

MIDSTATE COLLEGE
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Course: MBA620 Strategic Thinking and Action for a Changing World

Credit: 4 Quarter Hours

Method of Delivery: eLearning

Course Description: Students will study, formulate, and create competitive methodology based on the macro view of strategic planning as it applies to a competitive advantage within a company's infrastructure. Students will apply strategic thinking and action for successful organization of the total enterprise. Internal and external competitive forces will be analyzed as agents of change. Students will apply course content to real-world cases through hands-on learning using competition-based simulation models.

Instructor: Dr. Bridgette Heard

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Office Hours: Monday (4 p.m. – 6 p.m.)

Prerequisite(s): NA

Harvard Business Review Coursepack: Midstate MBA 620

<http://hbsp.harvard.edu>

Source	Type
The Inexorable Rise of Walmart: 1988-2016	Case Study
Using Scenario Planning to Reshape Strategy	Case Study
Dieselgate - Heavy Fumes Exhausting the Volkswagen Group	Case Study
Willow Creek Community Church: What Really Makes a Difference?	Case Study
General Electric after GE Capital	Case Study

Text(s) & Manual(s): Crafting & Executing Strategy: The Quest For Competitive Advantage – Concepts and Cases – 21e

Author(s): Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble, and Strickland (2018)

Publisher: McGraw Hill

Topics:

1. Understanding Strategy
2. Evaluating a Company's External Environment
3. Evaluating a Company's Resources, Capabilities, and Competiveness
4. The Five Generic Competitive Strategies
5. Competitive Positioning
6. Strategic Moves in International Markets
7. Competing in International Markets
8. Corporate Strategy
9. Ethics, Corporate Responsibility, Environmental Sustainability, and Strategy
10. Strategy Execution
11. Managing Internal Operations
12. Corporate Culture and Leadership

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
2. Develop a functional business model to aid in the strategic planning of organizations
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Assignments by Cognitive Domain and Course Learning Outcomes:

Cognitive Domain	% of Course	Course Learning Objectives	Assignments
Comprehension/ Knowledge	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess performance within modern organizations • Compare and contrast various management theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forums • Read Book Chapters • Individual Assignment(s)
Application	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations • Compare and contrast various management practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forums • Individual Assignments • Problem Based Learning • Midterm • Final Project
Analysis	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses • Compare and contrast various management theories • Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Forums • Individual Assignments • Problem Based Learning • Midterm Exam • Final Project

Evaluation	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions • Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions. • Compare and contrast various management theories • Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations • Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Assignments • Problem Based Learning • Midterm Exam • Final Project
Creating/Synthesis	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a functional business model to aid in the strategic planning of organizations • Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project

Discussion Forums:

Getting Started Discussion Post: Students are required to create an initial post at the beginning of each course. In the initial post, students will do the following:

1. Provide a short introduction of him/herself;
2. Explain his/her personal or professional experiences encountered that relate to the general topic(s) of the course; and
3. Review course outcomes and state how the outcomes are relevant to his/her own professional experiences and interests.

All Discussion Forums (Weekly):

Initial Post (For Each Week): Students are required to post an initial response to the question/prompt for the week. The initial post must be at a minimum of 300 words. The initial post must include at least one reference. Each reference must be cited at the end of every post.

Response Posts (For Each Week): Students must reply and/or make comments to a minimum of two peers. Posts must be at least 150 words.

Replies/responses to the professor will count as one Response Post. You must respond to the professor each time he/she asks a question or asks for more information. Regardless of the number of replies back and forth, all responses from the student (under the same discussion post) count as one response post.

The discussion rubric will be used to assess student contributions to the discussions each week. Points will be derived from the student's comprehensive initial post and response posts, including but not limited to, the student's ability and effectiveness at raising questions, extending the discussion, and using resources that contribute to the topic(s). The success of the discussion forum comes from all learners. We encourage each student to share ideas, opinions, and concepts, and use resources to substantiate his/her position (as needed).

