the main issues raised in the case and reading materials.

I will come to class every day with a teaching plan that will try to achieve a logical progression through the key issues in a given case. However, it is important to appreciate that the students in the class are co-producers of class discussions. Students need to listen carefully to each other, and to build on or critique prior comments. They should also try to resist the temptation to jump to topics that are not specifically open for discussion. When that happens, it is the responsibility of the class and the professor to bring the discussion back on track.

The discussion should be a conversation in which all participants recognize that they have an obligation to advance our understanding of the issue at hand. Your contributions to this learning process will be appraised in addition to the content of what you contribute.

Your participation will be evaluated based mainly on the **quality** of your contributions, taking into consideration aspects such as:

- Is the participant a good listener?
- Are the points made relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others and to the topics that the group is exploring together?
- Do the comments add to our understanding of the situation? Are they incisive? Do they cut to the core of the problem?
- Is there a willingness to challenge the ideas that are being expressed?
- Is there a willingness to test new ideas, or are the comments "safe" (such as repetition of case facts without analysis or conclusions, or comments already made by other participants)?
- Does the participant integrate material from past classes or readings where appropriate? Do the comments reflect cumulative learning over the course, or does the participant merely consider each case in isolation?

Expect cold calling. If you are not comfortable speaking in class for personal or cultural reasons, it is your responsibility to discuss this with the professor privately at the very beginning of the course (first week of class). You should be prepared for every session; if for some reason you are not prepared for a specific day, please let me know before the start of class.

Group Presentation

Summary of guidelines:

- Each group will choose a company of their interest, either well known or not known at all, from a case or any other source, and make a deep analysis of its corporate strategy formulation and/or implementation. Analysis can be focused on any of the topics of the program, or more than one of them, but always fulfilling length prerequisite established by the professor. All the groups will be required to propose report contents and discuss them with the professor in the timeframe specified.
- The report must not be only descriptive, but also analytical and present recommendations and conclusions. I strongly encourage you not to leave tools learnt in the box, use them.
- Each group will make a formal presentation to the rest of the class during last sessions of the course with the conclusions from their report.

All team members will share the same group grade no matter their role in group presentations, discussion, etc., assuming that there are no complaints about somebody's lack of participation in the assignment. Any exception will need to be communicated to the professor.

Final Exam

In the last session of the course there will be an individual exam. It will consist of questions about a final case delivered in advance by the professor. Therefore, during the exam you will have full access to the course materials, meaning that it will not be an exercise of memorization; however, if you have not read and assimilated the material (including textbook, cases, technical notes...) you will find much more challenging to address the questions in the exam.

More information on the evaluation criteria will be provided during our first session.

criteria	percentage	Learning Objectives	Comments
Final Exam	40 %		
Group Presentation	35 %		
Class Participation	25 %		

FAILING GRADE AND REASSESSMENT

When students receive a Fail in a course, they have the opportunity to present themselves for reassessment in order to earn the necessary credits toward graduation.

The reassessment of students should be scheduled between 5 and 10 working days after the review session takes place.

Grades for the reassessment are limited to a Low Pass and Fail.

Both, the initial Fail as well as the grade of the reassessment remain on the transcript. For the purpose of calculating the GPA however, only the grade of the reassessment is to be considered. Students receiving a failing grade in the reassessment of a course will not be able to continue in the program.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Recommended

- P. Ghemawat. *Redefining Global Strategy. Crossing Borders in a World Where*

Differences Still Matter. ISBN 9781633696068 (Printed)

- L. Capron, W. Mitchell. *Build, Borrow, or Buy: Solving the Growth Dilemma*. ISBN 1422143716 (Printed)

BEHAVIOR RULES

Please, check the University's Code of Conduct [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please, check the University's Attendance Policy [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

ETHICAL POLICY

Please, check the University's Ethics Code [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

