

Course Syllabus
Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations
Human Resource Management Department



Linking HR to Business Strategy



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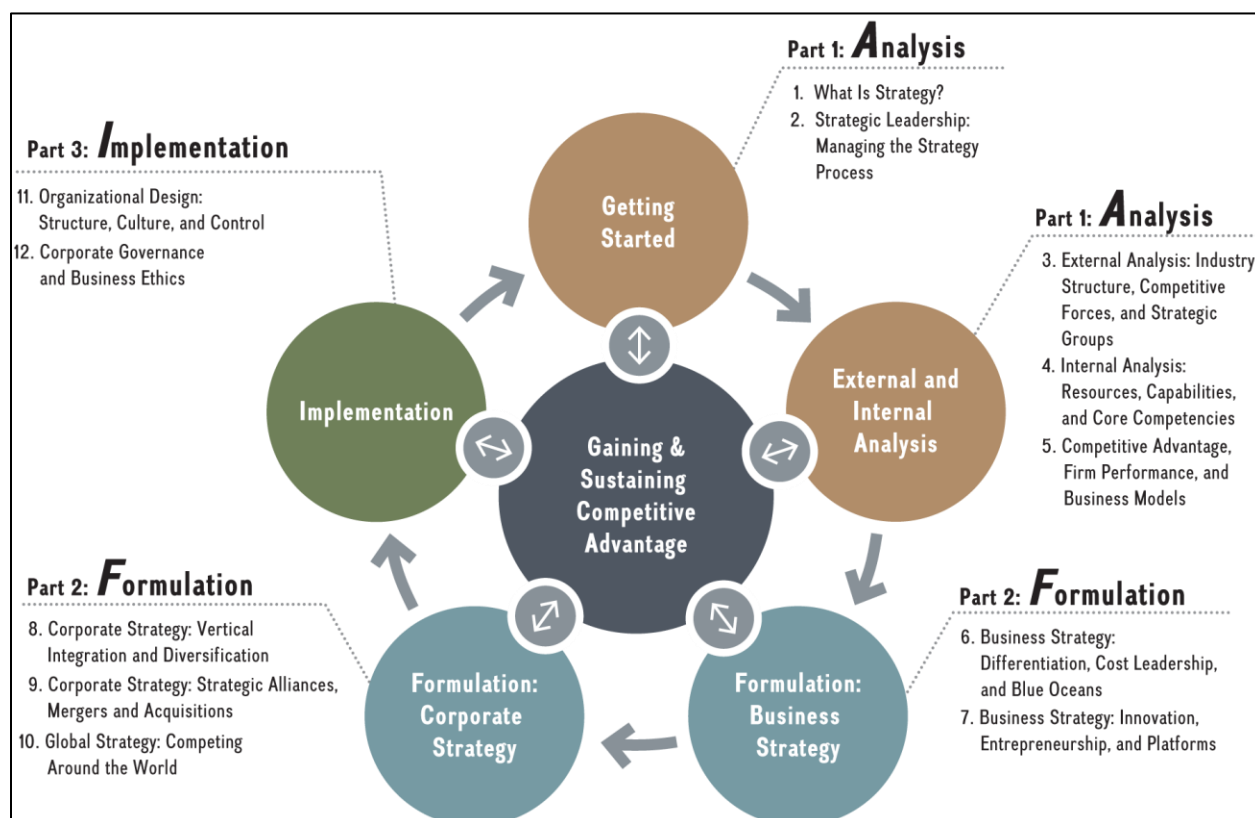
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1. Course Description

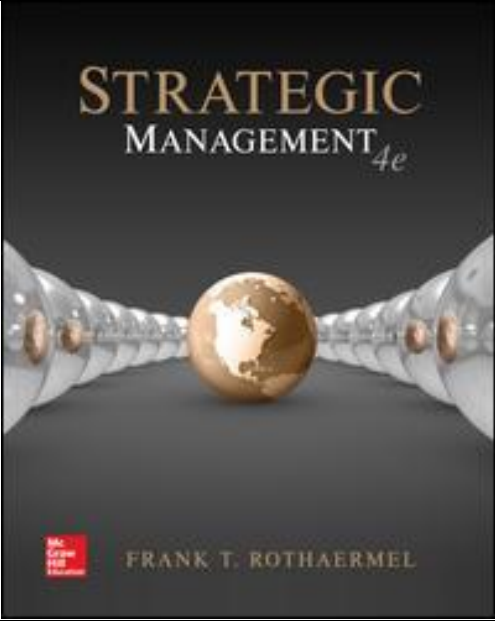
How do some firms gain a sustainable competitive advantage over industry rivals while others struggle to simply survive? How do factors such as a firm's internal and external environment impact the selection and implementation of the strategy? How do new firms effectively plan and execute strategies that will enable them to successfully compete against established firms? How do some firms align activities to support their chosen strategies while others seem to frequently struggle with alignment issues? These are some examples of the types of questions we will seek to answer in our study of strategic management. The course attempts to encourage an integrated, cross-functional perspective to develop analytical and decision-making skills needed to cope with organizational uncertainties and business realities. To achieve these objectives, a balance of theory and practice will be applied in the form of textbook readings and forum discussions mixed in with real-life business examples and cases.

