**Course Outline**

**John Molson MBA Program**

**MBA 625: Strategy in action**

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| Section: MBA 625/BB |
| Time: Thursday 17:45-20:15 |
| Classroom**:** MB-5.215 |
| Prof: Rajshree Prakash |
| Office: MB 13- 107 |
| Tel[[1]](#footnote-1)\*: 514 484 2424 ext 2912 |
| E-mail: rajshree.prakash@concordia.ca |
| Office hours: Thursday 15:00-16:30 |
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**Course Objectives**

This course focuses on the process of strategic implementation, i.e. the manner in which strategic plans are implemented. Strategic implementation involves the selection and combination of various managerial ‘tools’ such as performance assessment, reward and control systems, organizational structure, leadership style and the creation and maintenance of organizational culture. Using strategic management and organizational theory concepts as a framework, we will examine the extent to which management have options and alternatives in how they utilize the available tools to put a planned strategy into action. Specific topics discussed include implementing turnaround, business model innovation, customer centric strategies, and organizing for corporate social responsibility. A principal objective of the course is to enhance the student’s ability to make decisions through case studies, student presentations, and lectures.

**Specific Course Learning Goals:**

After completing this course, students will:

1. Have knowledge of the critical elements of strategy implementation

2. Be able to apply the case analytical framework to structure and make decisions about implementation.

3. Be aware of the major corporate social responsibility issues facing business today.

4. Develop a critical appreciation of the professional management literature

**Course Materials**

Case package from Concordia Bookstore. No textbook is required.

Required readings: Readings can be accessed free of charge can be accessed at <http://clues.concordia.ca/search>

**Summary class dates**

**Class 1: January 7th -** Introduction to organizational structure and strategy implementation.

Reading: ‘From Strategy to Implementation: seeking alignment’

**Class 2: January 14th –** Implementing a strategic turnaround

Readings: ‘Note on Organization Structure’ and ‘What is the Right Organizational Design?’ Daft & Anand (MS 2006)

Case: Northlands Ledger (A) Management style, strategy, performance

**Class 3: January 21st -**Performance Measurement

Reading: Kaplan and Norton, ‘The Balanced Scorecard: measures that drive performance’ (also see note in the detailed class plan)

Case: Transworld Auto parts (A)

**Class 4: February 4th** Defining roles and responsibilities

Reading: Fourne, S.P.L., Jansen J. J. P., Mom T.J.M (2014): Strategic Agility in MNEs: Managing Tensions to Capture opportunities across Emerging and Established Markets. *California Management Review.* Vol 56 no 3.

Case: Levendary Café: the China Challenge

**Class 5: February 11th -**Using the business model as an implementation tool

Reading: David Teece “Business Models, Business Strategy and Innovation” Long Range Planning 43: 172 – 194 (2010)

Case: Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Rugby Football Union: Competing Business Models

**Class 6: February 18th -**Generating employee buy-in to major strategic change

Case: Language and globalization: Englishnization at Rakuten

**Class 7: March 3rd - Written case assignment due today:** **Big spaceship: Ready to go big?**

Leadership & Implementation

Reading: Rob Goffee & Gareth Jones “Leading clever people” Harvard Business Review March 2007, 72-79

Case: Lululemon (Not in course pack)

**Class 8: March 10th -** Implementing CSR

Reading: Porter M., Kramer R. M. (2006): The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility. Harvard Business Review

Case: Frogs Leap Winery in 2011: The Sustainability Agenda

**Class 9: March 17th**  Presentation: 3M Taiwan: Product Innovation in a Subsidiary

**Class 10: March 24th -** Presentation: Nike’s Global Women’s Fitness Business

Reading: Ranjay Gulati “Silo Busting: How to Execute on the Oromise of Customer Focus” Harvard Business Review, May 2007

**Class 11: March 31st -** Presentation: Procter & Gamble (2005)

Reading: Strikwarda & Stoelhorst 2009. “The emergence and evolution of the multidimensional organization” California Management Review

**Class 12: April 7th -** Presentation: Siemens: building a structure to drive performance and responsibility

Take-home final assignment posted: **Thursday, April 7th, 17:45 pm**: Take-home final exam due: **Thursday April 21st 17:45 pm**

