

Business models

Module 4, 2020-2021

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Course information

Course Website:

Instructor's Office Hours: by prior appointments, Wednesday 6-8pm

Class Time:

Room Number:

TAs: Sergey Silaychev ssilaychev@nes.ru

Course description

Business models is an introductory course to management decision-making. It is often not until a far-away stage of a career that one can develop a comprehensive mastery over all aspects of business and organizational issues even at high level. However, a broad view is often useful much earlier. The main goal of this course is to equip students with practical business challenges, help with career choices in business and facilitate understanding their [future] colleagues. Course materials will prepare students for productive business discussions in various organizations and their functional departments.

The course is based on 7+ real business cases studying which we would:

- Explore various types of questions companies at different stage of their maturity can face. This will help build broader understanding of a company's functions
- Build the muscle of structured thinking about mostly unfamiliar problems. This skill will help younger executives to compensate for the lack of business experience and intuition
- Practice collective discussions of business situations as decisions in organizations are rarely taken single-minded.

Course requirements, grading, and attendance policies

This course has no prerequisites but it is important to attend classes prepared (having studied the cases). Prior business experience would be beneficial for the participants to bring home the content of the course, however students with limited or no business experience will also find it useful.

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Final grade will be derived from: [participation bonus (20%)] + mid-term essay at home (40%) + final essay (60%).

First make up exam will be an essay, second – an oral examination of the course materials mastery.

Course contents

During the course we will dive a bit deeper in 7+ episodes:

Session 1. Organization. Options and decision-making bodies. Case – operating partner of a marketplace.

Session 2. Strategy. Winning on a competitive market. Case – corporate banking team #1.

Session 3. Investment project. Stage-gate process. How ideas turn into paper and early action. Case – do we need a new port?

Session 4. Sales. Between passion and discipline. Case – charity for NES.

Mid-term. Case study at home.

Session 5. Customer value. When customer satisfaction meets profits. Case – churning clients.

Session 6. Early-stages. When strategy and operations are always in the same room. Case – SimpleTips.

Session 7. Cost-cutting. Content and process. How to make a huge company move? Case – moving a transport giant. COVID response. How to mobilize an organization for a new reality?

Final. Case study at home.

Description of course methodology

The course is based on case studies. Participants study the case prior to classes, then the case is discussed in the classroom.

Active discussion participation is an essential part of learning for this course. Ultimately, the skills we are trying to build rely a lot on communication therefore it is important to use opportunities for practice.

Sample tasks for course evaluation

Case 1: Carsharing.

Two partners Ilya and Alex a year ago launched a carsharing company in Moscow. They took 200 economy cars on a long-term lease. Initial investments in the project came around 1 mln USD.

Founders' prior experience is in marketing/sales and in raising money. During the last year they managed to build a working business model, collect a team, and shape their unique segment on the market. However, they are still way to small to be relevant even in Moscow. Big players (Yandex, etc) kill the margin and hinder small players development. The project is operationally unprofitable (loosing money every month) and the money left will not last longer than 6 months. What should the founders do?

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Course materials

Required textbooks and materials

Strategy beyond the hockey stick, C.Bradley, M.Hirt, S.Smit

Contemporary Strategy Analysis, R.Grant

Business Model Generation, A. Osterwalder, Y. Pigner

Additional materials

<https://vc.ru>

Academic integrity policy

Cheating, plagiarism, and any other violations of academic ethics at NES are not tolerated.