Module Outline

Programme   : The NUS Executive MBA
Module Title : Corporate Strategy
Semester   : Semester 2, Academic Year 2018-2019
Faculty   : Associate Professor Kenneth G. Huang, PhD.
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Overview

This module focuses on the work of a leader for a business entity, the corporation, business, division or plant including start-up. The module focuses on the skills and actions required of the general manager for the development, communication and implementation of strategic organizational choices in the context of complex business situations. Typical topics include: perspectives on the role of firms in society; setting of mission and objectives; the concept of strategy; industry analysis, generic strategies; firm competencies; corporate strategy and diversification; environmental analysis; strategy and structure; entrepreneurial and technology strategies; culture and other implementation processes; strategic leadership; organizational learning; and stakeholder analyses.

Module Objectives

Upon completing the module, students are expected to achieve the following learning objectives:

Objective 1: EMBA student will possess excellent communication and networking skills;

Objective 2: EMBA student will possess multi-disciplinary competencies including a sound understanding of technology-enabled or innovation-based businesses and technological change;

Objective 3: EMBA student will be a distinctive leader with high ability for strategic thinking to harness his/her leadership resources and potential;

Objective 4: EMBA student will have a global perspective with an in-depth knowledge of both established businesses and entrepreneurial start-ups in Asia and across the world.

Assessment

Pre-class Group Assignment	30%
Class Participation	30%
Group Project Report and Presentation	40%
TOTAL	**100%**

Pre-course Group Assignment (30%)

In your group, identify one start-up or established company which is experiencing a problem/downturn in the company itself or in a particular product area. (A technology based company or technological product is preferred.) Identify what the key problems are and what the (downward) performance trends are. As much as possible, illustrate the problems and trends with real empirical and descriptive data (which you can research/find from online or company sources e.g., NUS online sources, or public sources or newspapers). Then suggest what strategies might have gone wrong in the company, leading to the problems. You do not need to provide solutions which we will work on during class. An example is Gopro or Segway. You should come up with another company/product. **Deliverables before first class**: 5 page group report write-up (1 report per group) and prepare a 10 minute PowerPoint slides (1 set of PowerPoint slides for each group).

Individual Class Participation (30%)

Intelligent questions, lively discussions and knowledgeable responses are expected of each student during this course. Students are still expected to develop skills in articulating carefully crafted questions and appropriate responses in real time, especially in our case discussions in class. The award of the full 30% requires an average of three distinctive comments, insightful questions or responses raised during each class. Unsubstantiated absences may lead to an automatic lowering of the students' class participation grade.

Group Final Project Report and Presentation (40%)

The course will incorporate a strategy "consulting project", which will involve teams preparing a comprehensive strategic analysis for a (technology-based) company of the team's choice, which builds upon the pre-class group assignment. Each group is required to perform an in-depth, longitudinal analysis of the company whose strategy (for the whole company or a specific key product area) is NOT working well. Your group's analysis should be forward looking using the tools and frameworks taught in this course. The report should also include the analysis of industry in which the company operates. Each team is required to submit one written report (20%) and make one presentation (20%) for the group project in the afternoon of the last day of class.

Written report (20%): Each group should submit one project report before the start of the class during which the presentation is scheduled. The project report should be type written, 1.5 line-spaced, using 12-point size font, and should not exceed 10 pages for sections (3) to (7) (see below). Key tables and figures should be included in the text (as part of the 10 pages) and should not be added as exhibits. Any secondary or supplementary tables and figures that provide further support to the analysis of the report may be added as appendix (not part of the 10 pages). The cover page should provide the complete name of the team members, student ID numbers, module name and module code. The report should contain the following sections: (1) Cover page; (2) Table of contents; (3) Executive summary; (4) Company background/history; (5) Industry and competitive analysis; (6) Company analysis (e.g., resources and core competences, value chain, SWOT analysis, company performance over time, important issues/problems faced by the company); (7) Suggested solutions and/or new strategies to resolve these issues/problems; (8) References; (9) Supplementary tables and figures as appendix.

Presentation (20%): Each group is required to conduct a professional presentation of their analysis to the class. Each presentation should not exceed 25 minutes, not including Q&A which will follow immediately. Each group will host a Q&A session of about 10 to 15 minutes. Group should prepare for their presentation as if they were senior strategists who would be addressing the high-level managers/CEO within the company. Also, note that interesting presentations offer a judicious mix of anecdotes and analysis. Therefore, do not try to cram every single detail from your written report into your presentation.