**Evaluation**

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| --- | --- |
| Class Contribution 15% |  |
| Individual Assignment | 30% |
| Final take home exam | 30% |
| Group presentation | 25% |
| Total | 100% |

NOTEs:

1. Students are required to attend all classes.

2. To be fair to all students no late assignments will be accepted.

**COURSE ACTIVITIES**

The primary teaching vehicle in this course is the case method. The case method links strategy theory with real management problems to develop concepts and insights. Classroom activity will typically consist of a 90-minute case discussion that illustrates both classic and novel issues and solutions. In the second part of the class we cover relevant strategy readings to develop several key takeaway points about strategic planning and implementation.

**CLASS CONTRIBUTION (15%)**

This component of the evaluation is an assessment of your ability to apply the course concepts in understanding complex organizational decisions, problems and situations.You are also expected to play an active role in the case presentation portion of the course and may be assigned a specific role to ask questions of a particular presentation.

**INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (30%)**

The case for this assignment ‘Big spaceship: Ready to go big?’. This assignment deals with the core aspects of strategy design and implementation. Your assignment is to advise Michael Lebowitz on an organizing framework to achieve the firm's growth goals. You might want to consider the following questions before outlining your proposed action plan (i.e. point 4 below).

1. What are the defining features of the industry in which Big Spaceship completes? Who are its primary competitors?
2. What is Big Spaceship’s value proposition? How does the value proposition enable the firm to create differentiation within the industry?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team-based organization structure? Is Big Spaceship as currently organized and ready to “go big”? Why or why not?
4. Advise Michael Lebowitz on how you believe is the best way forward for the organization to achieve a sustainable pace of growth. Feel free to borrow from the McKinsey 7S framework as an organizing outline for your advice.

Your report should be no more than eight pages in length, typed double-spaced, excluding title and exhibit pages. The report must be stapled in the top left corner. *Please do not enclose the assignment in any type of binder or folder.*

**DUE: Beginning of class 7, Thursday, February 18th**

Hard copies of assignment are required. Hand in beginning of class. Alternatively, please place hard copy in my mailbox (MB Building 13th Floor Management Department Mailroom, Box#46).

**GROUP PRESENTATIONS (25%)**

The group project involves a case analysis presentation to the entire class. There will be four (or possibly five) self-selected groups of either four or five members. Groups should be agreed upon by week three (September 22nd \). If you haven’t found a group by the end of week three, I will assign you to a team. I will randomly assign each group a case in **week three** of the course. A specific assignment for each case is contained in the detailed course outline.

For your presentation you will have 30-40 minutes excluding the questions and answers. Please provide a printed copy of your slides (including backup slides) on the day of your presentation.

The grade on the group project presentation will be a team grade that will be assigned equally to all team members and/or determined by peer evaluation.

**Take Home Final/Exam Assignment (30%)**

**Use a similar structure, format and analytical methodology as the first written assignment. I will select a case (not in your reading package) and mail it to you.**

Case posted: April 7th Thursday, 17.30 PM

Case analysis due: April 14th 17:30 PM

Electronic copy only is required. Please send it to me by the cut off time. Equity requires that I cannot accept late submissions.

**Grading**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A+ | 90% | B+ | 77-79% | C | 50-69% |
| A | 85-90% | B | 74-76% | F | <49% |
| A- | 80-84% | B- | 70-73% |  |  |

**Detailed Class Plan**

**Class 1: January 7th- Introduction to organizational structure and strategy implementation**

Reading: “From strategy to implementation: seeking alignment”

**Class 2: January 14th - Implementing strategic turnaround**

Readings: **“**Note on organization structure” & “What is the right organizational design?” Daft & Anand (MS, 2006)

Case:Northlands Ledger (A) Management style, strategy, performance

1. What are the differences in the approach to customers of the *Sun Belt City Star* versus the *Northlands Ledger*?
2. Potter could simply order people at the *Ledger* to copy the customer-focused performances of the *Star*. What might have happened if he pursued this approach?
3. In what ways should Potter have changed the organization design of the *Ledger* to ensure better customer focus? Organization design comprises the structure, information and decision support systems, human resources policies and practices, incentives, and culture.
4. How should Potter have gone about leading and managing the change process?

