Digital Strategies for Sustainability
in Global Emerging Markets
(with field consulting projects and experiential learning trip
to Dubai/Abu Dhabi during spring break)
GSBA 554 -- Omar A. El Sawy

Place: JKP 202  Time:  9 am -12 noon for select Saturdays as noted in Schedule. Session on Saturday March 3rd is longer.
(The course includes 6 sessions of 3 hours each (March 3rd longer), and a field consulting project and an international experiential trip in Spring Break to the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi/Dubai) that includes 5 full days of company visits/lectures/briefing. Travel costs will be borne by students and for 2012 are $2950 in additional course expenditures. Registration is limited to 30 students).

Instructor: Omar A. El Sawy
https://marshallapps.usc.edu/portal/subapps/digitalmeasures/faculty.jsp?surveyId=48761

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:
This is a multidisciplinary cross-functional course (hence the GSBA designation) that is suitable for MBA students from all business functions and with interests in any industry. The course provides a managerial understanding of business strategies for sustainability in a global environment which is becoming increasingly enabled by digital technologies.

A successful business strategy for sustainability is different from and much broader than just “green” and must consider the multiple facets of the business ecosystem in which an organization operates: socio-cultural, economic, and technological – and not just the natural physical environment. Thus, a successful business strategy for sustainability has to worry about operating profitably while protecting/restoring the natural environment, but also about how actions affect members of society, resonate with cultural values, and generally conserve resources while building long-term capabilities. It is becoming increasingly critical for managers to
understand and appreciate what business strategies for sustainability are, how to design them, and to be sensitized to the challenges of organizational implementation.

The course brings two additional critical aspects to business strategies for sustainability: (i) an emphasis on global emerging markets and (ii) taking advantage of the capabilities of digital technologies and the associated novel digital business models that they enable. Paradoxically, much of the deployment of this sustainability transformation may be occurring more quickly in some high growth emerging economies around the world, rather than the slower growth developed economies. Furthermore, many global corporations in the developed world are having to worry about global sustainability strategies that highlight emerging economies where there are many growth opportunities in the next decade. The UAE (Dubai/Abu Dhabi) provides an exciting emerging location that may be a harbinger of things to come in our global economy, and provides a window to a region of the world that is relatively unexplored by global managers when compared to say BRIC economies.

The course will also specifically focus on how to take advantage of digital technologies for sustainability strategies. In 2012, we live in a technology intensive digital world that is filled with ubiquitous high speed communication wireless networks, real-time sensors, smart grids, social networks, and a multitude of mobile devices. These technologies are enabling novel digital business models that enable open innovation, complex sensing, real-time information, health and environment monitoring, customer co-creation, and much more. This provides a multitude of new options for intelligent business strategies for sustainability. The instructor’s forecast is that in the next few years the energy and environment industries (include smart clean energy) will undergo a radical transformation due to the use of digital technologies, and many industry boundaries will shift in associated industries such as building and construction, real estate, tourism, transportation, and healthcare.

The object of the course is to give you the skills and mindset to be a full participant in such progressive undertakings. The course will include an experiential learning trip to Dubai/Abu Dhabi (UAE) in the spring break. Team consulting projects will be carried out with 5 UAE companies in both locations (which are a 1.5 hours drive apart). The instructor travels to the UAE in the Fall to secure projects. The five project companies for Spring 2011 were Abraaj Capital/WAMDA, Dubai Ports World, Mubadala/ATIC, Masdar, and IBM. The five project companies for Spring 2012 are Abraaj Capital, Dubai Road & Transport Authority (RTA), Mubadala/ATIC, Etisalat Telecom, and Cisco.

This course is partially sponsored by Marshall’s CIBER grant from the US Department of Education from 2011-2014 and we are grateful for the support and endorsement.

