Unit Outline*

MGMT8510 / MGMT8710

Strategic Capabilities and Organisational Success

Semester 1, 2011
Crawley

Associate Professor Alan Simon

Business School
www.business.uwa.edu.au

* This Unit Outline should be read in conjunction with the Business School Unit Outline Supplement available on the Current Students web site http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/students
UNIT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Welcome to the MCom unit – Strategic Capabilities and Organisational Success. Your unit co-ordinator and lecturer/facilitator this semester is Dr. Alan Simon.

Unit content

This unit discusses the strategic and dynamic capabilities that help drive organisational success. A conceptual framework linking strategic capabilities and organisational strategy in the context of the changing environment is presented at the beginning. Specific key strategic capabilities are then discussed using examples from management consulting and other relevant organisations. The different ways of assessing organisational success are then introduced. Lastly the complex relationship of strategic capabilities to the success factors is discussed in detail. In summary:

- The relationship between strategy, strategic capabilities and the changing environment.
- Strategic capabilities in the supplier organisation related to success.
- Strategic capabilities at the interface of the supplier and client organisations related to success.
- Dynamic capabilities.
- The indicators of organisational success.
- The teleological web of relationships between strategic capabilities and success indicators.

The Goals of the unit

- The first goal is to deliver a relevant and accessible learning experience that extends all students, simultaneously recognising that students have different capabilities.

- Secondly, Strategic Capabilities and Organisational Success aims to provide students with the drivers and indicators of organisational success and a discussion of the complex relationship between the capabilities and success factors. In doing this, the theory is constantly linked to management practice and the practice is constantly linked to the theory.

- Thirdly, emphasis is also placed upon the student developing skills in oral and written communication and referencing of academic work. These skills are considered to be essential to studies in management.

- The last goal is to equip students with the skills to become independent learning individuals with enquiring minds and to be critically evaluative.
Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

• Comprehend the overarching conceptual framework of reference of the relationship between strategic capabilities and organisational strategy in the context of the changing environment.
• Understand which strategic capabilities in supplier organisations relate to success. These include, for example, strategic thinking, having a unique/differentiated product, broad skills’ base, being innovative, disciplined, able to deal with ambiguity and to identify trends.
• Understand the strategic capabilities at the interface of the supplier and client organisations that are related to success. They include for example setting clear objectives, defining and solving problems, marketing and selling, ethical behaviour such as integrity and honesty, credibility, communication and interpersonal skills and outstanding service quality.
• Recognise that several strategic capabilities are also dynamic capabilities in so far as they determine the firm’s ability to integrate, build and reconfigure external and internal competencies to address rapidly changing environments.
• Comprehend the indicators of organisational success. These indicators include for example, increased growth, revenue and profitability, client satisfaction, on time delivery within forecast budget, post-engagement support, achieving objectives agreed upon and actual implementation of recommendations.
• Understand the complex web of relationships between the strategic capabilities and the success indicators.

The learning outcomes and subject outcomes include inter alia The Association to Advance the Collegiate Schools of Business’ (AACSB) required learning experiences.

The AACSB’s required learning experiences in general knowledge and skill areas are:

• Ethical understanding and reasoning abilities;
• Analytical skills;
• Use of information technology;
• Multicultural and diversity understanding;
• Communication abilities;
• Reflective thinking.

Educational Principles and Graduate Attributes

UWA Education principles:
• To master the subject matter, concepts and techniques of their chosen discipline(s) at internationally-recognised levels and standards;
• To acquire the skills required to learn, and to continue through life to learn, from a variety of sources and experiences;
• To adapt acquired knowledge to new situations;
• To communicate in English clearly, concisely and logically;
• To acquire the skills needed to embrace rapidly-changing technologies in a global environment;
• To think and reason logically and creatively;
• To undertake problem identification, analysis and solution;
• To question accepted wisdom and be open to new ideas and possibilities;
• To acquire mature judgement and responsibility in ethical, moral, social, and practical, as well as academic matters;
• To work independently and in a team;
• To acquire cross-cultural and other competencies to take a citizenship and leadership role in the local, national and international community.
TEACHING AND LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching and learning strategies

One three hour lecture/seminar/presentation per week. The main aim is to equip students with the skills to become independent learning individuals with enquiring minds and to be critically evaluative. In the second instance, students are shown how to think critically about the application of academic management theory and concepts on strategic capabilities and organisational success to real-life management practice and vice versa.