**Class 3: January 21st - Performance Measurement**

Readings: Kaplan and Norton, “the balanced scorecard: measures that drive performance”

(Kaplan and Norton have written extensively on the subject of strategy execution. I recommend you also consider reading “Putting the balanced scorecard to work” and others depending upon your interest.)

Case: Transworld Autoparts (A)

1. What are the respective business strategies of Transworld Auto Part’s economy and luxury divisions? (You may want to think about how each division adds value to its customers and differentiates itself from its competition.)
2. What must each division do well to execute its strategy?
3. Which division manager has done a better job of executing his business unit’s strategy?
4. What is Transworld Auto Part’s rationale for implementing a strategy map and balanced scorecard exercise?
5. Which division manager developed a better strategy map and balanced scorecard? What changes would you propose to the strategy maps and balanced scorecards of the two divisions

**Class 4: January 28th - Defining roles and responsibilities**

Reading: Fourne, S.P.L., Jansen J. J. P., Mom T.J.M (2014): Strategic Agility in MNEs: Managing Tensions to Capture opportunities across Emerging and Established Markets. *California Management Review.* Vol 56 no 3.

Case : Levendary Café – The China Challenge

1. What is your evaluation of the way Levendary Café has entered the China market?
2. What changes (if any) should Mia Foster make? Specifically what should she do about Louis Chen? And what changes (if any) would you propose at the headquarters?
3. Prepare a specific action program for Foster to deal with the need for continued growth in China. What should be on her agenda for her meeting with Chen?

**Class 5: February 5th - Using the business model as an implementation tool**

Reading: David Teece “Business Models, Business Strategy and Innovation” Long Range Planning 43: 172 – 194 (2010)

Case: Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Rugby Football Union: Competing Business Models

**Class 6: February 12th - Generating employee buy-in to major strategic change**

Case: Language and globalization: Englishnization at Rakuten

1. Is “Englishnization” a good idea for Rakuten? What are the costs/benefits of such a policy?
2. What are Mikitani’s motivations for issuing the “Englishnization” policy?
3. Analyze the survey results in Exhibit 3. How are employees experiencing the mandate? What differences do you see?
4. What determines whether employees embrace or reject the language stipulation?

**Class 7: February 18th - Written case assignment due today:** **Big spaceship: Ready to go big?**

Leadership & Implementation

Reading: Rob Goffee & Gareth Jones “Leading clever people” Harvard Business Review March 2007, 72-79: nb: This reading has soon c me relevance for both Big spaceship & Lulu.

**Case: Leadership, Culture, and Transition at Lululemon**

Please note that this class consists of a multipart video & discussion. Introduction to the case is contained in the first class folder.

Discussion questions

1. What do you think is the central problem in the case?
2. In 2005, what did Advent International and Highland Capital see in lululemon?
3. How important is lululemon’s culture? What are the benefits and costs of a strong culture?
4. What caused lululemon’s problems?
5. What advice would you give to the incoming CEO? Would you be happy or concerned at the turn of events?

**Class 8: March 3rd - Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility**

Reading: Porter, M. & Kramer, R. M. 2006. “Strategy & society: the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility”. Harvard Business Review

Case: Frogs Leap Winery in 2011: The Sustainability Agenda

**Class 9: March 10th - Presentation1:** 3M Taiwan: Product Innovation in a Subsidiary’

This case deals with the core aspects of strategy design and implementation. If you were in the place of T.C. Chung, faced with the dilemma of having an innovative but untested product on unchartered territory, what would you do?

The four aspects that need to be covered in the case are:

1. Should Chung proceed with the Acne dressing project?
2. What options does Chung have regarding the options of Acne dressing?
3. What resources, if any, should Chung seek from the headquarters or other subsidiaries?
4. Recommend a path forward for Chung.

**Class 10: March 17th – Presentation 2:** Nike’s Global Women’s Fitness Business: Driving Strategic Integration

Reading: Ranjay Gulati “Silo Busting: How to Execute on the Promise of Customer Focus” Harvard Business Review, May 2007

Discussion Questions.