Skills Acquired Through This Course:

1) How to scope and assess a business strategy for sustainability, & understanding the drivers of sustainability
2) An understanding of digital business models and how they can enable novel sustainability strategies
3) An appreciation of high growth emerging economies in a direct experiential manner
4) A familiarity with the economic opportunities in the UAE region (Dubai/Abu Dhabi), and a new form of globalization
5) An understanding of how to proactively transform value chain activities in a company for sustainability
6) A team consulting experience in a high growth emerging economy
7) A familiarity with the energy/environment/transportation sectors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Date (2012)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Special Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sat Jan 14</td>
<td>Course Orientation &amp; Introduction to Emerging Markets, Intelligent Sustainability, and Digital Business Models – and their inter-connection</td>
<td>Explanation of Trip Procedures by Marshall Office of Global Programs</td>
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| 2        | Sat Jan 28        | Digital Disruption in the Smart Energy Sector: Drivers & Manifestations (including Green IT and smart grids). More on sustainability strategy and business models. | Guest Speaker #1 (Southern California Edison)  
Sector Case #1 – Intelligent Energy                                                                  |
| 3        | Sat Feb 11        | Real-Time Business Models, KPIs, and Dashboards in Sustainability Initiatives: Monitoring & Measurement                                         | Guest Speaker #2 (IBM Smart Planet Project)  
Sector Case #2 – Intelligent Environment & Transportation                                               |
| 4        | Sat Mar 3         | Sustainability Strategies in Emerging Markets, the Role of Digital Technologies, and the UAE Context.                                          | Country Orientation & Interim Class Presentations for Teams. Please note that this is a longer session which will run until 2 pm. |
|          | Fri Mar 9 through Sun Mar 18, 2012 | International Field Trip to United Arab Emirates (Dubai/Abu Dhabi). Full day 9-5 sessions at 5 companies from Sunday through Thursday | Company visits, Presentations and Briefings by Senior Company Executives; Presentation by USC MBA teams; Discussions |
| 5        | Sat Mar 31        | Integrative ReCap & Lessons for the Future                                                                                                 | Guest Speaker #3 (TBA)  
Golden Nuggets Assignment                                                                                 |
| 6        | Sat Apr 21        | Consulting Project Presentations with Feedback                                                                                               | Final Class Presentations for Teams                                                                   |
|          | Fri April 27      | *** Final Team Consulting Report due before 5 pm.                                                                                           |                                                                                                       |
PEDAGOGY & LEARNING METHODS

The course has 4 interrelated learning components as below. Please note that the course is front loaded with more work in the first half of the semester until the Spring break.

1. CASES & READINGS: The 1st component is a series of sector cases and readings to help you understand the key issues, underlying concepts, enabling technologies, and effective techniques for digital sustainability strategies. This learning will take place through the four scheduled Saturday sessions before the trip. Individual case-related write-ups are required. Guest speakers may also help enrich the sessions.

2. TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT: The 2nd component is working on a team consulting project that gives you the challenge and opportunity of dealing with the details and idiosyncrasies of a company project and honing your skills through doing and shaping. Teams will be assigned to each of the five companies. An oral class presentation by each team is required before the field trip; another is expected at the company, as well as a final presentation after returning from the field trip. A written report for each team is also required.

3. FIELD TRIP: The 3rd component is a field trip (during Spring Break) to the 5 companies. The field trip provides a vibrant and immersed learning environment for bringing together the first and second components to a new level of understanding. It involves a 5-day schedule of on-site visits to learn about and discuss digital sustainability strategies and interview managers of the 5 selected companies. It is an intense business experience with a grueling (but exciting) all-day schedule that requires your full attention and does not leave time for sightseeing. There are 2 free days after the 5 days of visits. All participants are expected to be actively engaged in this first-hand experience at all the 5 companies during the field trip.

4. DRAWING LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE: The 4th component is an integrative recap of what was learned through the first 3 components, reflecting back, and drawing lessons for the future. One session and one “golden nuggets” assignment is dedicated for that after returning from the field trip.

COURSE MATERIALS & READINGS


2. Harvard Business Review Articles (Course Pack): The course pack (5 articles) can be purchased online directly and downloaded in electronic form from Harvard Business Press -- as per the instructions provided in the BlackBoard class folder. You can also access HBR through USC libraries or may have a subscription.