Teaching and learning evaluation

You may be asked to complete two evaluations during this unit. These are the Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) and the Students’ Unit Reflective Feedback (SURF) evaluations. The SPOT is optional and is an evaluation of the lecturer and the unit. The SURF is completed online and is a university wide survey and deals only with the unit. You will receive an email from the SURF office inviting you to complete the SURF when it is activated. We encourage you to complete the forms as your feedback is extremely important and can be used to make changes to the unit or lecturing style when appropriate.

Attendance

Participation in class, whether it be listening to a lecture, presenting as an individual or as a group or syndicate work, is an important part of the learning process. It is therefore important that you attend classes. Several videos are shown in lectures and these are examinable in the final examination.

More formally, the University regulations state that ‘to complete a course or unit students shall attend prescribed classes, lectures, seminars and tutorials’. Where a student, due to exceptional circumstances, is unable to attend a scheduled class, they are required to obtain prior approval of the unit coordinator to be absent from that class. Any student absent from class without having had such absence approved by the unit coordinator may be referred to the faculty for advice and may be required to withdraw from the unit.
CONTACT DETAILS

We strongly advise students to regularly access their student email accounts. Important information regarding the unit is often communicated by email and will not be automatically forwarded to private email addresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit coordinator/lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Associate Professor Alan Simon (BUSN: G63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:alan.simon@uwa.edu.au">alan.simon@uwa.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong> 6488 2781</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation hours:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mondays 10.00am – 12.00pm</td>
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<td>Wednesdays 2.00pm – 4.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture times:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mondays, 5.00pm – 8.00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture venue:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>BUSN: 263 Andrew Frazer Tutorial Room</td>
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TEXTBOOK(S) & RESOURCES

Unit Website

http://webct.uwa.edu.au

Required text


Additional resources & reading material

In Subject Outline - Many contained in Course Reader and On Reserve.

Please note: Harvard Business Review (HBR) articles are not included in the course reader and are only available on Course Materials Online (CMO).

Some Relevant Journals

  Academy of Management Journal
  Academy of Management Review
  Australian Journal of Management
  Business Strategy and the Environment
  Harvard Business Review
  Journal of Organizational Change Management
  Journal of Management Consulting
  Management Decision
  Strategic Direction
  Strategic Management Journal
## UNIT STRUCTURE

### Overview

Students attend one 3 hour lecture/seminar/presentation per week at the following time and location: MONDAY 5.00pm - 8.00pm (BUSN: 263).

## UNIT SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Readings (in alphabetical order – for chronological order, see under topics)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 February</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strategy and introduction to strategic capabilities</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Chs 1, 2, 4, 9 Other readings asterisked on p. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 14 March</td>
<td>2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Change, the environment and strategic capabilities</td>
<td>Videos – Blundstone moves off shore; Change Mgt in Large Organisations</td>
<td>Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Chs 3, 10, 11, 14 Other readings asterisked on p. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 &amp; 28 March</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Strategic capabilities in the supplier organisation</td>
<td>Submit Essay 28 March</td>
<td>Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch 7 Other readings asterisked on p. 12-13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mini Group (MG) presentations 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Video – Seattle Fish Market</td>
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<tr>
<td>4, 11 &amp; 18 April</td>
<td>6, 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Strategic capabilities at the interface of the supplier and client organisations; Dynamic capabilities</td>
<td>Video – The Corporation</td>
<td>Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch 13 Other readings asterisked on pp. 13-14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mini Group (MG) presentations 3, 4 &amp; 5</td>
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<td><strong>MID SEMESTER BREAK</strong> 25 April – 29 April – <strong>NO LECTURE 25 APRIL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 &amp; 9 May</td>
<td>9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>The indicators of organisational success</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch 5 Other readings asterisked on pp. 14-15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mini Group (MG) presentations 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Pages</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 May</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>The web of interrelated strategic capabilities and success indicators</td>
<td>MG presentation 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asterisked readings on p. 15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23 &amp; 30 May</td>
<td>12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Review and Group presentations</td>
<td>Submit Group Projects on Wednesday, 1 June</td>
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</table>
MAJOR TOPICS AND READINGS

