



Aalto University
School of Business

Program Introduction Strategic Management in a Changing World

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Agenda

- **Strategy, strategic management – and the changing world**
- **Studying and learning in the program**
- **Academic writing & other conventions**

Your reflections on strategy?

- How and in what ways have you have run into the word or concept 'strategy'?
- How would you answer someone (outsider) if they would know that you are majoring in strategy (strategic management) and ask “what does it mean to major in strategic management or what is the difference to have a major ‘Management’”

Strategy and strategic management

- Strategy = a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term goal
- Strategic management = ongoing planning, monitoring, analysis and assessment of all necessities an organization needs to meet its objectives. Changes in business environments require organizations to constantly assess their strategies for success
- SM is a process that involves building a careful understanding of how the world is changing, as well as a knowledge of how those changes might affect a particular firm.
- SM process consists of sub-processes of goal-setting, analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy monitoring.
- SM is a discipline and a doctrine, i.e. it has its own specialized language, its membership rites, its “secret handshake” ...

Studying and learning in the program

- **Most of the program courses involve a significant amount of group work**
 - Honing students' group work skills
- **Academic knowledge and skills**
 - Theories and methods (knowledge + skills of applying)
 - Academic skills
 - *Academic information finding*
 - *Academic writing*
 - *Critical reflection skills*
- **Communication skills at the forefront**

Practical tips

- **No strict school or program level instructions on different deliverables – and courses take different forms (e.g. varying amount of class hours, varying policies in attendance)**
 - Follow the individual teachers' instructions
- **Many courses have “reaction papers” (or some may call them reflection papers) as their assignments:**
 - Teachers may have their own specific instructions on them, but usually the following formula is effective
 - *Write three or four paragraphs (no subtitles), one or two where you describe in your own words what the article is about and what are its' theoretical insights, findings/results, and then two or three where you reflect upon those insights, or findings.*
 - *Learn to see the “big picture” when reading, no need to understand every detail*
 - *Reactions are not reviews (not your duty to evaluate the academic value of the reading) – but critical thinking is always most welcomed*

Academic skills & conventions (academic writing tips)

- Conventions: In all writing assignments (where applicable and unless otherwise instructed): use APA style for the format of the papers: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>
- Esp. important is the citation technique
- Writing on academic style: follow the same conventions and style (e.g. similar phrases) that are used in the articles you read in courses
- Academic writing starts from academic reading (and before that) searching relevant research
 - Avoid using e.g. theses works, webpages, blogs etc. as academic sources of information - use peer-reviewed articles and academic textbooks

...cont'd

- Each area has its own number one respected journals, in organizational and management studies, with an emphasis on strategy in particular, for example
 - *Strategic Management Journal*
 - *Academy of Management Journal*
 - *Academy of Management Review*
 - *Organization Studies*
 - *Organization Science*
 - *Long Range Planning*
 - *Organization*
 - *Journal of Management Studies*
 - *Journal of Management*

Teaching and studying academic skills in the program

- No separate courses on academic writing or methods
- (Academic writing taught to you at BSc level already)
- Methods & theories (in overall, research skills) embedded in different courses (to a large degree through readings)
- Seminar and thesis work of course focusing on these issues

Most important part of the lecture: puzzling questions?