Specialization in International Business - course descriptions

Management Control
Project Management
Corporate Strategy
Knowing the Market and the Consumer
Talent Management
Business Government & Society
Business & Services Innovation
Capital Markets
Country Analysis
Marketing Strategy for Decision Making
MANAGEMENT CONTROL

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to allow students to gain knowledge, insights, and analytical skills related to how a firm’s managers go about designing, implementing, and using planning and control systems to implement a firm’s strategy.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the management control environment;
2. Describe the sequential steps in the typical management control process;
3. Describe and design performance measurement systems
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The objectives of this course are to bring you deeper into good practices, methodologies, techniques and tools for Project Management and to provide you the most appropriate know-how and alternatives to successfully set up and control a project within different organization and in market scenarios.

The course methodology is based on preliminary analysis of issues and situations to be solved by the Project Manager and on a presentation of possible methodologies and “good practices”, followed by practical application done with group cases. The case method of teaching is based on the idea that you, as a group, will discover the issues and learn from the ideas of others in the class.
CORPORATE STRATEGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Strategic decisions are related to the external and internal business conditions: many variables are behind strategic decisions; all of them part of a complex and dynamic system of relationships. Business leaders must focus not only on the administrative or operational challenges of running a firm, but also need to have a deep awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the firms they run, in order to match adequately the characteristics of the goods and services they provide to market requirements. Using a flexible approach to structure strategic decisions, the course aims at improving strategic thinking and strategic analysis and formulation skills, focusing on corporate strategy issues such as decision making, organizational design, and change management.

The course aims at developing the necessary skills to perform sound strategic analyses of industries and corporations. For that purpose, several frameworks for strategic analysis will be presented, and case studies will be discussed with the purpose of appreciating how real life companies make strategic decisions.

The course uses interactive methods, aimed at transmitting professional skills, abilities and attitudes which are useful in increasing the effectiveness of the learning process, team working, conflict-reducing abilities and leadership.

The course, which develops along three blocks, i.e. corporate strategy, international issues for strategy, and strategy in practice, 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.
KNOWING THE MARKET & THE CONSUMER

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Understanding how and why consumers make the decisions they do is fundamental for the elaboration of an effective marketing strategy. Even for companies dealing in B2B markets, understanding the end-consumer is a requirement. In addition, companies are constantly seeking information to inform their decisions. This course consists of two large blocks: Consumer Behavior and Marketing Research. First, students will learn the foundations of consumer behavior and the consumer decision-making process and how to use this knowledge in the formulation of effective marketing strategies and tactics. Second, they will learn the tools and methods to be able to effectively conduct (or hire) marketing research.

The first part will review the consumer decision making process, that is, the stages consumers go through from identifying a need to buying and consuming a product. This process will be then linked to marketing decision making. By analyzing how consumers make decisions at different stages of their process and the variables that influence those decisions, students will be better able to design an effective marketing mix.

The second part of the course will focus on obtaining market and consumer information to inform marketing decisions. While the first part provides a framework to understand consumer behavior, managers constantly need information that is specific to their context. The goal of the second part is to provide students with the methods and tools to translate a managerial decision problem into a research question, to design a research plan, to analyze data, interpret survey reports, produce an executive summary of the research, and to translate the results into practical recommendations.
TALENT MANAGEMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The focus of the course is the management of human capital, which in today's economy is often more important than physical or financial capital. In dealing with this issue, the course adopts the perspective of a general manager more than that of a human resource specialist. The course addresses human resource issues from a strategic perspective and considers how human resource management may aid organizations develop a competitive advantage. During the sessions we’ll explore all the relevant aspects of human resource management (such as recruitment and selection, compensation, performance management, retention and downsizing, etc.) and we’ll also emphasize how these practices are aligned with each other and how they fit the overall strategy of the organization.
BUSINESS GOVERNMENT & SOCIETY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the nonmarket forces that managers encounter. The emphasis is on the political, regulatory, social, and natural environment in which business operates.

