

First, the assignment is listed in the syllabus, as shown below:

Term Paper/Business Report: Each student group will be required to write a company report on a major publicly traded firm; each company must have a recent 10k available at the SEC website. A list of firms will be provided for the group to pick from. This is a semester-long assignment that serves as a culminating experience pulling from across your prior coursework.

Resources and information: Students may need to gather data from several sources (10Ks, current business periodical articles, investor reports, etc.) and create an analysis according to the outline shown on the next page. At the end of the report, you must provide a reference list including only the resources and works actually cited in the paper.

Format: You MUST clearly identify sources. Headings, subheadings and page numbers ARE REQUIRED. (Each section in outline must be a separate section with appropriate heading) Typed/word processed, double spaced, 12 font.

Participation: Students work in a 4-member group. This is an interdisciplinary project, so each group should have only one member from each business concentration (finance, management, marketing, information systems, and health care management).

Teamwork is important in the workplace and in this class. Since the quality of group output is dependent upon each individual's quality contribution, it is vital that each group member work as part of the team. Because since I cannot assess the degree to which group members are performing their fair share of work, group members will anonymously evaluate the performance of each member. Members will assess each other (as well as themselves) on their contribution to the content of the paper, attendance at meetings, timely contribution to individually assigned tasks, and overall performance. All members must receive a multiplier rating between .7 and 1.1 from each evaluator (i.e. you cannot give someone a zero score). I, as the instructor for the course, will be the final authority on each team member's rating.

Second, we spend one class period discussing the outline of the term paper, teacher expectations, and potential pitfalls. The outline is listed below (in the form as it is presented to students).

EVALUATION OUTLINE - MGMT 470
GROUP WRITTEN & PRESENTED COMPANY ANALYSIS

CONTENT

Preliminary Parts (Please refer to your Business Communication text)

- Title Page
- Transmittal Letter
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- Executive Summary

Body of the paper

Introduction to the Paper

- Purpose of the paper
- History of the company
- Current summary of the company (current location, number of employees, earnings, etc.)

Corporate Mission and Social Responsibility

- Mission statement, values, goals, etc.
- Corporate governance problems (if any); if they don't seem to have any, explain which mechanisms prevent the problem
- Ethical climate
- Corporate social responsibility

External Analysis

- Identification and description of the industry, including identify the sector and other industries in the sector if appropriate.
- Industry's dominant economic characteristics/traits and its life cycle
- Discussion of competition and the strength of each competitive force
 - Porter's Five Forces Model applied to the industry (include figure)
- Macro-environment – describe which of the forces in macro-environment are affecting the industry and describe the impact.
- Identification and description of the key competitors
- Show a strategic group map (include figure) that for the industry and define how the strategies differ between strategic groups.
- Is the industry attractive?
- Summary of Opportunities and Threats in the external environment

Internal Analysis

- Does your company have a competitive advantage? If so, does it come from low cost or differentiation? If it does not have a competitive advantage, explain why.
- Discuss the four generic building blocks of competitive advantage as they relate to your company and its functional strategies.
- Discuss distinctive competencies, resources, and capabilities

Discuss the durability of the competitive advantage
Analysis of financial performance using ROIC
Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses
SWOT analysis table

Strategies

Business-level strategies
Strategies for high-tech industries, if appropriate
Global-level strategies; describe which strategy they are currently pursuing as well as major shifts in the last five years.
Corporate-level strategies; has your company pursued vertical or horizontal integration; outsourcing or unrelated diversification.
How well is the present strategy working (financial data)

Strategy Implementation

Organization structure (include chart)
Strategic control systems
Motivation, rewards, and incentives
Corporate culture
Strategic Leadership

Strategic Recommendations for the Future

Addenda

Works Cited Page (use APA format) B at least 25 different sources must be used; at least 5 of them must come from the Wall Street Journal, and at least 5 of them must come from BusinessWeek or Forbes magazine.

Appendixes

DOCUMENTATION

Correct use of APA Style (documentation, spacing, headings, tables, figures, etc.)
Correct and appropriate citation of sources

MECHANICS

Error free presentation (no typos, format errors, spelling errors, etc.)
Appropriate and consistent format (margins don't change, laser printed, bound, etc.)
Check your Business Communication text for the section on formal report writing.
You will need to include all of the elements presented above -- title page, executive summary, etc.

ORGANIZATION

Clear organization using headings, topic sentences, transitions, etc.

Third, we have separated the large project into smaller, more manageable mini-projects. These are presented separately as project modules (adapted from course text). Each module is graded

and it is used to provide feedback to the student group on the term paper. The project models are listed below:

Project Module 1

1. Provide a brief history of the company.
2. Search for a mission statement for the firm. Not all organizations publish such a statement, so alternatively you can look for enduring principles and values upon which the firm seems to be anchored.
3. Identify the major goals of the company.

Project Module 2

1. Apply the five forces model to the industry in which your company is based. What does this model tell you about the nature of competition in the industry?
2. Are any changes taking place in the macro-environment that might have an impact, positive or negative, on the industry in which your company is based? If so, what are these changes, and how might they affect the industry?
3. Identify strategic groups that might exist in the industry. How does the intensity of competition differ across these strategic groups?
4. In what stage of life cycle is the industry in which your company is based? What are the implications of this for the intensity of competition both now and in the future?

Project Module 3

1. Extend beyond the asset base and use the VRIO framework to identify the competitive position held by your firm. Which, if any, of these resources are helpful in sustaining the firm's competitive advantage?
2. Identify the core competencies that are at the heart of the firm's competitive advantage.
3. Perform a SWOT analysis for your firm. Remember that strengths and weaknesses are internal to the firm, and opportunities and threats are external.

Project Module 4

1. Based on the information in the annual reports or published on the firm's website, summarize what the firm views as the reasons for its successes (either past or expected in the future). Search for both quantitative and qualitative success factors provided in the report.
2. Does the firm seem most focused on the economic, accounting, or shareholder perspective of its competitive advantage? Give quotes or information from these sources to support your view.

Project Module 5

1. Does your selected business have differentiated products or services (or cost-leadership)? If differentiation, what is the basis for this differentiation from the competition? If cost-leadership, identify which cost drivers it uses effectively to hold this position.
2. Each business strategy is context-dependent. What do you see as positives and negatives with the selected business strategy of your firm in its competitive situation?

References

Rothaermel, F. (2012). *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases*: McGraw-Hill Education.