3. Other Readings: Articles from professional journals and trade press, and industry reports. These will be made available on-line through BlackBoard class folder or distributed in class if hard copy.

4. Initial consulting project information for each of the five companies will be provided at start of semester to each of the company teams. Each company team will then be responsible for gathering further information pertaining to the company and the consulting project, and for maintaining liaison with the company. A guide for field studies and consulting behavior will be posted on Blackboard.

5. Blackboard Course Folder: There will be a session preparation guide posted for every session on Blackboard. Other than the course pack that needs to be purchased (see item 2. above), other readings will be posted on Blackboard course folder – as will session PowerPoints, assignment instructions, administrative information, guest speaker bios etc.. Please check it frequently! The sections that are populated typically are Syllabus, Assignments, and Content.

RELATED BOOKS

If you have any deeper special interest in any of the topics we will cover, these books are commendably intriguing and useful (not required) depending on your deeper interest. They cover new business models for digital platforms and ecological approaches to strategic digital innovation.


Each individual's effort and grade will be based on the following 4 components. Please note that extraordinary effort in any of those components will be recognized. Conversely, plagiarism in written assignments will be dealt with very severely as per USC rules.

1. TWO INDIVIDUAL CASE WRITE-UPS (20%)
Each participant is required to submit two individual case write-ups. These are sector cases which will analyze exemplary company strategies using digital technologies in selected sectors in energy/environment/transportation with a sustainability focus. Instructions will be provided with each case to guide your write-up.

2. TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT (55% -- 40% for report, 15% for presentations)
We will form project teams based on student preferences, project requirements, and what the instructor thinks are balanced multi-skill teams. We therefore cannot guarantee that you will get your first preference. Each team will be responsible for organizing itself and gathering further information pertaining to the company and the consulting project. This may involve visiting the local Southern California offices of similar companies if appropriate. There will be one team project report. Each team member will also be asked to assess the relative contributions/efforts of all the other members of their team in order to reward excellence and avoid free riders.

The team will be required to give three presentations: an interim presentation on the week before the trip (March 3 - see course schedule), a presentation to the company, and a final presentation four weeks after the trip (April 20 - see schedule). The first two presentations are graded (a composite grade based on the first presentation and how much progress was achieved in the second. At the time of the trip presentation, the project is typically 1/2 or 2/3 done depending on the project circumstances. The final presentation is not graded and is for feedback related to the final report presented to the company but will influence how report is perceived.

The final report is due one week after the final presentation (April 27 - see schedule). The report is expected to be about 40-50 VI3P pages (in addition, appendices can be attached). Apart from being reviewed and evaluated by the instructor, it will also be sent to the company. Outstanding projects will be completed as USC Case Studies and used as cases in future years. VI3P format is Vertical PowerPoint that is Intensive, Inviting, and Interactive. It is a consulting report format that we named in this course which yields consulting reports that are more likely to be read by senior executives and are more likely to engage them without being superficial. They also take advantage of internet active links.

3. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CLASS SESSIONS & FIELD TRIP (15%)
The course will move through material relatively quickly. Each class will build on material from previous classes. Thus it is very important that students attend and be prepared for each class. You are expected to actively discuss both readings and cases and add to the learning of the class. Quality is heavily favored over quantity.

In addition to active in-class participation, you are also expected to actively engage in useful discussion and attentive listening during the field trip. It is a great opportunity to engage with company managers.

Furthermore, to encourage cross-team fertilization and learning, a portion of your participation grade is based on how well you provide thoughtful input to consulting teams other than your own. Optional peer evaluations will be used for this latter component.

