

23E10000 Service Business Strategy

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1. How to complete the course?

The course encompasses the following elements, which are explained in more detail in following:

1. Independent work (60%)
 - a. Pre-assignment: Reflection note (20%, 0-20 points)
 - b. Thematic package 1: Learning reflection: mind map & video/audio (10 %, 0-10 points)
 - c. Thematic package 2: Learning reflection: mind map & video/audio (10 %, 0-10 points)
 - d. Thematic package 3: Case Study – report (10%, 0-10 points)
 - e. Thematic package 4: Learning reflection: reflection note on two articles (10 %, 0-10 points)

Please note that each thematic package includes one quiz (pass/fail) (Quizzes need to be *passed* in order to complete the course)
2. Group work on Lean Service Creation (40 %)

In order to pass the course, you have to successfully complete all the assignments on time. Extensions may be requested on justified grounds, but delayed submissions will be sanctioned (-20% of the points the student would have otherwise received). All the assignments need to be submitted to a designated inbox in MyCourses section “Assignments”.

Each assignment is graded separately and the course overall grading consists of the sum of points per each assignment. In this course book, you will find more information of the content and grading of the assignments.

Participants can earn max. 100 points; the total score of points will be converted to the final grade as follows:

Points	Grade	
90 points and over	5	Excellent
80 to 89 points	4	Very good
70 to 79 points	3	Good
60 to 69 points	2	Fair
50 to 59 points	1	Poor

49 points and lower		Fail
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2. Course assignments

2.1 Independent work (60 %)

2.1.1 Pre-Assignment: Reflection note (20 %, 0-20 points)

Idea:

The pre-assignment consists of two parts:

Part I: Reflect on your preconceptions before the start of the course.

1. How do you understand (would define) the concept of "service"? Do you feel that you already know a lot about the topic, and what is your motivation to study more about it? (4 p)
2. What do you think are the most topical or urgent issues that the service sector is facing in 2022 and in the near future? Justify your choice(s). In your answer, you may, for example, choose 1-2 current trends or challenges that you think are topical. (4 p)
3. Describe shortly your intention towards the course: How do you plan to work during the course? What you aim for and how do you plan to achieve your goals? (2 p)

Part II: Assess your preconceptions, regarding **the question 2 in Part I**, against the views of some economic journal or magazine (e.g., Harvard Business Review, Forbes, The Economist, Kauppalehti, Inc., Wired or similar – all these are available in Aalto Finna / Primo). Browse the magazine publications from recent years. Did your perception change somehow, if you now reflect on: What do you think are the most topical or urgent issues that the service sector is facing 2022 and in near future? If your perceptions did change, how? Does the view you get from the magazine describe similar issues than you considered as actual? (3 p)

Then, select two magazine articles that discuss some topical or urgent issue for services. The purpose is to select one issue to reflect on, so select two articles that discuss the same issue – their perspective to the issue may, however, be different. The issue may be same than one of those you reflected on in the Part I or it may be something totally different. Answer the following questions.

1. Shortly describe the main idea of the articles you reflect on. What is the topical or urgent issue the articles discuss? How do the authors justify that the topic is important? (4 p)
2. What kind of questions does the topic raise in you? Identify also at least three questions that you think service managers need to ask regarding this issue in order to sustain in the competition. Why do you think these questions are important? You may

assess the questions in general or reflect on e.g., a single industry or a company based on your own interests. **(3 p)**

Format and timeline:

1. Participants are asked to write approximately one (1) word page per each part (altogether two [2] pages), addressing the questions above. The maximal total length is 3 pages. The length of the answer is not the key. Instead pay attention to the content.
2. Grading of the assignment will be based on a scale from 0-20 points. The questions are evaluated as indicated vis-a-vis each question. The grading follows the general grading instructions given under heading “3. General instructions for the assignments”.
3. The task is designed as an individual work.
4. **The deadline for submitting the assignment is January 11, 2022, 23.59 Finnish time. Please upload your answer document to the respective assignment box on the MyCourses homepage. Do not forget to clearly indicate your name on the submission and the respective files!**

2.1.2 Thematic Packages

Idea in general:

Idea for each thematic package is similar.

1. For each thematic package, there is a designated section (e.g. Thematic package 1: Introduction to services) in MyCourses platform. Under each section you'll find all the learning material you need in order to complete the package.
2. First, watch the introduction video to the topic.
3. Study the learning material that consist of videos, podcasts and academic articles.
4. After careful study of all the material, take a Quiz. Each thematic package includes one quiz, that consists of 10 questions related to the core contents of the package. The questions are designed you to make sure that you have reached the learning outcomes of each thematic package. Quiz is graded pass / fail and each quiz need to be passed in order to finish the course. 7/10 points are needed to pass the quiz. The quiz can be taken twice but if you get fail, the teacher may offer you with alternative (similar) assignment. However, the quizzes are designed to be easily passed for a student that has studied all the material.
5. After completing the quiz, go to the MyCourses section "Assignments". Each Thematic package includes one assignment that will be graded.