Business operates in both a market and a nonmarket environment. Successful corporate strategy aligns the firm’s capabilities with the demands of both its market and nonmarket environment. This course systematically examines the political, regulatory, societal, cultural, and natural factors that shape business’ nonmarket environment. Students learn how to analyze and proactively manage the nonmarket environment through integrated market- and nonmarket strategies.

This course is divided into four parts:

In part one, we examine the role of markets, governments, and society in a market economy. We will examine markets, market failures, the role of government in correcting market failures, and government failures.

The second part begins the systematic analysis of politics as it relates to business. Students learn to analyze the motives for government intervention to better judge when and how political developments may affect business. Tools for nonmarket analysis and nonmarket strategy formulation are introduced. We then turn to business-government relations in specific regulatory domains, as we analyze how to align market and nonmarket strategy in challenging political environments.

Part three extends the analysis to the international level. We examine the political risk inherent in many international investment decisions, the dynamics of trade policymaking and protectionism, and the challenges – and opportunity – of “thin” regulation at the global level.

The fourth part turns attention to the role of business in society. Business is often blamed for social ills. But social challenges also provide opportunities for business. Building on prior insights, we consider directly the debate over corporate social responsibility and its link to corporate strategy, competitive advantage, and firm performance. In this context we also explore systematically the rise of “private politics” which are increasingly complementing conventional “public politics”. Business increasingly has to deal directly with activists, civil society networks, and NGOs. A profound challenge, this new plurality also opens exciting new nonmarket strategic opportunities for business, providing it with new potential allies.
BUSINESS AND SERVICES INNOVATION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Innovation brings value to the business. However, the managers lack of in-depth understanding of the detailed process of innovation. Aiming to answer the question of “how to do it”, this course takes an operational method to help managers to understand how a new product/service is developed. Further, this course seeks to help managers develop the strategic “mindset” to generate, select, and manage R&D portfolios.

This course will be composed of nine lectures sessions and three group presentation sessions. Through the lecture sessions, students will be able to learn all relevant product design theories from the state-of-art academic literature. Following the same process of product/service development, students are also expected to generate a new product/service concept and present the preliminary prototype at the end of the course.
CAPITAL MARKETS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will develop all the major aspects relating to Financial Markets in a much practical approach as possible. The new participant will be introduced to the world of finance, covering a wide range of topics such as the structure of the markets, the major products that are traded in those markets and the way to combine products through an asset management process.

Throughout 11 sessions (1 session will be devoted to the final exam) the student will be acquainted with an array of different asset classes and sub-asset classes in order for him/her to become familiar with stocks, bonds, derivative products, currencies, commodities, real estate, hedge funds or private equity, as well as by-products such as preferred stock, convertibles, corporate bonds, etc. But a “step by step” approach is needed to inter-connect individual products and the way they are issued, sold or traded in the financial markets. For this reason, the course will basically be defined along four major themes. First, the initial contact for the student with the “Markets” should focus on their structure. This is the first General Theme: “The Structure of the Financial Markets”. The second step should now address directly the products bought and sold in the markets. That is, “The Markets and its Products I (Traditional Asset Classes)” – as the second General Theme- goes over what has been defined as the “traditional” financial products; as opposed to the new, “alternative” products. In this second General Theme the student will dig thoroughly into the world of the fixed income markets, the equity markets, the derivatives markets or the more specialised but, nonetheless, still “traditional” products such as the currency (Foreign Exchange) or commodities’ markets. The third General Theme – “The Markets and its Products II (Alternative Asset Classes)” then jumps into the new breed of products such as hedge funds or private equity funds, that constitute what is normally regarded as the “alternative” asset classes, in the way that they should be part of an investment portfolio with the main objective of diversification due to their relatively low correlation with the “traditional” asset classes. Once the student has become acquainted with the markets as such and their specific products, the fourth and final General Theme – “Investment Vehicles in the Markets”- will focus on the structuring or bundling of the vehicles to invest in the markets. That is normally the task undertaken by the asset management industry in the world. Therefore, a profound analysis of the so called Collective Investment Schemes is required: how they work, its regulation and “best practices”, ending up with a view on how this instruments are sold in the markets to different investors. This has become a major point for concern in the developed world after the financial crisis left the industry shaken not only in terms of volume but, surely more important, with regards to its transparency and ethical behaviour. But before going through the investment industry a theoretical review of Portfolio Management is surely needed, in what is normally regarded as the “investment process”. Here is the point where students should have received the “whole picture” of financial markets. The course will follow as much as possible a practical approach, although it will require a “lecture” structure for its theoretical parts.

