

Competitive Strategy (3 ECTS)

Introduction

Strategy comprises the coordination and integration of efforts within the different functional areas of an organization in order to face an uncertain future. This includes shaping an overall firm strategy, framing the strategy for each individual business of the company, and establish these strategies. In this course, we will focus on formulating the strategy for a business within a company. Competitive Strategy formulation involves analyzing the industry you are in, determining how to position our strategy within the context of our business and develop the capabilities to compete in such context. Therefore, competitive strategy coordinates and integrates the individual functional business' areas, such as operations, marketing, sales, and finance. Corporative strategy - how to successfully combine both business-, and Strategy Execution, - the steps to translate a formulated business strategy into a successful action- will be studied two additional courses during the second year of the program.

Objectives

Thinking strategically is a skill difficult to master. The main objective of the Competitive Strategy course is to push students to think strategically and critically in different competitive situations. The course introduces the students to a coherent framework of Value Creation, Value Capture and Sustainability of Competitive Advantage, and develops related concepts and critical insights that are used to analyze the competitive environment of a firm and its internal strengths and weaknesses. I expect you to be able to deal with the basic strategy concepts introduced. Nevertheless, they remain tools, which should aid you in becoming better strategic thinkers. The ultimate objective is to formulate a strategy for a business that will shape the future environment of the firm, and aid the firm with its strategic decision-making in this future.

Content

This course is divided in different parts:

- I. Introduction
- II. The value system of the sector
- III. Competitive strategy – The building blocks
- IV. Competitive strategy –Challenges

V. Competitive Dynamics

Evaluation

- Class participation: 35%
- Simulation: 25%
- Final exam: 40%

Competences

Basic

CB7 –Know how to apply the knowledge acquired and the problem-solving capacity in new and little-known settings within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the area of study.

CB8 –Be able to integrate knowledge and deal with the complexity of making judgements based on information that being incomplete or limited, includes considerations about social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of the student's knowledge and judgements.

CB10 –Have the learning skills that enable to continue studying in a largely self-directed independent manner.

General

CG1. Expose and discuss business situations rigorously and effectively, using both formal and informal procedures, and providing relevant data to support their observations and conclusions.

CG4. Understand and apply the mechanisms that generate an environment of collaboration, communication, and trust between the members of a team or organization.

CG7. Effectively distinguish and categorize relevant information for business decision-making.

CG9. Interpret the global context to analyze and judge the threats and opportunities for the organization.

Specific

CE01 - Apply a structured, sound process in the analysis of business situations and decision making that includes the following phases: diagnosis of the problem, criteria selection, and identification of alternatives, weighted analysis and selection of an alternative with the appropriate action plan.

CE30. Strategically analyze the value chain and the keys to the success of an industry or a business, prior advanced knowledge of the various existing competitive strategies, the competitive contexts in which they make sense, and the origin of sustainable competitive advantages.

CE32. Ability to develop business plans, understanding each of the processes, which allow presenting business plans to real investors.