4. INTEGRATIVE GOLDEN NUGGETS ASSIGNMENT (10%)
There is also a written “golden nuggets” assignment that is due on Saturday March 31 after returning from the trip. A “golden nugget” is an insight, a management practice, a rule of thumb, a lesson, or a revelation that you have found to be particularly valuable or unique. In the context of this course the “golden nugget” would be about digital strategies for sustainability in global emerging markets --- especially in the context of the UAE, and that you “found” through your various experiences in this class. We would like you to reflect back on those experiences and to draw lessons for the future. Your write-up will identify and describe 5 “golden nuggets,” and how they have changed your understanding of digital strategies for sustainability, digital business models, sustainability practices, or idiosyncrasies of emerging contexts like the UAE – and how you will approach these in the future as a manager. We will integrate the individual assignments into one large electronic document that will reflect the class contribution to the area and that you will have for your own reference.
CLASS PARTICIPATION PROFESSIONALISM

Your participation grade is based on quality and a sincere effort to provoke, learn and understand, rather than quantity. The more you engage with the class with passion, intellectual curiosity, and interest, the higher will be your participation grade, and the more successful and exciting our learning experience will be. We are all here to learn and share our understanding.

1- Attendance: You are expected to attend all sessions. If you cannot attend for a specific reason then please inform the professor through e-mail that you are unable to attend, or your absence will affect your participation grade. Treat it like a professional meeting at work: if you cannot attend, you are expected to inform the person running the meeting as a professional courtesy. There are only 6 sessions so it is especially important to attend all sessions.

2. Engagement: You are expected to attend and prepare for each class and to actively engage in the discussion of readings and cases. If you don't keep up with the reading, you will not enjoy the class. Thus it is very important that you be prepared for each class. You are expected to actively discuss both readings and cases and add to the learning of the class, whether in the live classroom or on-line (if you see an article that is pertinent to the class – let us all know). You are also expected to raise questions that provoke the thinking of others. You may be randomly called upon in class to comment and answer questions, so please be prepared.

3. Laptops & Mobile Devices: It is a professional courtesy to devote your full attention in the class as you would in a face-to-face meeting at work. Using a laptop/device for e-mail, instant messaging, twittering, etc. or doing other assignments for other courses while in class, is deemed unprofessional and is distracting. The only exception allowable will be to look up something related to a company we are discussing at that moment. All laptops need to be closed when we have a guest speaker.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITY
If you have any disability that requires special academic accommodations, please let us know ASAP. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the term as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/
TRIP ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Travel is not expected to exceed $2950 in additional course expenditures. That will cover airfare, airport transfer in UAE, ground transportation in UAE to companies, and hotels (double-room accommodation at 3-star hotel given exorbitant hotel prices in UAE) as well as breakfasts. Lunches will be provided by companies on the five visitation days; dinners will be your responsibility. Air travel is on direct flight from LAX to Dubai on Emirates Airlines, and for 2012 the hotel is the Marina View Hotel in Dubai. The Marshall Office of Global Programs can answer all your questions about the trip issues.

We immediately need your filled-in passport information form so that the Marshall Office of Global Programs can determine any visa issues that may be a problem. The booked schedule is that we will depart on the Friday before the Spring Break week (March 9 – see schedule) and be back on the Sunday 9 days later (March 18 – see schedule below). The UAE is 12 hours ahead of LA.

TRIP TO DUBAI & ABU DHABI  March 9-18, 2012

Depart LAX: Emirates Airlines 9:45 am Friday March 9 ----> Arrive Dubai Saturday March 10, 1:30 pm

Company Visits in UAE: Sunday March 11- Thursday March 15, 2012
1- Sunday March 11th: Abraaj Capital (Dubai)
2- Monday March 12th: Dubai Road & Transport Authority (RTA)
3- Tuesday March 13th: Mubadala/ATIC (Abu Dhabi)
4- Wednesday March 14th: Etisalat (Abu Dhabi)
5- Thursday March 15th: Cisco (Dubai)

Free time: Friday Mar 16 (businesses closed on Friday) & Saturday Mar 17

Depart Dubai: Sunday March 18th  Emirates Airlines 8:50 am ---> Arrive LAX Sunday March 18 2:15 pm