Instructions for each assignment are explained in the following:

Thematic package 1: Introduction to services

Idea:

Learning reflection: mind map & video/audio (10 %, 0-10 points)

Reflect on your learning from the thematic package 1. Summarize in 1-2 sentences, what do you think was the key message of the package? Then prepare a digital mind map, in which you place your summary in the center of the pattern. Enrich your mind map by answering the following questions.

1. Name two important and central issues you learned. Describe in your own words, how do you understand these issues? Did what you learned support your understanding of these issues you named so far, or did your perception change, if so, how? Do you disagree with some of the ideas presented to you?
2. How do you think the ideas you named in the question 1 relate to the whole of marketing and managing services?
3. How important and timing do you think these issues are to service businesses and service managers today and in the future?

You may link to your thoughts to your own experience or to e.g., social, environmental, firm or industry specific issues based on your own interests. Or, if you think these issues are not relevant to service managers and service industry, argue and justify.

Format and timeline:

1. Prepare a digital mind map (one template) using 10-50 items. As items, you might use for example graphical illustrations, key words, quotes, photos or short phrases. You may build your mind map in whatever way you see fit. However, avoid using long sentences. There is no single way to do the mind map, but you are encouraged to be creative.
2. As a tool, you are suggested to use Miro, but using any other digital mind mapping app, tool or software is equally fine. (Instructions to use Miro you'll find: <https://help.miro.com/>)
3. Prepare also a videotaped presentation, in which you explain your mind map (i.e., the narrative represents your voice-recorded answers to the questions). In addition to the mind map, you are not expected to include any additional visual content to your video. Also, plain voice audio record (and the mind map as separate file) is sufficient, if you can make sure that your audience can follow your narrative. The maximal total presentation time is 5 minutes.
4. The task is designed as an individual work.
5. Submit both, your mind map (photo or a link to the Miro template) and the videotaped (max. 5 min) presentation.
6. Grading will be based on a scale from 0-10 points. Grading of the assignment will be based on, primarily the content of your narrative and secondary, to the visual

presentation of your mind map. The grading follows the general grading instructions given under heading “3. General instructions for the assignments”.

7. **The deadline for submitting the assignment is January. 19. 2022, 23.59 Finnish time. Please upload your answer document to the respective assignment box on the MyCourses homepage. Do not forget to clearly indicate your name on the submission and the respective files!**

Thematic package 2: Managing service excellence

Idea:

Learning reflection: mind map & video/audio (10 %, 0-10 points)

Reflect on your learning from the thematic package 2. Summarize in 1-2 sentences, what do you think was the key message of the package? Then prepare a digital mind map, in which you place your summary in the center of the pattern. Enrich your mind map by answering the following questions.

4. Name two important and central issues you learned. Describe in your own words, how do you understand these issues? Did what you learned support your understanding of these issues you named so far, or did your perception change, if so, how? Do you disagree with some of the ideas presented to you?
5. How do you think the ideas you named in the question 1 relate to the whole of marketing and managing services?
6. How important and timing do you think these issues are to service businesses and service managers today and in the future?

You may link to your thoughts to your own experience or to e.g., social, environmental, firm or industry specific issues based on your own interests. Or, if you think these issues are not relevant to service managers and service industry, argue and justify.

Format and timeline:

1. Prepare a digital mind map (one template) using 10-50 items. As items, you might use for example graphical illustrations, key words, quotes, photos or short phrases. You may build your mind map in whatever way you see fit. However, avoid using long sentences. There is no single way to do the mind map, but you are encouraged to be creative.
2. As a tool, you are suggested to use Miro, but using any other digital mind mapping app, tool or software is equally fine. (Instructions to use Miro you'll find: <https://help.miro.com/>)
3. Prepare also a videotaped presentation, in which you explain your mind map (i.e., the narrative represents your voice-recorded answers to the questions). In addition to the mind map, you are not expected to include any additional visual content to your video. Also, plain voice audio record (and the mind map as separate file) is sufficient, if you can make sure that your audience can follow your narrative. The maximal total presentation time is 5 minutes.
4. The task is designed as an individual work.
5. Submit both, your mind map (photo or a link to the Miro template) and the videotaped (max. 5 min) presentation.
6. Grading will be based on a scale from 0-10 points. Grading of the assignment will be based on, primarily the content of your narrative and secondary, to the visual

presentation of your mind map. The grading follows the general grading instructions given under heading “3. General instructions for the assignments”.