1. Darcy Winslow the former general manager of the global women's fitness business and now appointed to a new role focusing upon implementing Nike's new category driven organization architecture across the Nike’s other businesses is seeking specific recommendations from you on two questions.
2. What options and recommendations would you give to the new general manager of the global women's fitness business to help him/her *sustain and improve* the level of integration that had already been achieved in that division?
3. What options and recommendations would you give to Darcy Winslow in her new responsibilities for implementing a category driven organization model. She is interested in learning what she might do to orchestrate the change more quickly and on a larger scale. What challenges barriers and trade-offs would you expect to find in other businesses as the company abandons its product driven mentality in favor of a more consumer oriented approach?

**Class 11: March 24th - Presentation 3:** Procter & Gamble (2005)

Reading: Strikwarda & Stoelhorst 2009. “The emergence and evolution of the multidimensional organization” California Management Review

1. Why did the US organizational structure shift from product grouping in the 1950s to a matrix in the 1980s? Why did the European organizational structure shift from geographic grouping in the 1950s to category management in the 1980s? Why were the two structures integrated into a global cube in the 1990s?
2. What are the key distinguishing features of Organization 2005? Why did P&G adopt this structure?
3. Should Lafley make a strong commitment to keeping Organization 2005 or should he plan to dismantle the structure? Are other hybrid options feasible?
4. What steps would you advise Lafley to take in implementing your recommended structure?

**Class 12: March 31st - Presentation 4:** Siemens: building a structure to drive performance and responsibility

Reading: Strikwarda & Stoelhorst 2009. “The emergence and evolution of the multidimensional organization” California Management Review

Discussion questions:

1. What is the source of the tension existed between headquarters and the regions? Does new CEO Peter Losher’s reorganization address these tensions adequately?
2. What do you consider to be the key implementation tools used by Losher when implementing strategic change?
3. How does Siemens’ organization structure help managers harness potential synergies in the company?
4. Using the notion of strategic-alignment, is the role of the HQ consistent with Siemens strategic resources? Do you see any symptoms of misalignment?

**Class 13: April 7th -Presentation or Summary if necessary**

Assessment of Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are assessed through quizzes, mid-term assignment, a group project, and a final examination.

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| Learning  Learning Activity  Objective | Mid-term Assignment | Group Project | Final Exam |
| Use strategic tools and frameworks to analyze the concept of strategic fit, and devise implementation plans | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze the concept of alignment and discuss implementation | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and present a professional business presentation | Use case study of an actual company to test application of analysis |
| Acquire the ability to integrate information from cases that help in understanding the source of problems | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and write a professional business report | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and present a professional business presentation | Use case study of an actual company to test application of analysis |
| Learn how to identify and define strategic problems of business cases | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and write a professional business report | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and present a professional business presentation | Use case study of an actual company to test application of analysis |
| Be able to identify and evaluate strategic options in order to propose a feasible implementation plan | Use case studies of actual companies to analyze and write a professional business report | Real-time question and answer period to assess strength of conclusions | Use case study of an actual company to test application of analysis |
| Develop presentation skills and learn how to present an analysis in a logical and professional manner |  | Oral presentation with real-time question and answer period |  |

**Academic Integrity and the Academic Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct (Academic) at Concordia University states that “the integrity of University academic life and of the degrees, diplomas and certificates the University confers is dependent upon the honesty and soundness of the instructor-student learning relationship and, in particular, that of the evaluation process. As such, all students are expected to be honest in all of their academic endeavours and relationships with the University,” (Academic Code of Conduct, art. 1) Graduate Calendar, 2008-2009, page 834).]

All students enrolled at Concordia are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of this Code. You are strongly encouraged to read the pertinent section in the 2008-2009Concordia Graduate Calendar Graduate Calendar, (pages 834-851) and visit the following web address: <http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/> both of which provide useful information about proper academic conduct.

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| DISCLAIMER  The instructor reserves the right to change or update this outline, and any other course related materials, as required. The student will be informed in a timely manner through First Class and/or announcements during class. |

1. \* The preferred (and the most effective) way of getting in touch with me is through e-mail. I am generally able to respond within 24 hours. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)