2. Course Details

Course Learning Objectives	This course has two major objectives. The first is to provide students with a robust understanding and application of business and corporate strategies, especially when it comes to how to formulate and implement them. The second is to ensure that students can illustrate how HR practices differ under various corporate strategies to support their competitive advantages. Students who complete this course should achieve the following learning objectives: 1. Discuss what is a business strategy and the process of creating a distinctive one for each organization. 2. Assess the external environment of firms and demonstrate how external factors influence organizations in deciding how to gain and sustain their competitive advantages. 3. Assess the internal environment of firms and demonstrate how organizations capitalize on internal factors to achieve and sustain their competitive advantage. 4. Illustrate how organizational competitive advantage influences firm performance. 5. Evaluate various business strategies that define and enhance how organizations achieve their competitive advantage. 6. Determine how to formulate a corporate strategy that aligns with the business strategy and identifies where to compete. 7. Derive how firms implement their strategies through organizational design; including formulating organizational structures, creating organizational cultures, and designing control and rewards systems that support their strategies. 8. Demonstrate how HR activities and practices support various organizational strategies, specifically when it comes to the following: managing workforce flow, developing human capital, managing reward systems, and managing performance.
SMLR Learning Objectives	• Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions. ○ Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of and perspectives on work. ○ Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective. ○ Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems. ○ Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER) ○ Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context (HRM) • Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. ○ Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories, and concepts in their field of study. ○ Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues. • Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. ○ Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. ○ Understand the legal, regulatory, and ethical issues related to their field. ○ Develop human resource management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers (HRM)

	○ Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of human resource practices (HRM) • Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry-level professional. ○ Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English. ○ Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. ○ Produce quality research papers with the proper convention of attribution/citation. ○ Produce high-quality executive summaries. ○ Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence. ○ Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way
Target Audience	<u>This course is an optimal learning experience for:</u> ➤ Professionals seeking senior HR positions. ➤ Professionals seeking knowledge of People Management. ➤ Managers seeking to improve their People Management skills and interested in implementing effective HR practices that align with the organizational strategy. ➤ Professionals aspiring to managerial positions.
Course Topics	1. What is Strategy? 2. Strategic Leadership: Managing the Strategy Process 3. External Analysis: Industry Structure, Competitive Forces, and Strategic Groups 4. Internal Analysis: Resources, Capabilities, and Core Competencies 5. Competitive Advantage, Firm Performance, and Business Models 6. Business Strategy: Differentiation, Cost Leadership, and Blue Oceans 7. Business Strategy: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Platforms 8. Corporate Strategy: Vertical Integration and Diversification 9. Corporate Strategy: Strategic Alliances, Mergers, and Acquisitions 10. Organizational Design: Structure, Culture, and Control

3. Readings

	➤ Rothaermel, Frank T. (2019). Strategic Management. Fourth edition. United States of America, New York: McGraw Hill Education. Link: https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/strategic-management-rothaermel/M9781259927621.html ➤ The book is available in textbook, loose-leaf, and eBook formats. ➤ Note: I made an extensive effort in making my lectures inclusive of all material, and they are also transcribed for your convenience. Thus, most students find my lectures enough to study for the course. Some students might need more information to comprehend the material, thus if they feel the need to buy the book, then I recommend buying any edition after the fourth. Go for the cheapest that you can find. ➤ Make sure to read all assigned readings and cover the weekly lectures early in the week to optimize your learning experience.
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4. Assessment

The assessment criteria abide by the Graduate Grades and Records Policy: http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-grad_current/pg69.html. Moreover, it is useful to read the New Brunswick Graduate Catalog to know your rights and obligations at http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-grad_current/pg43.html. The following table lists the assessment methods and their weights:

Method	Percent
Quizzes	30%
Forums	20%
Group Project	25%
Individual Project	25%
Total	100%