Getting Started Rubric					
Critical Elements	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not Evident	Value
Comprehension	Develops an initial post with an organized, clear point of view or idea using rich and significant detail (18-20)	Develops an initial post with a point of view or idea using appropriate detail (16-17)	Develops an initial post with a point of view or idea but with some gaps in organization and detail (14-15)	Does not develop an initial post with an organized point of view or idea (0-13))	20
Timeliness		Submits initial post on time (8-10)	Submits initial post one day late (7)	Submits initial post two or more days late (0-6)	10
Engagement	Provides relevant and meaningful response posts with clarifying explanation and detail (18-20)	Provides relevant response posts with some explanation and detail (16-17)	Provides somewhat relevant response posts with some explanation and detail (14-15)	Provides response posts that are generic with little explanation or detail (0-13)	20
Critical Thinking	Draws insightful conclusions that are thoroughly defended with evidence and examples (25-30)	Draws informed conclusions that are justified with evidence (21-24)	Draws logical conclusions (18-23)	Does not draw logical conclusions (16-17)	30
Writing (Mechanics)	Initial post and responses are easily understood, clear, and concise using proper citation methods where applicable with no errors in citations (18-20)	Initial post and responses are easily understood using proper citation methods where applicable with few errors in citations (16-17)	Initial post and responses are understandable using proper citation methods where applicable with a number of errors in citations (14-15)	Initial post and responses are not understandable and do not use proper citation methods where applicable (0-13)	20
Total					100%
Adapted from original source: Southern New Hampshire University. (2017). Retrieved from www.snhu.edu.					

Discussion Rubric					
Critical Elements	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not Evident	Value
References	Ties personal experiences to the concepts being studied, providing an orderly, brief version of the experience, with points stated clearly (9-10)	Ties personal experiences to the concepts being studied, providing a somewhat rambling version of the experience, with points stated (8)	Summarizes the concepts being studied with no ties to personal experiences (7)	Either did not post to the discussion or failed to accurately summarize concepts or tie them to personal experience (0-6)	10
Critique	Engages in collegial debates with peers and instructor (18-20)	Engages in collegial debates with selected peers only (16-17)	Dominates the discussion or is closed to differing points of view (14-15)	Student "lurks" in the forum, but no discussion postings are provided (0-13)	20
Originality	Avoids repeating in a different form points made by others (18-20)	Clarifies points made by others (16-17)	Rephrases ideas presented by others (14-15)	Agrees with what others say but offers no other response (0-13)	20
Evidence	Shows evidence of having completed, understood, and applied the readings and external resources, and provides appropriate citations (9-10)	Shows evidence of having completed and understood the readings and conducted some external research, but does not provide appropriate citations (8)	Shows some evidence of having completed the readings. No evidence of external research (7)	No evidence of completing the readings provided (0-6)	10
Argument	Objectively follows the evidence and the reasoning supports the argument (18-20)	Objectively follows the evidence, but the reasoning provided in the argument is incomplete or inconsistent with the view (16-17)	Exhibits closed-mindedness or hostility to reason (14-15)	Did not enter the discussion, or posted an initial thread and then failed to participate in the ongoing discussion (0-13)	20
Questions	Poses real-life questions or challenges that emerge from the discussion material that shape an informed conclusion (18-20)	Poses real-life questions or challenges that are loosely related to the discussion materials, and attempts to shape an informed conclusion (16-17)	Repeats questions or challenges posed in the discussion materials and repeats the conclusions presented by the authors (14-15)	No evidence of critical thinking (0-13)	20
Earned Total					100%
Comments:					
Adapted from original source: Southern New Hampshire University. (2017). Retrieved from www.snhu.edu .					

Individual Assignments:

Students are required to submit individual assignments on the weeks specified under assignment details. The individual assignment is a graduate-level paper that includes a cover page, written material, and a reference page. References must all be within the last seven years. Only “source document” references considered to be “seminal sources” are allowed to be older than seven years old.

Papers are to be 3-5 pages (not including the cover or reference page), succinct, informative, and written at the graduate level.

The paper must show understanding, application, and analysis. Superior papers will include the levels of evaluation and possibly creation (as applicable).

Individual student performance data from individual assignments will employ this rubric to assess Program Learning Objective (PLO) #5: apply theories of organizational behavior and strategic planning to create solutions for complex business challenges.

