

MBA 565 - Strategic Management**Syllabus****MoWe 6:00PM-9:45PM****RINEC, 350 Eddy St, Providence RI Rm. (TBD) & Online (Zoom)****Instructor:** Robert Johnson, MBA**Cell Phone:** 401-595-7134**Email:** robertf_johnson@uri.edu**Office Hours:** By Appointment**Required Text:** None**Readings and Case Studies:** See Class Schedule and List Below**Course Objective and Description**

This course centers on learning about strategy in a broad range of settings. It uses articles, case studies, guest lecturers and group discussions all of which strengthen self-learning, learning from peers and executive practitioners.

The course reviews key topics including cash, talent, ownership, governance, culture, and other considerations through a broad range of organizations including start-ups, mid-sized and global companies, non-profits, and other ownership structures. One class examines M&A, exits and liquidations, another class studies dealing with decline and turnarounds.

This course provides students with the framework and analytical tools about industry structures and competitive forces. These are useful to approaching effective strategy development and decision making.

Class Schedule of Topics

(Subject to Change upon Notification)

Class Date	Class Contents	Readings and/or Cases to be discussed
June 24 (class 1)	Course intro Strategy frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy (article) > Stuck in the Middle (article) > Athena Bancorp (case)
June 26 (class 2)	Market analysis & customer intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Segmenting and targeting (core curriculum) > EV Revolution Gets a Reality Check (article) > Crescent Pure (case)
July 1 (class 3)	Competition & competitive analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Strategies to Crack Well Guarded Markets (article) > Competitive analysis - Strategic Group Mapping (article) > Arrogant Brewing (multi-media case)
July 3 (class 4)	Ownership Governance Quiz 1 (classes 1-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Top Boards Do These 4 Things Differently (article) > Disney: Endgame (article) > Villeroy & Boch: Tradition, Innovation and 270 Years of a Franco-German Alliance (case)

July 8 (class 5)	Start Up's Mid-sized businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How Fast Can Your Company Afford to Grow? (article) ➤ Robinhood has a customer service problem (article) ➤ Trader Joe's: At a Crossroads? (case)
July 10 (class 6)	Multi-nationals & Globals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competing Globally (core curriculum) ➤ Demographics Aren't China's Friend (article) ➤ Sanctuary Soft: International Expansion Strategies (case)
July 15 (class 7)	Non-profits Quiz 2 (classes 4-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How Nonprofit Leaders can keep their organizations afloat (article) ➤ Lofty Missions, Down-to-Earth Plans (article) ➤ Eagle Nest Association of Watertown (case)
July 17 (class 8)	Dealing with decline - turnaround or other options?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How to Market in a Downturn (article) ➤ How to Survive a Recession and Thrive Afterwards (article) ➤ Hostess Brands, Inc. Bankruptcy, Liquidation and Revitalization (case)
July 22 (Class 9)	M&A, Exits Bankruptcy & Liquidations Quiz 3 (classes 7-9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Don't Make This Common M&A Mistake (article) ➤ A Beginners Guide to Bankruptcy (article) ➤ Toys "R" Us: What Went Wrong? (case)
July 24 (class 10) (last class)	Final Group Project Presentations	<p>Case alternatives (1 per group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Big Apple Circus: Time to Fold the Tent? ➤ Bracken Darrell's Turnaround & Growth Strategy at Logitech ➤ MoviePass: A Netflix for Moviegoers? ➤ Contributor Funding and the Turnaround of the Guardian

Evaluation

Class Preparation & Participation (20%)

There will be readings and/or business cases to prepare for each class and each class will be highly interactive through facilitated discussion. *Preparation and participation counts for 20% of the final grade.*

Quizzes (45%)

Three (3) quizzes will occur during the semester. Each will be a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. *Quiz scores counts for 45% of the final grade.*

Group Project - Final (35%)

There will be a final group project. Towards the end of the semester, students will form teams of 3-5 for their project.

The project centers on a company case study where the organization facing a turnaround situation or strategic decision. The final project cases have been preselected. Students will form their own team and each team will be assigned one

case for their project. The deliverable will be a short, executive-level presentation that answers several questions including:

- What business are they in and how are they different/better than the competition?
- What are the top forces faced by this organization, why?
- How did they get into this situation?
- What strategic alternatives are available to improve their situation and why?

Group projects count for 35% of the final grade.

Other Information

Each student is expected to participate actively in each class session, including reading articles and case studies in advance.

