

**SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY**

**SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO**



Sault College

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**COURSE TITLE:** Problem Solving & Decision Making

**CODE NO. :** BUS 2310                      **SEMESTER:** Four

**PROGRAM:** Business

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**DATE:** 2003/01              **PREVIOUS OUTLINE DATED:** 2002/01

**APPROVED:**

	_____	_____
	<b>DEAN</b>	<b>DATE</b>

**TOTAL CREDITS:** Three

**PREREQUISITE(S):** N/A

**LENGTH OF COURSE:** 16 Weeks              **TOTAL CREDIT HOURS:** 48

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*For additional information, please contact Dean*  
*School of Student Success Services, Business & Liberal Studies*  
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**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Problem Solving and Decision Making are viewed as integral components of the Strategic Management Process. This course will integrate concepts and theories studied throughout the Business Diploma program. Students will use the case analysis method to develop strategic planning skills. The intent of this course is to give the student the opportunity to gain managerial experience by means of simulated management decision making exercise.

**II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **Provide an overview of the strategic management process and strategic competitiveness.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Discuss the nature and value of strategic management.
- Outline the levels and characteristics of strategic management.
- Discuss the benefits and risks of strategic management.
- Explain the strategic management process.
- Define strategic competitiveness, competitive advantage, and above-average returns.
- Discuss the challenge of strategic management.
- Describe the new competitive landscape and how it is being shaped by global and technological changes.
- Use the industrial organization to (I/O) model to explain how firms can earn above-average returns.
- Use the resource-based model to explain how firms can earn above-average returns.
- Describe the work of strategists.

2. **Understand the ultimate goal of strategic management—to impact organizational performance.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Define performance, particularly the differences among above-average returns, average returns, and below-average returns.
- Discuss the different ways in which organizational performance is measured.

- Know the strengths and weaknesses of different measures of organizational performance.

3. **Explain how the external environment may impact on a business.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain the importance of studying and understanding the external environment.
- Define the general and industry environments.
- Discuss the four activities of the external environmental analysis process.
- Name and describe the six segments of the general environment.
- Identify the five competitive forces and explain how they determine an industry's profit potential.
- Describe what firms need to know about their competitors and different methods used to collect competitive intelligence.

4. **Examine the internal environment: resources, capabilities, and core competencies.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain the importance of studying and understanding the internal environment.
- Define value and discuss its importance.
- Describe four criteria used to determine if a firm's resources and capabilities are core competencies.
- Explain how value chain analysis is used to identify and evaluate a firm's resources and capabilities.
- Discuss the importance of preventing a firm's core competencies from becoming core rigidities.
- Explain the relationship between a firm's strategic inputs and its strategic actions.

5. **Identify and apply the best business-level strategy.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Define strategy and explain business-level strategies.
- Describe the relationship between customers and business-level strategies
- Discuss the issues firms consider when evaluating customers

in terms of who, what, and how.

- Define the integrated low-cost/differentiation strategy and discuss its increasing importance in the new competitive landscape.
- Describe the capabilities necessary to develop competitive advantage through the cost leadership, differentiation, focused low-cost, focused differentiation, and integrated low-cost/differentiation business-level strategies.
- Explain the risks associated with each of the five business-level strategies.

**6. Examine the significance of competitive dynamics.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Define the conditions for undertaking competitive actions.
- Identify and explain factors affecting the probability that a competitor will initiate a response to competitive actions.
- Describe first, second, and late movers and the advantages and disadvantages.
- Understand the factors that contribute to the likelihood of a response to a competitive action.
- Explain the effects of the size of a firm, the speed with which it makes strategic decisions, and implementation, innovation, and quality on the firms' ability to take competitive action.
- Understand three basic market situations as outcomes of the competitive dynamics.
- Discuss the types of competitive actions most relevant for each of the three stages of an industry evolution
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**7. Explore corporate-level strategies.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Define corporate-level strategy and discuss its importance to the diversified firm.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of single-business and dominate-business strategies.
- Explain three primary reasons why firms move from single business and dominant-business strategies to more diversified strategies.
- Describe how related-diversified firms use sharing activities and the transfer of core competencies to create value.
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- Discuss the incentives and resources that encourage diversification.
- Describe motives that can encourage managers to further diversify.

8. **Discuss the elements of acquisition and restructuring strategies.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Describe why acquisitions have been a popular strategy.
- List and explain the reasons why firms make acquisitions
- Describe seven problems that work against developing a competitive advantage when making acquisitions.
- Name and describe the attributes of acquisitions that help make them successful.
- *Define restructuring and distinguish* among its common forms.
- Describe how a firm can achieve successful outcomes from a restructuring strategy.

