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LINCOLN UNIVERSITY MBA PROGRAM

Business Strategy & Decision Making (BA 380)

Spring Semester 2009

Professor: **Marshall J. Burak**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Business Strategy & Decision Making

Today's business firms develop, grow and operate in an extremely complex and often fiercely competitive marketplace. Decisions that managers make must, therefore, be based on the most complete and current information available about their markets, products, technology and resource availability. Such decisions require inputs from many sources and disciplines and must, by virtue of their complexity, draw upon the skills, knowledge and experience of the entire management team. Successfully competing in a rapidly evolving global business environment depends upon management creating a strategic focus and coherent plan for growth, innovation and superior financial performance. Ultimately, it is management's careful consideration and blending of information, opportunity and resources that form decisions that have strategic value in terms of the continuing successful development of the firm.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will focus on the corporation and the set of strategic factors that underlie the basis for formulating and implementing management decisions. These strategic factors have both internal and external impact on the firm in terms of influencing both the organization of the business and its outreach to and interaction with the global marketplace. Cases will be used to illustrate how business firms develop strategic responses and management decisions to critical issues such as competitive threats, technology change, growth opportunities and financial performance. Emphasis will be placed on the analytical techniques and tools for creating useful and valid business, market and financial information that becomes the foundation for the development of strategic management decision making. In addition to a mid-term and final exam, students will be required to complete a team project requiring the comprehensive analysis of a business case. A core learning experience in this course is involving students in the



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process and methodology used to analyze a complex business case to determine and critique the company's strategic focus and basis for management decision making. Students will be expected to apply these tools in their assessment and recommendations related to their team project case.

COURSE INSTRUCTIONS

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This course emphasizes a realistic look at how moderate to very large size firms develop and make strategic decisions. The approach includes an appraisal of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing companies and uses real business cases as the basis for analyzing and evaluating company responses. Students are expected to have read the text and case assignments prior to class meetings. Class discussions will be based on an examination of the assigned text material and illustrative cases. The assigned textbook is to be considered a basic resource providing a presentation and explanation of strategic business concepts and the formative factors that guide and determine management decision making. The assigned textbook readings parallel case assignments and class discussion topics. It is important that both the reading and case assignments are completed in preparation for productive class discussions.

II. READING AND PROBLEM ASSIGNMENTS

Reading assignments from the text, Strategic Management, Concepts and Cases, provide background concepts and analytical tools useful in evaluating assigned cases.

Case assignments are used primarily for purposes of providing practice in the development of useful information forming the basis of management strategies and decision-making.

III. COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT

Successful completion of this course requires an in-depth analysis of a business case including an analysis of the company's market position, strategic initiatives and focus, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, technology, competitive environment, resources and financial condition. Teams will be formed and each team will be assigned a different case for their project. At the beginning of this course instructions will be provided related to this assignment including



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development of the case analysis, assessment of the company's strategies, key decisions, financial condition and performance, evaluation of the company's successes and failures, formation of a set of recommendations and the submission of a completed team project report. Time will be set aside during my course visit to consult with and support each team as they undertake their project assignment. The final team project report will be due to me by May 11th and may be submitted either in hard copy by mail or in electronic form by e-mail.

IV. EXAMINATIONS AND GRADING

A. Examinations will be designed to test for: 1) an understanding of the factors that influence corporate strategies and decision making, and 2) the ability to recognize their appropriate application toward creating successful business growth and financial performance.

B. Basis for Grading

Mid-term examination	30%
Final examination	40%
Comprehensive Project	<u>30%</u>
	100%

READING LIST FOR BA 380 – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Required Texts:

Strategic Management, Concepts and Cases, 8th Ed., Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, Cengage Learning/South-Western, 2009, ISBN # 978-0-324-65559-9



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Course Outline and Assignments

<u>Date/Day/Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading & Case Assignments</u>
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Part I Strategic Management Inputs

Jan. 14, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	Strategic Management and Competitiveness	Text: Chapters 1 Case: 3M (#1)
Jan. 21, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	The External Environment The Internal Organization	Text: Chapters 2&3

Part II Strategic Actions: Strategy Formulation

Jan. 28, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	Business Level Strategy	Text: Chapters 4&5
Feb. 4, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	Competitive Rivalry & Dynamics	Case: AMD vs. Intel (#4)
Feb. 11, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	Corporate Level Strategy	Text: Chapters 6&7
Feb. 18, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	International Strategy	Text: Chapter 8 Case: Boeing (#5)
Feb. 25, Wed. 12:30-3:15pm	Cooperative Strategy Team Comprehensive Project Meetings	Text: Chapter 9



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**Mar. 4, Wed
12:30-3:15pm**

Mid-Term Exam

Part III

Strategic Actions: Strategy Implementation

**Mar. 11, Wed.
12:30-3:15pm**

Corporate Governance

**Text: Chapter 10
Case: Disney (#9)**

Mar. 18, Wed.

No Class Meeting (Spring Recess)

Mar. 25, Wed.

No Class Meeting (Team Project Development)

**April 1, Wed.
12:30-3:15pm**

**Organizational Structure & Controls
Team Comprehensive Project Meetings**

Text: Chapter 11

April 8, Wed.

No Class Meeting (Team Project Development)

**April 15, Wed.
12:30-3:15pm**

Strategic Leadership

**Text: Chapter 12
Case: GE (#11)**

**April 22, Wed.
12:30-3:15pm**

Strategic Entrepreneurship

**Text: Chapter 13
Case: ING Direct
(#15)**

April 29, Wed.

Corporate Ethics & Responsibility

Case: Tyco (#26)

**May 6, Wed.
12:30-3:15pm**

Final Exam

Comprehensive Team Project Due in hardcopy or by E-Mail on May 11, 2009