

Doctoral course: Strategizing in networks, 7.5 ECTS

Course directors

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Time, location and enrollment

The course will be held at Örebro University, Sweden on May 4-8th, 2015. Applications should be sent to Christina.oberg@oru.se no later than March 27th, 2015. Please submit your application as a p. Eligible to apply are PhD students in the Nordic countries. Financial support available for up to 15 students from NFF-affiliated universities, but also PhD students from other universities are welcome to apply to the course. Maximum number of participants: 20 PhD students.

Inquiries can be sent to the head of course (Christina.oberg@oru.se).

Background and aim of the course

In recent years, various research disciplines have increasingly showed interest in the collaboration among companies. This includes literature on alliances, on new forms of organizations consisting of more or less loosely coupled entities, and on innovation research describing crowd-mechanisms and open-innovation initiatives.

In industrial marketing, such collaborations have long been acknowledged as inter-organizational interactions in business relationships between companies that interconnect several such relationships into networks. The business relationships have been described as the enabler of firms and their strategic intentions, in how resources are provided by business partners. At the same time, literature refers to how present relationships disable firms from conducting their strategies independent of others. This is explained by how companies act and react to strategies performed by other companies in the network-context.

Parallel to this, strategy research emphasizing strategic flexibility point to how companies need to be adjustable to their environment, and focuses on the actual strategic practice.

The doctoral course “Strategizing in Networks” links strategy to business relationships of firms to create an understanding for how companies can and cannot strategize in an interconnected environment, what strategy may look like when other firms are taken into account, and how firms may create strategies on a collaborative level.

Learning objectives

The course will make the students:

- Reflect on what strategy means in an interconnected business context
- Compare and discuss various schools of thought, their constituents, understandings and implications for networks
- Practically apply ideas on strategy and strategizing in networks and relate it to own research interests

Course participants

The ideal course participant is a PhD candidate in (industrial) marketing, innovation or strategy. We also invite PhD candidates that wish to broaden their knowledge related to research topics in other management areas or economics.

Learning material

The course will be based on journal articles and book chapters that are discussed at seminars throughout the course. All texts should be read before the course. See course outline below for details.

Method of examination

The course will be examined through seminars (mandatory) during the running of the course and a final course paper. The seminars involve discussing and applying literature related to each module of the course. The final course paper aims to relate to course material and further reading to the research interest of the PhD candidate.

Course organization

The course will be given by Örebro University, Sweden in collaboration with BI, Norwegian Business School, Norway, Tampere University, Finland, and Linköping University, Sweden. Örebro University will function as the home institution for the course.

Course outline

The course will be divided into four themes and a final discussion/presentation of paper synopsis. It will run as an intensive course for a week, with different themes for each day. The themes are as follows (incl. readings)

- Theme I: A network approach to strategy
This theme introduces the network approach (the IMP school of thought) and specifically how strategy has been treated in this literature.
 - Håkansson, H. (ed.), (1982). *International marketing and purchasing of industrial goods - An interaction approach* London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. (selected chapters)
 - Håkansson, H. & Snehota, I. (1989). *No Business is an island - The network concept of business strategy*. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 5 (3), 187-200.

- Harrison, D., Holmen, E., & Pedersen, A-C. (2010). *How companies strategise deliberately in networks using strategic initiatives. Industrial Marketing Management, 39(6), 947-955.*
- Baraldi, E., Brennan, R., Harrison, D., Tunisini, A.-L., & Zolkiewski, J. (2007). *Strategic thinking and the IMP approach: A comparative analysis. Industrial Marketing Management, 36, 879-894.*
- Harrison, D. & Prenekert, F. (2009). *Network strategizing trajectories within a planned strategy process. Industrial Marketing Management, 38 (6), 662-670.*
- Theme II: Strategy perspectives on network-related issues
In the strategy literature, strategy has either been described as company-centric resource-based or core competence dependent, or acknowledged the company as embedded and dependent. This theme highlights various ways in which strategy has been described as related to the company's context.
 - Mintzberg, H. (1973). *Strategy-making in three modes. California Management Review, 16 (2), 44-53.*
 - Granovetter, M. (1985). *Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. The American Journal of Sociology, 91 (3), 481-510.*
 - Uzzi, B. (1997). *Social structure and competition in interfirm networks: The paradox of embeddedness. Administrative Science Quarterly, 42 (1), 35-67.*
 - Baden-Fuller, C. & Volberda, H.W. (1997). *Strategic renewal. International Studies of Management & Organization, 27 (2), 95-120.*
 - de Man, A.-P. (2004). *The network economy - Strategy structure and management, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. (selected chapters)*
 - Zhou, K.Z. & Wu, F. (2010). *Technological capability, strategic flexibility, and product innovation. Strategic Management Journal, 31 (5), 547-561.*
- Theme III: Empirical application of strategy in networks: mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances
In mergers and acquisitions, firms usually cite strategic reasons for acquiring other parties. However, the acquired actor brings in more to the acquiring company than can be foreseen or anticipated. Furthermore, a merger or acquisition may have effects on business partners of the firm, or be driven by changes among business partners. This theme describes the various ways in which strategy is described as related to company's latitude for action with special focus on mergers and acquisitions. It further includes an insight into strategic alliances as constructed networks of firms.
 - Halinen, A., Salmi, A., & Havila, V. (1999). *From dyadic change to changing business networks: an analytical framework. The Journal of Management Studies, 36 (6), 779-794.*
 - Öberg, C. & Holtström, J. (2006). *Are mergers and acquisitions contagious? Journal of Business Research, 59 (12), 1267-1275.*
 - Lavie, D., Haunschild, P.R., & Khanna, P. (2012). *Organizational differences, relational mechanisms, and alliance performance. Strategic Management Journal, 33 (13), 1453-1479.*
 - Öberg, C. (2015). *Acquisition as an adaptation strategy, in Annette Risberg, David King, and Olimpia Meglio (eds.), Companion to Mergers and Acquisition (Oxford: Routledge).*

- *Huemer, L., Håkansson, H., & Prenkert, F. (2009). The Becoming of Cermaq: The interplay between network influences and firm level control ambitions. The IMP Journal, 3(3), 53-75.*
- Theme IV: Empirical application of strategy in networks: innovation
Innovation is an area where collaboration and interaction among parties have been emphasized. It may consist of shared development projects, different parties taking various roles related to an innovation, and the spinning-in, spinning-out of ideas . This theme describes the various ways in which strategy is described as related to company's innovation processes with special focus on open innovation.
 - *Chesbrough, H.W. (2003). The era of open innovation. MIT Sloan Management Review, 44 (3), 35-41.*
 - *Chesbrough, H.W. & Appleyard, M.M. (2007). Open innovation and strategy. California Management Review, 50 (1), 57-76.*
 - *Ebner, W., Leimeister, J.M., & Krcmar, H. (2009). Community engineering for innovations: the ideas competition as a method to nurture a virtual community for innovations. R&D Management, 39 (4), 342-356.*
 - *Phelps, C.C. (2010). A longitudinal study of the influence of alliance network structure and composition on firm exploratory innovation. Academy of Management Journal, 53 (4), 890-913.*
 - *Öberg, C. & Shih, T. (2014). Divergent and convergent logic of firms – Barriers and enablers for development and commercialization of innovations. Industrial Marketing Management.*
- Concluding discussion and presentations of synopsis for course papers. Final papers will be sent to the course examiner after the course and provided with feedback.