The following table lists the Grading and Point System assigned by the university:

Percent	Grade	Description	Grade Points
90-100%	A	Outstanding	4.0
87-89%	B+		3.5
80-86%	B	Good	3.0
77-79%	C+		2.5
70-76%	C	Satisfactory	2.0
≤ 69%	F	Failing	1.0

A. Quizzes

In total, you will have to take 10 quizzes, each covering the 10 major topics in this course. Each quiz consists of 10 True/False questions and 10 multiple-choice questions: with 20 questions in total. You will have permission to repeat each quiz twice, and the final attempt score will be counted towards your final grade. The quizzes aim to ensure that students will cover all the lectures. You have the flexibility to take the quiz any time during the assigned week, and they are not monitored. Therefore, their major aim of them is educative and not punitive.

B. Forum Discussions

Forum discussions aim to debate questions that address the week's subject issues. Students are expected to actively participate in online forum discussions, interact, reflect, exchange ideas, and expand their knowledge base. Students are encouraged to post and interact with each other as much as they can. That said, at a minimum, students need to post an initial contribution that answers the forum question. The initial contribution should be posted at least during the first three days of the assigned period. The initial contribution will be assessed based on its content, demonstrated analytical thinking, and references used, if any. Second, the student should actively collaborate and respond to other posts throughout the assigned period. At a minimum, the student should reply thrice to others – in addition to the initial contribution. The collaboration will be assessed based on content and engagement, demonstrated analytical thinking, and references. Also, the student will be assessed based on the quality of their writing. The quality of writing will be assessed based on clarity and mechanics and organization.

The following is the breakdown of each forum discussion assessment:

Assessment Category	Assessment Criteria
Initial Contribution (45%)	Content Contribution (20%)
	Analytical Thinking (20%)
	References (5%)
Collaboration (45%)	Content Contribution and Engagement (20%)
	Analytical Thinking (20%)
	References (5%)
Quality of Writing (10%)	Clarity and mechanics (5%)
	Organization (5%)

For more details on how to maximize your score, please refer to forum discussion rubrics.

C. Assignments

Students will have several assignments during the course. Those assignments comprise several parts of the final individual project. The assignments aim to ensure that students are reflecting on the course material within the context of the organization of choice, which is typically your current employer, or past employer if you are currently unemployed.

D. Individual Project

The individual project consists of four parts, and it aims to reflect on the course content within the context of the course and link this content to the HR strategy and practices. The following are the project parts:

- Part I: Background on the organization of choice, typically your current employer or past employer.
- Part II: SWOT analysis of the organization.
- Part III: Explaining and Assessing the Business Strategy of the organization.
- Part IV: Assessing the HR strategy and its alignment with the business strategy. Recommending changes to the HR strategy and practices to serve better the business strategy and to contribute to the organizational strengths by minimizing organizational weaknesses.

Note that more details will be provided under the project description on Canvas.

5. Course Requirements and Instructor Expectations

- Students are expected to read all the required readings and cover the week's lecture early on. This increases the learning experience and elevates the interaction level among students in the discussion forums.
- Students are expected to actively participate in discussion forums to fulfill the learning outcomes. Remember that discussion forums are assessed and contribute to your final grade!
- Students are asked to check Canvas frequently – at least every 24 hours. Course material including additional readings, media, useful links, and announcements will be added regularly and will enhance your learning experience.
- All required materials for the course are subject to formal assessment, even if they were not covered in the lecture. Remember that the instructor is merely a facilitator of your learning experience. Attaining the utmost knowledge of the course subjects is highly dependent on individual effort and peer interaction.
- For every 3 credits of study, students should expect to commit at least 100 hours of their time to coursework, self-study, and revision.
- The instructor will continuously provide feedback whenever a student requests help. Students are encouraged to contact their instructor for one-on-one sessions if needed.
- Students are expected to behave professionally. Failing to do so will affect your forum discussion grade. The following are some guidelines:
 - Students are expected to participate in forum discussions on time with adequate quality and quantity of replies.
 - Revise your work before posting your initial contribution and replies as you will not be able to modify your post once you submit it.
 - Add something new to justify your position when posting in the forums. Do not only post if you agree or don't agree with your peers' replies. Instead justify your comment with appropriate references, analysis, and linkages.
 - Students are expected to behave ethically and respectfully towards their instructor and peers.
 - Misconduct in forum discussions, chatting, and other forums and forms of communication will not be tolerated.
 - Make sure not to use all capital letters while replying to your peer. In case you want to emphasize a keyword or a point, use italics, bold, or asterisks.
 - For further information on the discussion forum's rubrics and how to behave ethically and professionally in an online course, please refer to the guidelines on the course website.