Individual / Group (PBL) Assignments Rubric					
Critical Elements	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not Evident	Value
Main Elements	Includes all of the main elements and requirements and cites multiple examples to illustrate each element (23-25)	Includes most of the main elements and requirements and cites many examples to illustrate each element (20-22)	Includes some of the main elements and requirements (18-19)	Does not include any of the main elements and requirements (16-17)	25
Inquiry and Analysis	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of multiple concepts (18-20)	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of some concepts (16-17)	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of minimal concepts (14-15)	Does not provide in-depth analysis (0-13)	20
Integration and Application	All of the course concepts are correctly applied (9-10)	Most of the course concepts are correctly applied (8)	Some of the course concepts are correctly applied (7)	Does not correctly apply any of the course concepts (0-6)	10
Critical Thinking	Draws insightful conclusions that are thoroughly defended with evidence and examples (18-20)	Draws informed conclusions that are justified with evidence (16-17)	Draws logical conclusions, but does not defend with evidence (14-15)	Does not draw logical conclusions (0-13)	20
Research	Incorporates at least two scholarly/technical resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research (14-15)	Incorporates at least two resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research (12-13)	Incorporates at least one resource that reflects depth and breadth of research (11)	Does not incorporate scholarly resources that reflect depth and breadth of research (0-10)	15
Articulation of Response	Submission is properly cited, free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format (9-10)	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization (8)	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas (7)	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas (0-6)	10
Earned Total					100%
Comments:					
Adapted from original source: Southern New Hampshire University. (2017). Retrieved from www.snhu.edu .					

NOTE: The rubric is the same for both individual and group assignments.

Problem Based Learning

Problem based learning includes case studies or additional resources that show the application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of the issue(s) presented. The paper must be at least six pages but no more than ten pages (not including the cover/reference pages). A minimum of three peer- reviewed articles per group member must be included on the reference page. Students will also be required to make an oral presentation.

Group members will be assigned. For every assignment, the group must identify a mutually agreed upon time to meet (in person and/or virtually) to divide and conquer. Students should ensure each peer as an equal part of the assignment. A “Group Leader” should be selected for each assignment (please rotate this position). The Group Leader will be responsible for reviewing the components, completing final edits, and submitting the paper on behalf of the group. Other group members can assist with the reviewing/editing, but only one paper can be submitted on behalf of the group.

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will address the following learning objectives:

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

The exam will be both essay and short answer.

Final Project

The final project will include the development of a strategic plan for a functional business model. Students will be required to submit a 10-12 page paper highlighting elements of the strategic planning process that will include the business model. A minimum of four peer-reviewed articles must be cited. The final project will be 20% of the overall grade.

Final Project Rubric					
Critical Elements	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Not Evident	Value
Main Elements	Includes almost all of the main elements and requirements and cites multiple examples to illustrate each element (23-25)	Includes most of the main elements and requirements and cites many examples to illustrate each element (20-22)	Includes some of the main elements and requirements (18-19)	Does not include any of the main elements and requirements (0-17)	25
Inquiry and Analysis	Explores multiple issues through extensive collection and in-depth analysis of evidence to make informed conclusions (18-20)	Explores some issues through collection and in-depth analysis of evidence to make informed conclusions (16-17)	Explores minimal issues through collection and analysis of evidence to make informed conclusions (14-15)	Does not explore issues through collection and analysis of evidence and does not make informed conclusions (0-13)	20
Integration and Application	All of the course concepts are correctly applied (9-10)	Most of the course concepts are correctly applied (8)	Some of the course concepts are correctly applied (7)	Does not correctly apply any of the course concepts (0-6)	10
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates comprehensive exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (18-20)	Demonstrates moderate exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (16-17)	Demonstrates minimal exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (14-15)	Does not demonstrate exploration of issues and ideas before accepting or forming an opinion or conclusion (0-13)	20
Recommendation	Offers extensive alternative solutions via plan of action by applying respective theories (14-15)	Offers extensive alternative solutions via plan of action (12-13)	Attempts to offer an alternative solution via plan of action (11)	Fails to offer an alternative solution via plan of action (0-10)	15
Writing (Mechanics/Citations)	No errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations (9-10)	Minor errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations (8)	Some errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations (7)	Major errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations (0-6)	10
Earned Total					100
Comments:					

Assignment Details:

Activity Type	Number of Assignments	% of Grade
Discussion Forums (Weeks 1 – 12)	12	10%
Individual Assignments (Weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12)	5	25%
Problem Based Learning (group projects i.e. case studies, etc.) (Weeks 2, 4, 7, 9,11)	5	25%
Written Analysis and Presentation Online students will submit a PowerPoint presentation and include narrative.		
Midterm Exam and Final Project <i>Papers/Assignments will be submitted prior to the final class. Students will give individual presentations on their papers. The instructor will grade both the paper and the presentation with a rubric (provided to the student at the beginning of the term).</i> (Weeks 6 & 11)	2	40%
TOTAL		100%

