# Corporate Strategy

## Prof. Mario Molteni

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to guide students in the analysis of strategic problems of multi-business companies. It fosters understanding of characteristics for *corporate-level strategy* capable of generating value for both shareholders and other stakeholders.

At the end of the course, students will be able to apply acquired knowledge to the analysis of corporate strategy of a company in all its dimensions: mission and vision, business portfolio, resources, organisational structure, sustainability policies, economic and socio-environmental performance.

In addition, the course stimulates the ability to devise new growth strategies, such as acquisitions, joint ventures, mergers, internal development, corporate venture initiatives, etc. Students will develop an operation able to create value for the corporate portfolio.

In regard to both analytical skills and the ability to create and formulate new strategies, the course develops students’ communication skills by assigning them the task of presenting their projects to both lecturers and top business leaders of the companies examined.

***COURSE CONTENT***

* *Introduction to corporate strategy (CS)*: Creating corporate advantage in the multi-business enterprise; the hourglass of CS; resource-based view and CS; CS archetypes.
* *Mega-trend*: analysis of the most relevant changes occurring at the global level, that push for a continuous transformation of CS.
* *Corporate governance*: analysis of corporate governance systems in different national contexts; the influence of corporate governance on CS.
* *Corporate resources*: the role of resources in value creation; classification of resources by nature, function, level; the value creation zone; the resourse-based strategy.
* *Analysis and development of the business portfolio*: core business and diversification decisions; portfolio maps; diversification directions and means for expansion (external growth vs. internal development); international growth; corporate venture capital operations; degree of diversification and economic performance.
* *Organization of multibusiness corporations*: structures; control and cohesion; roles and size of central units.
* *Performance*: economic performance; the compatibility between economic performance and corporate growth; sustanaibility performances; sustainability report and integrated reporting.
* *CS and sustainability policies*: sustainability as an opportunity to redefine or launch new business; the logic of shared value creation; circular economy.
* *Renewing the business portfolio*: innovation drivers; approches to innovation; mergers and acquisitions; defining the price for acquisitions; post-acquisition managerial challenges.

***READING LIST***

M. Molteni, G.. Invernizzi, M. Pedrini, *Corporate Strategy Lab, McGraw Hill, Milan*.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, case study analysis, and meetings with subject matter experts (businessmen and managers of multibusiness corporations).

During the Part I of the course (first 6 weeks) the students, divided into groups, are carried out in the analysis of the corporate strategy of a public listed company. Meetings will be planned to present the company assigned to each group.

During the second part of the course, instead, the groups will have to propose an operation aimed to modify the business portfolio (acquisition, joint venture, merger, internal development, disposition) of the company under analysis, in order to generate value either for shareholders or the other stakeholders. The group works will be presented in class during the final lectures of the course, and then illustrated to the top management of the companies under analysis, in order to outline their strengths and weaknesses and select the best solutions.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment of *attending students* includes:

* assessment by lecturers of a presentation by student groups on company analysis and project development;
* assessment by business leaders of the project formulated by the groups;
* open ended written exam based on the course content.

For *non-attending* students: written exam with multiple choice questions and open questions on all the chapters of the book.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no specific prerequisites. However, students who approach this course are recommended to have basic knowledge of competitive strategy at business level, which is typically acquired in strategy and basic company policy courses and in strategic marketing courses. The ability to analyse economic-financial performance of a company (balance sheet analysis) is also recommended.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.