9. **Discuss and apply the elements of international strategies.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain traditional and emerging motives for firms to pursue international diversification.
- Explore the four factors that lead to a basis for international business-level strategies.
- Name and define generic international business-level strategies
- Define the three international corporate-level strategies: multidomestic, global, and transnational.
- Name and describe the five alternative modes for entering international markets.
- Explain the effects of international diversification on firm returns and innovation.
- Name and describe two major risks of international diversification
- Explain why the positive outcomes from international expansion are limited.

10. **Discuss and apply the elements of corporate strategies**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Identify and define different types of cooperative strategy.
- Explain the rationale for a cooperative strategy in three types

of competitive situations: slow-cycle, standard-cycle, and fast-cycle markets.

- Understand competitive advantages and disadvantages and competitive dynamics of cooperative strategies at the business level.
- Describe uses of cooperative strategies at the corporate level.
- Identify appropriate applications of cooperative strategies when pursuing international strategies.
- Distinguish the competitive risks of cooperative strategies.
- Understand the nature of trust as a strategic asset in forming cooperative strategies.
- Describe the two basic management approaches for managing strategic alliances.

**Marks for the above outcomes will be distributed approximately equally.**

### III. TOPICS:

1. Strategic Management Inputs
2. Strategic Actions: Strategy Formulation
3. Strategic Actions: Strategy Implementation

### IV. REQUIRED RESOURCES/TEXTS/MATERIALS:

Strategic Management Competitiveness and Globalization - First Canadian Edition (Concepts and Cases 017-622-6842)  
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### V. Evaluation Process/Grading System

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

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|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • Quizzes                           | 20% |
| • Financial Analysis Assignment     | 10% |
| • Case Research –CEO                | 10% |
| • Tests                             | 40% |
| • Case Presentation & Participation | 20% |

TOTAL	100%
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## **TESTS**

Dates of tests will be announced approximately one week in advance.  
**Students are required to write all tests and quizzes as scheduled.**

### **THERE WILL BE NO RE-WRITES OF INDIVIDUAL TESTS/EXAMS !!!!**

**Students must meet the following requirements to complete this course successfully:**

1. Must complete, in a fashion acceptable to the professor, all cases, projects and assignments.
2. Must write all tests. If a student misses an exam and has not made appropriate arrangements as outlined below, he/she will receive a mark of zero for that test/exam.
3. Must have an overall mark of 60%. This mark includes all work in the semester.

Students who are not successful in achieving the minimum mark of 60% and/or do not complete the required assignments in an acceptable fashion, as they are due, will repeat the course.

**FINAL GRADES WILL BE ISSUED BY THE REGISTRAR'S OFFICE**

The following semester grades will be assigned to students in postsecondary courses:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Grade Point Equivalent</u>
A+	90 - 100%	4.00
A	80 - 89%	3.75
B	70 - 79%	3.00
C	60 - 69%	2.00
R (Repeat)	59% or below	0.00
CR (Credit)	Credit for diploma requirements has been awarded.	
S	Satisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.	
U	Unsatisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.	
X	A temporary grade. This is used in limited situations with extenuating circumstances giving a student additional time to complete the requirements for a course (see <i>Policies &amp; Procedures Manual – Deferred Grades and Make-up</i> ).	
NR	Grade not reported to Registrar's office. This is used to facilitate transcript preparation when, for extenuating circumstances, it has not been possible for the faculty member to report grades.	

## VI. SPECIAL NOTES:

### Special Needs:

If you are a student with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, or learning disabilities), you are encouraged to discuss required accommodations with your instructor and/or the Special Needs office. Visit Room E1204 or call Extension 493, 717, or 491 so that support services can be arranged for you.

### Retention of course outlines:

It is the responsibility of the student to retain all course outlines for possible future use in acquiring advanced standing at other postsecondary institutions.



**Plagiarism:**

Students should refer to the definition of “academic dishonesty” in *Student Rights and Responsibilities*. Students who engage in “academic dishonesty” will receive an automatic failure for that submission and/or such other penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course/program, as may be decided by the professor/dean. In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the copyright of the material referenced, and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

**Course outline amendments:**

The Professor reserves the right to change the information contained in this course outline depending on the needs of the learner and the availability of resources.

Substitute course information is available in the Registrar's office.

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

**Missed Tests/Exam:**

If a student is not able to write a test/exam as scheduled, for medical reasons or some other emergency, that student is asked to contact the professor **prior** to the test/exam and provide an explanation which is acceptable to the professor. (Medical certificates or other appropriate proof **may** be required.) Following the student’s return to the college, he/she must request, in writing, to write a makeup for the missed test/exam. This request will be in proper letter form (typed), hard copy, (no e-mail) and must outline the reasons for requesting special consideration. Making such a request does not guarantee that the student will receive permission to make up for the missed test/exam. Such requests must be made within one week of the student’s return to the college.