Midstate Grading Scale:

90 - 100 A
80 - 89 B
70 - 79 C
60 - 69 D
0 - 59 F

Midstate Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism is using another person's words, by either paraphrasing or direct quotation, without giving credit to the author(s). Plagiarism can also consist of cutting and pasting material from electronic sources by submitting all or a portion of work for assignment credit. This includes papers, computer programs, music, sculptures, paintings, photographs, etc. authored by another person without explicitly citing the original source(s). These actions violate the trust and honesty expected in academic work. Plagiarism is strictly against the academic policy of Midstate College. Its seriousness requires a measured, forceful response which includes consequences for inappropriate and/or no citation.

In courses containing writing assignments, the College promotes the use of an electronic resource that compares the student's writing against previously submitted papers, journals, periodicals, books, and web pages. Students and instructors can use this service to reduce the incidence of plagiarism. This electronic resource has been found to conform to legal requirements for fair use and student confidentiality. It is able to provide a report to the student indicating the parts of the assignment that match.

Student Success:

The Office of Student Success is available to students seeking tutoring for individual classes or who need assistance with writing assignments. Information is also available on test taking techniques, how to take notes, developing good study skills, etc. Contact Student Success in Room 110 (in person); (309) 692-4092, extension 1100 (phone); studentsuccess@midstate.edu

Policies and Procedures:

1. Late Work: Late work is not accepted and will result in a zero percent on any/all late assignments. Only in extreme extenuating circumstances will late work be accepted (and even in such circumstances, the student has the responsibility to notify the instructor in a timely manner and seek approval for extensions). Even if extensions are granted, late penalties in grading will still apply at the discretion of the instructor.

2. All Writing Assignments: I expect graduate-level writing. This includes, but is not limited to papers, essays, projects, essay questions on exams, homework assignments, and summaries. These assignments will supplement the textbook, additional readings, and lectures to further your understanding and application of course material. Students may be asked to submit forums or written work online via Turnitin (our online plagiarism and grammar scanning software). All citations must be formatted using APA 6. Late papers will not be accepted (see above policy on late work). All writing must be typed, 12 pt. font, with 1" margins. Writing should pull on details from the course material and should be in your own words (see Academic Dishonesty below).

3. Academic Dishonesty: Material/information taken from ANY source, including the course textbook, should be cited appropriately. Cheating / plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated in this course and may result in the dismissal/suspension from the course/program/college. Do your own work. Not knowing the rules of plagiarism is not a valid defense. Check with me or our numerous campus resources on academic integrity (i.e. Student Success, Library, etc.) if you are not clear on what constitutes plagiarism.

4. Syllabi Changes: The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus at any time. Students will receive timely notice of all such changes via announcements made online in Moodle Rooms and/or via email.

Participation Requirements:

In class: Students are expected to be in class during each on-campus session. Attendance is taken for each class session, and reported to the college. Likewise, students may receive credit for attending, and/or participating in, class. In the event of an absence, even if it was approved by the instructor in advance, the student will be marked absent and may lose any/all points associated with participation.

eLearning: In accordance with Midstate College policies, class material will be made available in our learning management system (Moodle Rooms) on Monday at 12:00 p.m. of each week and will remain available until the following Monday until 8:00 AM. This allows students one week to access the lecture and related material for that week's session, complete any assignments and/or assessments, and participate in the mandatory discussion and summary boards (see my discussion/summary requirements rubric in Moodle Rooms to ensure full credit in forums). Students must "submit substantial gradable work" in order to be marked as present for each week (see the Midstate eLearning policy on attendance in the student eLearning handbook). While each week extends from Monday at 12:00 PM to the following Monday at 8:00 AM, the instructor has the right to set due dates at their discretion within each week. For instance, your initial discussion posts are due Thursday nights by Midnight (further information is located on my discussion/summary rubric). Certain assignments, exams, and papers/projects may be due in the middle of the week at specified days and times.

Examination Information:

This class will include final project that will be worth 20% of the final grade. The final project will be comprehensive, as it will cover the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and confirm the student's knowledge of the course content by addressing the course objectives.

Methods of Evaluating Student Performance:

At the MBA level, students will be graded on their performance through content submitted via discussion forums, individual, and group assignments. Student performance will be evaluated with rubrics which are available to students at the beginning of the term.