6. Academic Honesty and Code of Conduct

Students are expected to abide by Rutgers's Academic Integrity Policy and Code of Student Conduct. Acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, or misrepresentation are not tolerated and will be dealt with according to the university policies and procedures. If you have doubts about committing a potential academic dishonesty act, please contact the course instructor for advice. Moreover, you are advised to check the websites of the Office of Academic Integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> and the Office of Student Conduct at <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/>. Alternatively, you can refer to the undergraduate catalog section for academic integrity at http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug_current/pg1370.html and the section for the code of conduct at http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nb-ug_current/pg1373.html.

7. Communication Guidelines

When corresponding with your instructor and classmates through email or discussion forums, please take the time to be grammatically correct and use a positive tone. Please also refrain from using all CAPITAL LETTERS, as this is often interpreted as shouting. Always treat your instructor and fellow students respectfully in all communications.

8. Attendance Policy

Participation in all discussion forums shall be expected. Submitting all assessments on time is also expected. Failure to participate in discussion forums with no authentic excuse will negatively affect your grade. Failure to submit an assessment on time will result in a grade of zero.

Rutgers University Attendance Policy has assigned the following recognized grounds for absences:

1. Illness requiring medical attention (written proof is needed).
2. Curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty.
3. Personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid (pre-approved by the instructor unless it is a family emergency).
4. Recognized religious holidays (please refer to the links at the end of this section).
5. Severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions (Rutgers University usually cancels classes when the weather conditions are not safe for the commute) – this condition is invalid as the course is delivered online and requires no transportation.

As a general guideline, students must attain the instructor's approval before their absence unless it is an emergency. At least two weeks' notice is required before any examination date. If the cause of absenteeism is legitimate, then the instructor will work with the student to make up the required exercises and examinations. The following links further clarify the attendance policy:

Rutgers' Attendance Policy: <http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/10.2.7%20-%20current.pdf>

Rutgers' Religious Holiday Policy: <https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/religious-holiday-policy>

Interfaith Calendar: <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/index.htm>

NJ Department of Education Religious Holiday List: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/holidays.htm>

9. Technical Requirements

There are no special technical prerequisites, but, as the course delivery and communication takes place via the screen, students will benefit from consistent, secure access to a personal computer with up-to-date word processing and graphics software (Flash and video players). A high-speed Internet connection is also recommended. The following are some basic hardware and software requirements:

1. An up-to-date computer (usually no older than 2-3 years. Students need to make sure that their computers are functional as it is their responsibility).
2. Broadband connection with reliable internet access.
3. Voice input (Microphone) and output hardware.
4. A webcam (800 x 600 resolution or better).
5. Operating System (Windows 7, 8, or higher / Mac OSX 10.7 Lion or higher).
6. Microsoft Word & PowerPoint.
7. Adobe Flash Player.
8. Adobe Reader (PDF reader).
9. A Media Player.
10. Please check the following link for more technical requirements: <http://www.proctortrack.com/technical-requirements/>

10. Special Needs and Accommodation

"Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodation. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the registration form on the ODS website at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>". For additional information, please visit the website of the Office of Disability Services at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students>.

11. Student Resources & Scholarships

If you require any help in the areas of (a) mental health, (b) academic coaching, and (c) financial assistance: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/about-smlr/fall-2022-information-smlr-students>
Additional resources are available at the Dean of Students office: <http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/resources-and-support/>
For SMLR's scholarship offerings: <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/scholarships>

12. Tentative Schedule

This is a fully asynchronous online course. Thus, meeting deadlines assigned in the course modules is vital. Self-management is an important ability to keep up with the course. The course will be delivered in approximately 8 weeks, and each week has an assigned module. Please refer to the course website for more details. Modules include:

- Lectures covering the main course topics: concepts, theories, and practices.
- Formal assessments of students' knowledge for each lecture
- Discussion forums that contextualize the course topics with real business examples and enhance knowledge-sharing and interaction among the session attendees – including the instructor. In addition, they aim to refine your analytical and communication skills.
- Assignments and a project that will contextualize your knowledge in an organizational context.

Note: The course schedule is tentative, and the instructor reserves the right to change the schedule as seen fit.

Good luck and welcome to the Course!