Grade Breakdown

93 - 100 Points	A
90 - 92.99 Points	A-
86 - 89.99 Points	B+
83 - 85.99 Points	B
80 - 82.99 Points	B-
76 - 79.99 Points	C+
73 - 76.99 Points	C
70 - 72.99 Points	C-
66 - 69.99 Points	D+
63 - 65.99 Points	D
60 - 62.99 Points	D-
59.99 Points	F

Reasonable Accommodation

As the instructor of this course, I am committed to provide reasonable accommodation to student with disabilities. Any student who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible. We can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the University of Rhode Island is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to any student who requires assistance to perform.

Academic Misconduct

Any form of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. All cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to URI policies (as outlined in the student handbook and general catalog). If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please contact me.

Sick Policy

If you are sick, stay home! Please send me an email (or call me) to let me know you did not simply forget to come to class. We can discuss what you may be able to do to make up for your absence.

Known Absences

If you know you cannot make it to class, please let me know if possible, either by telling me or via email. I expect you to come to all classes, but I understand sometimes work or personal issues may interfere.

Cases and Readings:

HBPS articles and cases have been assembled into a course pack (<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1159535>) to make it easy for you to successfully completed this course.

Readings:

- The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy (R0801E)
- Stuck in the Middle (article posted on Brightspace)
- Segmenting and targeting (8219)
- EV Revolution Gets a Reality Check (article posted on Brightspace)
- Strategic Groups and Mapping (article posted on Brightspace)
- Strategies to Crack Well Guarded Markets (R0705E)
- Top Boards Do These 4 Things Differently (H05E3K)
- Disney: Endgame (article posted on Brightspace)
- How Fast Can Your Company Afford to Grow? (R0105K)
- Robinhood has a customer service problem (article on Brightspace)
- Competing Globally (8123)
- Demographics Aren't China's Friend (article on Brightspace)
- How Nonprofit Leaders can keep their organizations afloat (H05KMK)
- Lofty Missions, Down to Earth Plans (R0403)
- How to Market in a Downturn (R0904D)
- How to Survive a Recession and Thrive Afterwards (R1903F)
- Don't Make This Common M&A Mistake (H05FVE)
- A Beginners Guide to Bankruptcy (<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/beginner-guide-to-business-bankruptcy-4126049>)

Planned Case Studies:

- Athena Bancorp (919517)
- Crescent Pure (915539)
- Arrogant Brewing: Strategy in the Craft Beer Market (I0043e-htm; multi-media case)
- Trader Joe's: At a Crossroads? (IM1243)
- Villeroy & Boch: Tradition, Innovation and 270 Years of a Franco-German Alliance(IM1042)
- Sanctuary Soft: International Expansion Strategies (409104)
- Eagle Nest Association of Waterdown: Decisions at the Crossroads (W20789)
- Hostess Brands, Inc. Bankruptcy, Liquidation and Revitalization (posted on course site)
- Toys"R"Us, What Went Wrong? (W18475)

Final Project cases (1 per team)

1. Big Apple Circus: Time to Fold the Tent? (418050)
2. Bracken Darrell's Turnaround & Growth Strategy at Logitech (IM1128)
3. Contributor Funding and the Turnaround of the Guardian (W20609)
4. MoviePass: A Netflix for Moviegoers? (W19657)

Bio of Robert Johnson

Robert's expertise is with strategy, marketing, and product development for tech companies such as Atrion, CGI, Inc. and Deloitte Consulting. His specialties are customer intimacy initiatives, business development and leading product line expansions that build substantial revenue streams over time. For example, in 2008 Robert was recruited by the CEO of Atrion to co-lead new product development and product marketing; revenues grew from \$30M to over \$170M during his tenure.

In Spring 2017, Robert founded Bennett Frank Associates, a strategy and marketing execution firm that helps companies in business and tech services, consumer goods industries, education

tech, and federal government pursue emerging and overlooked markets, target the right customers, and generate demand to accelerate growth.

During the Pandemic, Robert had a unique client. From June 2020 to July 2022, he was engaged by the RI Dept of Health as a Sr. Project Manager for the State's Covid-19 Testing Team responsible for procurement, supply and vendor management. During that period, the State conducted over 8 million Covid tests.

Robert has taught URI MBA 540 from 2015 to 2017, Marketing in URI's One Year MBA program from 2017 to 2019, and MBA 565 in 2020 to 2024.

Robert has an M.B.A. from Babson College and a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts, Boston.