Week by Week

Week 1

Topic(s): Understanding Strategy

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapters 1 and 2

Assignments:

Getting Started Discussion Forum:

1. Provide a short introduction of yourself.
2. Explain your personal or professional experiences encountered that relate to the general topic(s) of the course.
3. Review course outcomes and state how the outcomes are relevant to your own professional experiences and interests.

Discussion Forum:

Question: What is your company's (or a company you are familiar with) strategy? Evaluate the strategy by explaining its strengths and weaknesses? Identify elements that could be added to strengthen the weaknesses.

Assign Case

Week 2

Topic(s): Evaluating a Company's External Environment

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 3

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: Identify and evaluate factors in your company's (or a company you are familiar with) macro-environment that have or can impact the company's ability to be successful.

Case Analysis

Topic(s): Evaluating a Company's Resources, Capabilities, and Competitiveness

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 4

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: What are the most important resources and capabilities in your company (or a company you are familiar with)? What resources and capabilities are missing? How can those resources and capabilities be identified and integrated into the company?

Individual Assignment: Case 4: Amazon.com's Business Model and Its Evolution Questions:

1. What are the chief elements of Amazon's overall competitive strategy? How well do the pieces fit together? Is the strategy evolving?
2. What are the key elements of Amazon's strategy in e-commerce, cloud computing services, personal media players, digital media streaming? Are those strategies successful? Are they compatible? Explain.
3. Does it appear that the company's competitive positions in personal media players and digital streaming are stronger or weaker than its position in e-commerce and cloud-based computing services? What steps should it take to ensure that the digitally streamed media—and mobile platforms to access that media—become a major contributor to the company's overall performance?
4. Does it make good strategic sense for Amazon to be a competitor in the e-commerce, cloud-based computing services, and personal media device industries? Which of its three principal product lines—e-commerce, cloud computing services, or personal media players—do you think is most important to Amazon's future growth and profitability? Why? Should any of the product lines be discontinued?
5. What is your assessment of Amazon's financial performance the past three years? (Use the financial ratios in the Appendix of the text as a guide in doing your financial analysis.)
6. What strategic issues confront Amazon in 2015? What market or internal circumstances should most concern Jeff Bezos and the company's senior leadership team?

7. What recommendations would you make to Amazon to address the strategic issues confronting it in 2015 and sustain its impressive growth in revenues and maintain its profitability?

Video for Individual Assignment:

“Amazon.com Business Strategy in the 2000s—Profit vs. growth—Long Runway for Success,” that can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvzrRx5-He4>

Assign Case

Week 4

Topic(s): The Five Generic Competitive Strategies

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 5

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: What do you believe the best differentiation strategy is for the company you are currently working in (or a company you are familiar with)? Why? What are some strategies (at least 2) that you can create that can make the current differentiation strategy better?

Case Analysis

Topic(s): Competitive Positioning

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 6

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: What are the strategic benefits and risks of expanding a company's horizontal and vertical scope? Name a company that has benefitted from one or both. Explain.

Individual Assignment:

Questions:

1. What is competition like in the activity tracking industry? How strong is the competitive strength of buyers and suppliers? New entrants and substitute products? Rivalry among competing sellers? Prepare a Five Forces Model of Competition to support your conclusions.
2. How would you best describe Fitbit's competitive strategy?
3. Perform a SWOT analysis for Fitbit. What are the company's primary strengths and weaknesses? What external opportunities and threats exist?
4. Analyze the company's financial performance. Do trends suggest that its strategy is working?
5. What recommendations would you make to Fitbit management to address the most important strategic issues facing the company?

Videos for Individual Assignment:

Fox Business video interview with Fitbit CEO James Park entitled "We Don't Target Same Consumer as Apple," that can be accessed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Elpqlbm7bs>.

2015 CNBC Mad Money video titled “Upping the Wellness Game” that can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yobOs-mgHmE>.

Assign Case

Week 6 – Midterm Week

Topic(s): Strategic Moves in International Markets

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
8. Compare and contrast various management practices
9. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
10. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
11. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
12. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 7

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: What are the benefits of a company competing in international markets? What are the risks? Analyze the five major strategic options for entering foreign markets.

Midterm Exam (Essay and short answer)

Week 7

Topic(s): Corporate Strategy

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 8

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: How can business diversification enhance shareholder value? What types of strategies are needed (be specific)?