The professor will consider the request, and if permission is granted, the test/exam will be given at the end of the semester, or at some other time at the professor’s convenience. This will allow time for the student to prepare for the test without missing important work and to provide time for the professor to prepare a new test.

In considering the request, the professor will take a number of factors into consideration. These will include, but not limited to, the student’s attendance and participation in class, completion of other tests, quizzes, and assignments as scheduled and the professor's judgment as to the student’s potential success.

In all other cases, the student will receive a mark of zero for that test.

**THERE WILL BE NO SUPPLEMENTARY TESTS!!**

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Attendance will be taken for each class. While students are expected to attend all classes, it is understood that circumstances beyond their control may prevent them from doing so. Students who find themselves in this category should treat the classes as a job and take action accordingly.

**In all cases, attendance of less than 80% of the scheduled classes is not acceptable.**

The professor will use attendance in considering student requests for special consideration in writing missed tests, submitting late assignments, etc.

**Submitting Assigned Work:**

All assignments, projects, questions, etc. must be submitted to the professor at the beginning of class on the due date. Once the class starts, any assignment, etc. which has not been submitted will be considered late. If no class is scheduled on the due date, students are required to deliver the assignments, etc. to the professor's office, by the deadline time. Assignments, etc. may be submitted in advance; normally assignments, etc. will not be accepted after the stated deadline. If a student wishes consideration for a late submission, he/she must make this request in a formal typed letter, (hard copy) providing an explanation. If the assignment is accepted late, a penalty will be assessed. Assignments, etc. will not be accepted late once those which have been submitted on time have been graded and returned to students.

**It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the professor gets his/her completed assignment, etc.**

**Return of Students' Work:**

Tests, quizzes, assignments, etc. will be returned to students during one of the normal class times. Any student not present at that time must pick up his/her test, etc. at the professor's office within three weeks of that class. Tests, etc. not picked up within the three weeks will be discarded. End of semester tests, etc. will be held for three weeks following the end of the semester. If they have not been picked up within that three-week period, they will be discarded.

Tests, etc. will be returned only to the students to whom they belong. In limited circumstances tests, etc. may be given to another student, if the student to whom they belong provides written instructions in a formal letter (hard copy) to the professor requesting that the test, etc. be given to a particular individual.

**Assistance is Always Available:**

**IT WILL BE TO THE STUDENTS' ADVANTAGE TO HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR PROBLEMS RELATED TO THIS COURSE RESOLVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, HAVE PROBLEMS, OR CONCERNS, SEE YOUR PROFESSOR. SHE WILL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HELP!!**

Students are urged to ask questions and to participate in, and contribute to, the class discussion. Students are also encouraged to read newspapers, magazines, etc. and to tune in to radio and television newscasts for legal and business news. This will make the subject more understandable, interesting, and practical. It will provide students the opportunity to better apply the theory and to enhance his/her opportunity for success in this course.

**PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT STUDENTS WILL ONLY GET OUT OF THIS COURSE WHAT THEY PUT INTO IT.**

**Classroom Decorum:**

Students will respect the diversity and the dignity of those in the classroom. Students will respect the professor's right and duty to teach and students' right to learn without interference. Students who cause any interference with the objectives of the class will be given a verbal warning on the first occasion. If such behaviour continues, the student will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be permitted to return until he/she commits in writing, typed, (a formal letter) that he/she will conduct themselves appropriately in the classroom. This letter will be addressed to the professor

If a student is asked to leave the classroom a second time, he/she must make an appointment with the Dean who will decide if the student will be permitted to return to class. At that time a copy of the above letter will be submitted to the Dean.

In the event that a student is asked to leave the classroom a third time, he/she will not be permitted back to the classroom for the rest of the semester. The Dean will also decide if any other action needs to be taken.

Students attending this class do so to study Business Problem Solving and Decision Making. Therefore, no other activity will be permitted. Student's who wish to engage in other activities will be asked to leave the classroom, as described above.

Students will also be asked to leave the classroom, as described above if they are sleeping, or appear to be sleeping, and for putting their feet up on the furniture.

It is the professor's intention to maintain proper classroom decorum at all times in order to provide the best possible learning and teaching environment.

#### **VII. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT:**

Students who wish to apply for advanced credit in the course should consult the professor. Credit for prior learning will be given upon successful completion of a challenge exam or portfolio.

#### **VIII. DIRECT CREDIT TRANSFERS:**

Students who wish to apply for direct credit transfer (advanced standing) should obtain a direct credit transfer form from the Dean's secretary. Students will be required to provide a transcript and course outline related to the course in question.