Schedule and Outline
1 hour 20 minutes x 6 sessions per day. 18 sessions altogether. 15 minutes break between each session.

DAY 1
I. Introduction to strategy
8:30 – 9:50 Session 1: Introduction and course structure. What is strategy? Definitions, examples and fundamental concepts in strategy (with an emphasis on technology and innovation).
9:50 – 10:05   AM tea break

II. Where and how do we compete?
10:05 – 11:25 Session 2: Competition, external environment, resources and capabilities: Porter's five forces
11:25 – 11:40   AM tea break
11.40 – 13.00 Session 3: Applying the five forces: Turnaround strategy and the case of LEGO
13:00 – 14:00   Lunch break

III. What unique values and capabilities do we bring or create?
14:00 – 15:20 Session 4: Value chain analysis and internal firm structure
15:20 – 15:35   PM tea break
15:35 – 16:55 Session 5: Economics of a high profit industry: Cola wars continue
16:55 – 17:10   PM tea break
17:10 – 18:30 Session 6: Value proposition for customers and marketing strategy: Guest speaker, Microsoft

DAY 2
8:30 – 9:50 Session 7: Technology strategy and S-curve
9:50 – 10:05   AM tea break

IV. How do we capture value? Resources, capabilities and technology.
10:05 – 11:25 Session 8: Intellectual property (IP) rights and IP strategy (including in emerging economies)
11:25 – 11:40   AM tea break
11.40 – 13.00 Session 9: Bionym case and negotiation exercise
13:00 – 14:00   Lunch break
14:00 – 15:20 Session 10: Dynamics of standard driven markets and dominant design
15:20 – 15:35   PM tea break
15:35 – 16:55 Session 11: Competing in standard driven markets. Power play: Nintendo in 8-bit video games
16:55 – 17:10   PM tea break
17:10 – 18:30 Session 12: From product to platform and platform strategy

DAY 3
V. How do we sustain and deliver value?
8:30 – 9:50 Session 13: Using disruption strategy: Disruption and competition
9:50 – 10:05   AM tea break
10:05 – 11:25 Session 14: Putting disruption strategy to the test: The case of Netflix
11:25 – 11:40   AM tea break
11.40 – 13.00 Session 15: Defending against disruption and new business model creation
13:00 – 14:00   Lunch break

VI. How do we implement strategy? Strategy in action!
14:00 – 15:20 Session 16: Groups 1-2 presentation of turnaround strategy
15:20 – 15:35   PM tea break
15:35 – 16:55 Session 17: Groups 3-4 presentation of turnaround strategy
16:55 – 17:10   PM tea break
17:10 – 18:30 Session 18: Groups 5-6 presentation of turnaround strategy and course wrap-up

General Guide & Reading

(1) "The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy" by M. E. Porter, Harvard Business Review, 86 (1), January 2008, pages 78-93. [Session 2]

(2) LEGO (A): The Crisis (HBS Case 713-478) [Session 3]
(https://hbr.org/product/lego-a-the-crisis/713478-PDF-ENG)

(3) Cola Wars Continue: Coke and Pepsi in 2010 (HBS Case 711-462) [Session 5]
(https://hbr.org/product/cola-wars-continue-coke-and-pepsi-in-2010/711462-PDF-ENG)

(4) "China's Innovation Landscape" by K. G. Huang, Science, 329 (5992), August 2010, pages 632-633 and Supporting Online Material. [Session 8]

(5) "Institutional Regime Shift in Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation Strategies of Firms in China" by K. G. Huang, X. Geng and H. Wang, Organization Science, 28(2), 2017, pages 355-377. [Session 8]

(6) Bionym [Session 9]

(7) Power Play (A): Nintendo in 8-bit Video Games (HBS Case 795-102) [Session 11]
(https://hbr.org/product/power-play-a-nintendo-in-8-bit-video-games/795102-PDF-ENG)

(8) "How Companies Become Platform Leaders" by Gawer, A. and M. Cusumano, Sloan Management Review, 49(2), 2008, pages 28-35. [Session 12]

(9) "Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave" by J. L. Bower and C. M. Christensen, Harvard Business Review, 73 (1), January/February 1995, pages 43-53. [Session 13]

(10) Netflix. HBS Case 607138-PDF-ENG [Session 14] (https://hbr.org/product/netflix/607138-PDF-ENG)

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism:

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.