

Prof. [Bruno Cassiman](#)

email: bcassiman@iese.edu

Office: Q-630

Phone: 506410

Assistant: Carolina Dolz

Assistant email: cdolz@iese.edu

Office: Q-631

Phone: 506420



[CANDS] COMPETITION & STRATEGY

Introduction

Competition & Strategy (CS) is an integrative course that traces its roots back to the earliest years of IESE Business School. It has long been recognized that there is something more to leadership than designing organizational mechanisms and managing specialized functions. Leaders are also generalists, and at the core of leadership is the setting of overall strategy for the enterprise. CS brings a discipline, a set of concepts, and a point of view to this inherently complex and creative process.

At the core of CS is a sophisticated understanding of competition and the competitive environment. While other courses appropriately focus on one or a few elements of the environment—e.g. customers and channels, supply chain, financial markets—CS takes a broad and integrated view of the external environment. It defines rivalry broadly to include not only direct competitors but also substitute and complementary products, potential new entrants, and even suppliers and customers who try to drive down a firm's profits. It examines the influence of government policy, financial markets, and cultural and societal values on industry competition. CS also explores the role of location in competition, and with it the complex set of institutions, networks, and relationships that comprise a place such as the City of London, Silicon Valley or Barcelona.

CS furthermore takes an integrated view of the firm. It emphasizes the relationships among the functional disciplines (i.e., operations, marketing, and finance) covered in other courses. Coordination and consistency across the functions are hallmarks of effective strategy. A successful firm is distinguished by the way it tailors its functional policies to each other and to its environment, not by a pursuit of "best practices" that are common to many competitors. We will push you to understand how functional policies should be tailored and should relate to one another, and we will provide tools to help you do so. The cross-functional nature of CS is stimulating but also poses a challenge. We assume that you have mastered the concepts of the functional courses and rely heavily on your command of them.

Finally, CS is distinguished by its long-term perspective. We are concerned with superior long-run financial performance, not performance in any given quarter or year. Our focus is thus on the dynamics of competition, which is never ending. Strategy deals with industry changes that are often measured in decades and with firms' long-term choices about direction; CS cases, therefore, span long periods of time and address a company's history as well as its present. The course places a major focus on the sustainability of competitive advantages and threats to sustainability that must be countered. One of the challenges of the strategist is to reconcile the long-term character of competition with the immediate pressures of customers, employees, and the capital markets.

Objectives

Thinking strategically is a difficult skill to master. The objective of this course in Competitive Strategy is to push the participants to think strategically in different situations. The course will introduce the participants to a coherent framework of Value Creation and Value Capture and related concepts that are used to analyze the competitive environment of a firm and its internal strengths and weaknesses. We expect you to be able to deal with the basic strategy concepts introduced. Nevertheless, they remain tools, which should aid you in becoming better strategic thinkers. The ultimate objective is to formulate a strategy for a business that will shape the future environment of the firm and aid the firm with its strategic decision-making in this future.

Competences

Basic Competences

- Possess and understand knowledge that provides a basis or opportunity to be original in the development and / or application of ideas, often in a research context. (CB6).
- The students know how to apply the knowledge acquired and their ability to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study. (CB7).
- The students can integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments. (CB8).
- Students know how to communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way. (CB9).
- Students possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous. (CB10).

General Competences

- To explain and discuss business situations in a rigorous, effective way using both formal and informal procedures, and providing relevant information to support the observations and conclusions. (CG1).
- To identify the catalysts of personal and organizational change to foster the entrepreneurial and innovative behavior that makes it possible to adapt to changing business environments. (CG5).
- To prioritize objectives, schedule activities appropriately, and execute them within the proper timeframe. (CG6).
- To distinguish and categorize relevant information effectively for business decision making. (CG7).
- To formulate and evaluate business strategies in decision-making, anticipating the economic consequences of action plans. (CG11).

Specific Competences

- To apply a structured, rigorous analysis process of business situations that encompasses all the dimensions of the business (personnel, strategy, finance, etc.) and concludes with the preparation of a reasonable, feasible action plan. (CE1).
- To analyze and understand the value chain of an industry or business to develop the corporate strategy. (CE30).

- To understand and evaluate cultures of innovation and entrepreneurship within one's own business (intrapreneurship). (CE34).

Content

The course is divided into three parts:

1. Preparation weeks with online lecture.
2. On-campus weeks: We will enjoy six sessions together during the on-campus weeks. The sessions begin with the basic building blocks of competitive strategy. These comprise an overall framework for competitive strategy formulation. The course concludes with an examination of strategy in emerging or radically changing industries. Developing strategy in such settings challenges you to apply all the earlier concepts and introduces you to some new ones along the way.

Consolidation weeks with online lecture: This segment is designed to reinforce and practice the concepts and tools used in the residential sessions. The online lecture will conclude the course by bringing all the elements for thinking strategically together.

Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on your contribution in class (SE4: 40%), the memo on your strategic challenge: 40% (SE1) and on your short feedback report on the strategic challenge of a colleague: 20% (SE2).

ADENDA COVID-19

Ha sido necesario ajustar el calendario, para brindar la mejor experiencia de aprendizaje posible. Por esta razón, la clase presencial de esta asignatura ha sido pospuesta hasta septiembre 2020.