Case Analysis

Week 8

Topic(s): Ethics, Corporate Responsibility, Environmental Sustainability, and Strategy

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 9

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: Explain/Evaluate the importance of ethics, corporate social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and strategy for a company. Give examples to support each.

Individual Assignment:

Questions:

1. Prepare a PESTEL analysis for the South African wine industry. What does this analysis tell you about the attractiveness of the external environment for companies operating in the industry?
2. What is competition like in the industry? Prepare a Porter's Five Forces Competitive Strength analysis that examines the strength of each competitive force. Which competitive forces seem to have the strongest effect on industry attractiveness?
3. Identify the industry dynamics and forces driving change in the South African wine industry. What changes

- do you expect in the industry over the next 3 – 5 years?
4. Identify the key success factors in the South African wine industry. What must every successful company operating in the industry do to be competitive?
 5. What factors might shape strategy choices for competing in international markets in the wine industry?
 6. Based on your analysis of the industry and your answers to the preceding questions, what are your recommendations for expanding sales and revenues for South African wineries?

Videos for Individual Assignment:

YouTube video titled “*South Africa’s Booming Wine Industry*” that you may want to show the class (or have students watch on their own). The link to the video is <https://youtu.be/1zz1ZQG6H0M>.

“Opportunities & Challenges in Sout Africa’s Wine Industry.” The video link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m7FwzPIfT0>.

Assign Case

Week 9

Topic(s): Building an Organization Capable of Good Strategy Execution: People, Capabilities, and Structure.

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 10

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: Identify and evaluate the key components of the successful strategy execution process.

Case Analysis

Topic(s): Strategy Execution

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 11

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: Identify and evaluate some internal processes/systems that help company employees meet strategic goals.

Individual Assignment:

Questions:

1. Do NFL franchises operate as socially responsible businesses? Assess the five components of an NFL franchise's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy.
2. Prepare an economic analysis of the decision to accept a college football scholarship versus attending a prestigious academic college. Use the costs and salary information presented in the case to compute the Net Present Value of earnings of both alternatives. State all assumptions that you make in your analysis.
3. If Jacoby Jackson decides to accept a football scholarship, and is successful in the NFL draft, what can he expect to earn over his athletic lifespan? State any assumptions that you make in your calculations.
4. Should universities continue to support football, considering the large body of evidence that indicates that many players will get concussions and of those, some will suffer life-time debilitation from Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)? Prepare a Moral and Business case for cessation of university sponsored football programs.

Videos for Individual Assignment:

"Is It Time to Pay College Athletes?" that can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8IKwKbvKTY>.

"Should College Athletes Be Paid?" that can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8Q-L5yr0Lw>.

Assign Case

Week 11

Topic(s): Corporate Culture and Leadership: Keys to Good Strategy Execution

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
2. Develop a functional business model to aid in the strategic planning of organizations
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Read Chapter 12

Final Paper Due

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: Evaluate the importance/role of corporate culture and leadership in the successful execution of strategy.

Case Analysis

Week 12

Topic(s): Strategy: Putting It All Together

Objective(s):

1. Assess performance within modern organizations and form strategies that lead to continuous improvement
3. Compare and contrast various management practices
4. Synthesize learned concepts to make optimal business decisions
5. Formulate business strategies based on goals and objectives of modern organizations
6. Analyze and solve business problems based on careful case study analyses
7. Evaluate data to reach informed strategic decisions reaching optimal conclusions.

Assignments:

Discussion Forum:

Question: What are the top three (3) lessons you have learned about crafting and executing strategy in the quest for competitive advantage?

Individual Assignment:

Questions:

1. What is the objective and mission of SANParks/Kruger National Park? Is selling rhino horn consistent with their objective and vision? If not, then should it be? Defend your position.
2. Identify the price and the sources of demand and supply of rhino horn. What trends do you identify and what are the likely effects of these trends on the long-term problem of poaching?
3. Identify solutions to the problem of Rhino poaching. What are the pros and cons of each?
4. How can NGOs and non-African governments help to reduce the rhino poaching problem?
5. Construct a five forces model for the rhino sales industry. What competitive threats are associated with the rival sellers, suppliers, buyers, substitutes, and new entrants?

Video for Individual Assignment:

Rhino Poaching <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paSVWkOfSWQ>.