7. **The deadline for submitting the assignment is January. 29, 2022, 23.59 Finnish time. Please upload your answer document to the respective assignment box on the MyCourse homepage. Do not forget to clearly indicate your name on the submission and the respective files!**

Thematic package 3: Technology-driven service strategies

Idea:

Case study – report: (10 %, 0-10 points)

The module also features case teaching. The case study the participants are asked to analyze is: **HEMA IN CHINA: IS ALIBABA AHEAD OF AMAZON IN RETAILING?** Case studies give you a practical arena or context to apply what you have learned into a real-life situation. We will follow the Harvard Business School case study method, which is described as follows:

[The] case method is a profound educational innovation that presents the greatest challenges confronting leading companies, nonprofits, and government organizations—complete with the constraints and incomplete information found in real business issues—and places the student in the role of the decision maker. There are no simple solutions; yet through the dynamic process of exchanging perspectives, countering and defending points, and building on each other's ide-as, students become adept at analyzing issues, exercising judgment, and making difficult decisions—the hallmarks of skillful leadership. [...]

Participants are asked to answer the following four questions when analyzing the case study:

1. How would you define Hema/Amazon Go’s digitalization strategies? (2 p)
2. What are the key differentiators (value propositions) of Hema and Amazon Go? Do they differ a lot from traditional grocery retail? (3 p)
3. What are the success factors in traditional and in new (grocery) retail? (2,5 p)
4. Provide examples of how prespective analytics is helping Amazon and Alibaba improve their services? (2,5 p)

Format and timeline:

1. Answer the four case study questions in a max. three-page word document. In addition to that, you may use tables or charts, but they are not required. You may format the assignment using question numbers (1-4.) i.e., the answer does not need to be a coherent piece of text with introduction and conclusions.
2. The task is designed as an individual work.
3. Grading of the case study report will be based on a scale from 0-10 points. The grading follows the general grading instructions given under heading “3. General instructions for the assignments”.
4. **The deadline for submitting the case study report is February. 9, 2022, 23.59 Finnish time. Please upload your answer document to the respective assignment box on the MyCourses homepage. Do not forget to clearly indicate your name on the submission and the respective files!**

Thematic package 4: Emerging themes in services – strategies to yield societal impact

Idea:

Learning reflection: reflection note on two articles (10 %, 0-10 points)

You are asked to read two academic articles included in thematic package 4. Please compare articles and reflect on them by addressing the following questions:

1. What is/are the topic(s) that the articles address on? What are the main research questions of the articles? (2 p)
2. How are these questions answered? What methods are used? What are the findings the authors have made? (2 p)
3. What kind of theoretical contributions or managerial implications do the articles offer (if any)? How timing do you think these implications are for service managers and / or for societies (decision makers) today? (3 p)
4. Do you think the article is relevant to service businesses in order them to face the challenges of today and future? Why or why not? What kind of services would benefit the most from this article? You may reflect your thoughts to e.g., social, environmental, economic or industry specific challenges based on your own interests. Or, if you think the article offers nothing useful to service industry, argue and justify. (3 p)

You are free (but not required) to use any sources in addition to the two given articles.

Format and timeline:

1. Participants are asked to write two to three word-pages of reflection on the selected two articles, addressing the questions above. Please note, that three pages should NOT be exceeded.
2. The task is designed as an individual work.
3. Grading of the case study report will be based on a scale from 0-10 points. The grading follows the general grading instructions given under heading “3. General instructions for the assignments”.
4. **The deadline for submitting the assignment report is February. 23, 2022, 23.59 Finnish time. Please upload your answer document to the respective assignment box on the MyCourses homepage. Do not forget to clearly indicate your name on the submission and the respective files!**

2.2 Group Work (40 %)

Idea and Timeline:

The module also features designing solution to a real-life customer problem, using the Lean Service Creation (LSC)-approach. In teams of 3-6 students (depending on the final number of participants), participants will identify a real-life customer problem and create a solution to it using the LSC-method. The group work starts with ***kick off-session***, held on ***January 13, 2022, 9-10:30 a.m. via Zoom***, in which the details of the assignment are presented and participants are allocated to different groups. A ***mid-term clinic-session*** (voluntary) is held on ***January 27, 2022, 9-10 a.m. also via Zoom***. In that session, participants may ask questions and receive feedback regarding their work. Participation in the mid-term session is voluntary. The final outcomes will be presented in the ***presentation-session***, held on ***February 16, 2022 9-11 a.m. via Zoom***. In the Presentation-session, each group will also provide and receive feedback to/from other groups.