Program objectives:

1) To be able to get acquainted with a fairly important amount of financial products in the markets, structured into the various families of “asset classes”
2) To understand how this products interact in the markets with its consequences on the portfolios of the investors
3) To learn how markets work as such, how they have developed historically up to what we have now and what the future might be for the financial industry
4) To become aware of the regulatory and competitive trends affecting the markets, with the aim to let the student know where the opportunities and the risks are.
COUNTRY ANALYSIS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In an increasingly interdependent world countries have been following different economic and political strategies in their search for increased welfare. These different approaches have important implications for businesses, either when thinking of investing in a foreign country or when attempting to carry out export-import activities.

The course will analyze different countries and regions in terms of their political organization and their economic policies and will relate these to business issues. The student will gain a greater understanding of the general environment in these countries and, by extension, of others not directly covered during the course. The ultimate objective is to equip students with a set of tools that will allow them to better analyze in their future professional life the social, economic and political characteristics of different countries, and use this understanding to make adequate business decisions.
MARKETING STRATEGY FOR DECISION MAKING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Marketing Strategy for Decision Making is a seminar designed to develop the knowledge and application of marketing strategy using a business simulation. Nothing teaches like the real world. Marketing theory is certainly important. But its how each student applies it that makes the real difference. All too often, students have to wait until their first job to get hands-on training. That’s a costly way to practice. Why using a simulation to learn marketing strategy? The statistics speak for themselves. The learning retention rate of a standard lecture is only 5%. Give someone the chance to practice by applying their knowledge, and their retention jumps to 75% to 80%. That’s a powerful difference, and it’s what simulations deliver more than any other learning tool. It’s a risk-free platform for testing ideas. No one gets fired and no real budgets are on the line. Yet, participants leave the experience with a more analytical way of thinking, and are more prepared for the real world by testing contingencies and scenarios in advance.

The name of the game here is marketing strategy. Marketing Strategy for Decision Making allows a participant to condense a long-term perspective into a matter of days. You’ll see at once how a decision made today will affect the company’s value in the years to come. Not just in theory, but through the lessons of real market factors.

From actual market conditions to changing market forces, our Marketing Strategy for Decision Making seminar mirror the competitive landscape to the last detail. Students apply decisions and see results at once. Nothing else translates ideas into results as quickly or accurately.

For masters’ level students, Marketing Strategy for Decision Making offers a comprehensive mix of marketing strategy and long-term planning. Through direct competition, participants pilot a company through a competitive landscape in which all of their marketing skills are required. Whether creating a new market or further penetrating an existing one, both strategic and tactical abilities are required: R&D, finance, portfolio management, segmentation and positioning, as well as pricing, promotion and distribution.

Because a winning strategy is nothing without perfect execution, operational decisions play a vital role in the course. From price points to advertising budgets and distribution channels, participants control every aspect of how their plans are realized, and constantly refine their decisions based on actual market performance. It’s learning on all levels.

The Marketing Strategy for Decision Making seminar also reinforces a strong focus on competitive thinking and market understanding. Marketing Strategy for Decision Making clearly reflects the impact a sudden competitive move or changing customer needs can have on a company, and encourages teams to look beyond their own corporate walls for insight and ideas.

Just as important, Marketing Strategy for Decision Making always engages students and professionals on a more emotional level. The fast pace and hands-on experience creates an intense energy, making participants eager to apply their new skills. It’s a lot of fun, but also hard work. Students and executives find the combination irresistible.

Finally, it’s absolutely mandatory to come to the first class with the simulation manual read. The manual is a very easy-to-read description and overview of the market, the products, the customers, and the general environment you are going to face in the simulation.