# Small Business Management

## Prof. Fabio Antoldi

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

The SME Management course explores the key issues in the development process of small and medium-sized enterprises. The main strategic and organisational characteristics of SMEs, and the techniques and tools needed to guide their market evolution, are then analysed with the aim of guaranteeing the company's continuity and success over time.

Given the contents covered, the course represents an advanced course in business strategy and organisation; however, it is specifically dedicated to the competitive challenges of the small business which, despite constituting the majority in our production system, is an often little studied theme in institutional management courses, and requires a specific approach due also to the fact that it's uniquely led by the entrepreneur.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the best organisational structures and most appropriate ways for a business organisation to function in its various evolutionary stages, with particular focus on the development of SMEs.
2. Independently assess the main areas of an SME's business management on which to intervene in order to achieve a successful growth path, possibly also creating alliances with other companies.
3. Develop adequate skills and knowledge to carry out an efficient business consultation with small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, with particular attention to family-owned businesses.

***COURSE CONTENT***

* Defining SMEs (quantitative and qualitative approach)
* The role of SMEs in the Italian, European and world economy
* The strategic and organisational characteristics of SMEs
* Governing the SME's organisational development processes
* The competitive strategies of SMEs
* Managing the relationship between family and business
* The role of SME strategic networks for competitiveness.

***READING LIST***

F. Antoldi, *Lo sviluppo imprenditoriale,* McGraw-Hill, Milan, 2012;

F. Antoldi, Ed., *Raccolta di casi e letture per il corso di Management delle PMI (2021/22 edition)*, course notes available at the University Photocopying Office.

Additional teaching materials (lecture slides, business cases, supplementary readings) will be made available on the Blackboard platform during the course. It is therefore recommended that students enrol in the online course in order to also access these materials, which are necessary for exam preparation.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course involves the use of different teaching methods. For those attending lectures, there will be discussions of business cases in addition to lectures. Entrepreneurs and managers will be invited to the course to contribute their testimonies, and so enrich the analytical skills and critical spirit of students.

The detailed programme, which also contains the detailed calendar and all the teaching materials used in the course (lecturer's slides, readings, cases, videos, etc.) will be made available on the Blackboard platform.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

A final written exam.

There are two different exam formats, depending on whether the student chooses to attend lectures or not.

Students who regularly attend the course will have the opportunity - solely during the first exam session - to take a written test, including a test part (multiple choice questions) and two open-ended questions (with defined spaces), which will focus exclusively on the topics covered and the teaching materials analysed during the sessions.

For non-attending students, the exam will take the form of eight open-ended questions (with defined spaces) and will focus on the contents of the programme and the entire textbook.

When assessing the open-ended answers, attention will be paid to the student's ability to create links between the various topics covered, using appropriate language and developing critical thinking.

The final course assessment will be marked out of thirty.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Attendance of lectures, although not compulsory, is recommended. To profitably attend the SME Management course, students are required to already possess a basic knowledge of business, in particular that covered in the courses on marketing, organisation, business strategy and management control.

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/>.