A central task for the group work is to select a Finnish subject company and to develop an innovative service offering for the selected subject company. During the service concept development, the following issues (questions) should be considered (answered):

- What is the customer problem that the service will tackle?
- Describe the customer segment you are designing the service for. What are the concrete needs, wants, problems, or desires that your innovative service addresses?
- Describe how the service works based on a blueprint.
- Give the new service a concrete name/label, describe its features and functions, its customer benefits, and come up with a concrete value proposition.
- Explain the new service's revenue model.

To facilitate the group work, you will be provided with specific guiding questions and canvases based on the LSC-approach during the kick-off session.

Please note that participation in the kick-off and presentation sessions is mandatory.

Format and grading:

The group work consists of two assignments that will be evaluated separately: a written report on the LSC-project and a respective presentation of the project. For the written report, you will receive a template that you should fill in. Presentations should be given in form of an efficient elevator pitch, and not exceed 5 min in length in order to leave enough room for discussion. Grading of the group work will be based on a scale from 0-40 points and represents the sum of the points that the group receives for the written report and the presentation (0-20 points respectively). Assignment specific instructions will be given during

the kick-off session on *January 13, 2022*. The deadline for submitting the written report is *February 23, 2022*.

3. General instructions for the assignments

Format:

- Clearly indicate your name and student number on the front page of your submission.
- Name your file to indicate “the name” of the assignment and your Last Name. E.g. “Pre-AssignmentSeittu”
- In all written reports, use 12 Times New Roman and spacing 1.
- Please use pdf-file in your submissions, if not otherwise instructed.
- Use references to indicate, whether, you are speaking from your own point of view or referring to another (which?) source. Use a separate reference list.
- References should be cited properly according to the American Psychological Association (APA) citation guidelines: <https://www.apastyle.org/>.
- Stick to the defined page or word counts, if one is given to you; only content provided within the given assignment specific instructions will be graded.

Grading:

In general, I will evaluate your work based on the following questions:

- *How carefully the questions are considered in the answer?* Try to tackle the essence of the question and pay attention to signal words used in the question (e.g., describe, depict, discuss, explain etc.).
- *How well the reader can recognize the question that the participant is referring to?* Good idea is to e.g. build your sentences by repeating the question in the beginning: “The main implications of the article are..”
- *How logical is the flow of argumentation and how well the arguments are justified?* Build a logical flow of argumentation in order to develop a convincing storyline. You may use examples to illustrate and support your line of reasoning.
- *How visible and multifaceted is the respondent’s own reflection?* Reflect on your own thoughts and surrounding environment (e.g. discuss pros and cons of an issue). Try to provide convincing rationale for suggestions or evaluations that you may give. You are encouraged to give such in all reflection assignments and in the group work.
- *How coherent and grammatically fluent is the answer?* Your English skills will not be evaluated but use clear, easy-to-understand language and submit structured and organized texts. Before submitting your texts, read them through and pay attention the readability. If you cannot make sense of the core idea of your sentences, there is a huge possibility that the reader will not understand them either.
- **Excellent** answers typically precisely cover the core of the questions, define relevant concepts in a clear manner using easy-to-understand language, develop a coherent line of argumentation, and offer concrete implications which are meaningfully substantiated (i.e., do not strike the reader out of the blue). Most importantly, writer should show her ability to critically deal with the subject of interest by including her own grounded, personal assessment of the matter (e.g., by discussing pros and cons of

an issue). Typically, these answers offer insightful thoughts and arguments, that are elaborated and well justified. In general, these answers show ambiguous and throughout work. *Very good* answers typically are close to excellent answers but lack some core elements.

- Answers that get *grades below* excellent or very good, typically discuss the topic in a too general level, essential concepts or ideas are dealt narrowly or something essential is left unaddressed. For example, some question may lack answer. In these answers, student may also show intermediate / poor skills in showing that she has read and internalized the text / audio / video, and is able to distinguish the central from the less essential. Typically, these answers offer arguments that are not elaborated or justified at all. The answer might also be too short taking into consideration what is requested. Typically, *good* answers have elements from excellent or very good answer but they also include some deficiencies. The more deficiencies in the answer, the lower the grade will be. To get *poor (or fail)*, the student shows that she has not invested in the work at all.
- Grammatical coherence is not evaluated, but difficult-to-read texts, in which e.g., verbs are lacking or the meaning is otherwise impossible to make sense of, cannot be graded as excellent.
- We will check for plagiarism; in extreme cases of plagiarism, the submission might be declared as invalid and the candidate fails this part of the course. We suggest you to use Turnitin before you submit. (More info: <https://wiki.aalto.fi/display/turnitin/>)

Enjoy your study!