1. **The relationship between strategy, strategic capabilities and the changing environment (first 3 weeks)**

*Hubbard, G. and Beamish, P. (2011), Strategic Management: Thinking Analysis & Action 4e, Sydney: Pearson Prentice Hall, Chs 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 & 14. *(On Reserve)*  
*Senior, B. & Swailes, S. (2010), Organizational Change 4e, Essex: Pearson (Ch. 1 – Organisations and their changing environments and Ch. 2 – The nature of organisational change) *(On Reserve)*  
2. **Strategic capabilities in the supplier organisation**

Strategic thinking, having a unique/differentiated product, broad skills’ base, being innovative, disciplined, able to deal with ambiguity and able to identify trends.

*Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch. 7. (On Reserve)
*Simon, A., and LaCava, G., (2005), ‘Strategic thinking and some human resource issues: Comparing the views of current and potential business leaders in Western Australia’. In D. Mortimer & G. Stewart (Editors), Teaching, Learning and Research in Institutions and Regions. 5th Annual Pacific Employee Relations (PERA) Conference, Yeppoon, 21-24 November. (Course Reader)

3. **Strategic capabilities at the interface of the supplier and client organisations**

These are skills, functions and values and include service quality, setting clear objectives, defining and solving problems, marketing and selling, ethical behaviour such as integrity and honesty, credibility, communication and interpersonal skills

Eunson, B. (1995), Communicating With Customers, Brisbane, Australia: John Wiley & Sons. (On Reserve)
Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic capabilities determine the firm’s ability to integrate, build and reconfigure external and internal competencies to address rapidly changing environments. But they also include concrete examples like product development, strategic decision making, leadership and alliancing.


*Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch. 13. *(On Reserve)*


5. **The indicators of organisational success**

These indicators include increased growth, revenue and profitability, client satisfaction, on time delivery within forecast budget, post-engagement support, achieving objectives agreed upon and actual implementation of recommendations.


*Callahan, T., (2003), ‘How do you know where you are going if you don’t know where you are?’ *Business Credit*, Vol. 105, No. 9: pp.50-54. (Course Reader)


* Hubbard and Beamish (2011), Ch. 5. (On Reserve)


6. **The relationship of the strategic capabilities to the success indicators**


ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

The purpose of assessment

There are a number of reasons for having assessable tasks as part of an academic program. The assessable tasks are designed to encourage you to explore and understand the subject more fully. The fact that we grade your work provides you with an indication of how much you have achieved. Providing feedback on your work also serves as part of the learning process.

The relationship of the assessment components to the learning outcomes (p. 4)

All of the assessment tasks relate in some way or another to the learning objectives and educational principles

Assessment mechanism summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 1</strong></td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>Ongoing for 8 weeks from Weeks 4 – Week 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Group (MG) oral presentations contingent upon class size</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 2</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28 March 2011 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 3</strong></td>
<td>(27.5%)</td>
<td>23 &amp; 30 May 2011 (Oral)</td>
<td>1 June 2011 (Written)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group case study project</td>
<td>7.5% oral, 20% written</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final exam</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>June (Actual date TBA)</td>
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Note 1: Results may be subject to scaling and standardisation under faculty policy and are not necessarily the sum of the component parts.

Note 2: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning outcomes as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the unit.

Assessment components

Assignment 1 – Mini Group Presentations (7.5%)
About 30-40 minutes including questions

Every week, starting from week 3, a mini group of students, (contingent upon numbers), will present for 20-30 minutes (plus a further 10 minutes for questions) what they deem to be up to 5 significant and/or new developments in the topic area under study. See pp. 12 – 15 for major topic areas and p. 8 for program. Provide a maximum 4 page (6 credit point students) - 5 page (8 credit point students) referenced mini paper as well as a handout of your slideshow. Topic 4 (Dynamic Capabilities) is excluded from Assignment 1.
Assignment 2 - Individual Written Exercise - Essay (15%)
Maximum 2400 words (6 credit point students) 3000 words (8 credit point students), Submit by 5.00pm, 28 March 2011.

Dynamic capabilities determine the firm’s ability to integrate, build and reconfigure external and internal competencies to address rapidly changing environments. But this definition is simply too theoretical for Wu and thus more concrete dynamic capabilities are required to assist organisations to cope with rapidly changing environments. Discuss.

Assignment 3 - Group Exercise (20% written component, 7.5% oral presentation component)

To be done in groups of up to 5 students. – Maximum 2900 words (6 credit point students) 3600 words (8 credit point students) for the written component. Submit the written project on Friday 29 May by noon.

Select a top notch organization or company eg., Management Consulting firm (like Accenture, Boston Consulting Group, and so on) or Apple or BHP or Leighton Holdings or Mercedes Benz or Toyota or Google or other relevant organisation, for your group case study. Assess whether it has a sound strategy for managing environmental contingencies in place (Group 1); a sound strategy for managing change in place (Group 2); sound INTERNAL strategic capabilities in place (Group 3); sound EXTERNAL strategic capabilities in place (Group 4); sound DYNAMIC capabilities in place (Group 5); a good strategy for measuring its performance (Group 6). Justify your assessment. Besides academic sources, you should also consult relevant websites, content analyse relevant documents and talk to appropriate personnel.

Final Exam (50%)

Written in the official examination period – 3 hour exam.

Policies on Assessment

Plagiarism

You must cite and list any references you use as sources of facts, wording or arguments presented in your essay and tutorial assignments. All assignments are individual assignments – whilst it is permissible to collaborate with others in researching the topic or collecting material, collaboration in the writing process is prohibited. Work that is found to be copied, either from other students or from other sources, without proper acknowledgement, will be given a mark of zero. Serious instances of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action. If you are in any doubt as to how to appropriately acknowledge published sources in your assignments, then ask your tutor or the course co-ordinator for guidance.

Scaling of Final Grades

In accordance with the grading policy of the Faculty of Economics & Commerce, the final grades of the whole class may be subject to adjustment or scaling (as explained).

Penalties for Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalised at the rate of 5 marks for every day late or part thereof, such that an assignment submitted two days late and receiving an initial mark of 65% would be marked down to 55%. Saturday and Sunday each constitute one day late. No extension of the due date will be granted, other than in exceptional personal circumstances (e.g. serious illness, with accompanying medical certificate). Equipment malfunction and work commitments will not be accepted as valid reasons for late work.
Submission of assignments

Submit your assignment in an electronic format by going to the Uniprint web site www.uniprint.uwa.edu.au, then click on “Student Assignments” and follow the instructions.

Student Guild

Phone: (+61 8) 6488 2295
Facsimile: (+61 8) 6488 1041
E-mail: enquiries@guild.uwa.edu.au
Website: http://www.guild.uwa.edu.au

Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities


Appeals against academic assessment

The University provides the opportunity for students to lodge an appeal against assessment results and/or progress status (refer http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/appeals).

References


Callahan, T. (2003), ‘How do you know where you are going if you don’t know where you are?’, *Business Credit*, Vol. 105, No. 9: pp. 50-54.


Senior, B. & Swailes, S. (2010), Organizational Change 4e, Essex: Pearson (Ch. 1 – Organisations and their changing environments and Ch. 2 – The nature of organisational change)


