

## Overview Core Courses - MBA Phase 2

This document contains information on the philosophy and procedure with regards to the general structure of BSN's core courses as well as a summary of the content of each core course.

### 1. Core Course structure

The six core courses offered in the second Phase of the programme are:

HRM	- Human Resources Management
MM	- Marketing Management
OM	- Operations Management
FM	- Financial Management
IMIS	- Information Management & Internet Strategy
SM	- Strategic Management

Although not in every course literally enhanced (FM, IMIS and SM), BSN's core course are generally structured as follows:

- **Vision**  
Deals with general (not introductory) theoretical knowledge relating to the core course and also explores which processes form the foundation within the respective management field.
- **Instruments**  
Covers important management tools or methods and their practical applicability.
- **Integration**  
Is intended to provide the student with a platform for understanding the link between the central issues of each core course and other related issues which are of importance to the student's organisation.

Each section within a course comprises a couple of 'units' or 'topics' which BSN refers to as workshops. The number of workshops per section usually varies, but the amount of study required for completion of each core course is similar.

Key aspects with regards to the selection of workshop topics and prescribed articles are:

- **Relevance** to the overall vision on the management field as well as to the current business environment.
- **Inspire** the students to further explore each workshop topic and, where relevant / applicable, challenge the views presented.
- **Actuality** of the publications.

It must be stressed that emphasis is placed on the first two aspects. In other words, an article published in, say 1990, could obviously not be classed in the category 'actuality', yet may still be considered very relevant and inspirational. The underlying thought of the core courses is to provide the student with relevant knowledge, by means of which he / she can not only make decisions on a suitable Action Learning Project (information, and new insights instilled), but also increase the chances of successful implementation (knowledge gained).

References to the reading material per workshop are usually structured as follows:

**Prescribed book(s)**

BSN acknowledges the value of using first-class textbooks, yet not so much as the 'leading feature' of a core course, but rather as an important source of reference. Hence, developers are encouraged (but not instructed) to limit the compulsory reading to 1 title, covering the core course in a generic fashion.

**Recommended book(s)**

References to other (not compulsory) books that enhance the overall vision of the course and / or are deemed to provide substantially deeper insights into (particular workshops of) the core course.

**Prescribed article(s)**

These are the readings (usually 1 or 2 articles) supplementary to each workshop in the core course, of which selection is based on their relevance, inspirational value and actuality.

**Supplementary article(s)**

Additional references, included for the purpose of background reading. Recommended but not necessarily compulsory.

## 2. Contents core courses

### 2.1 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

To some organisations considered to be “a necessary evil”, while by others perceived as their “most valuable assets”. However, as with many clichés, the latter seems to be more reliable, or rather, the more preferable to build an MBA core course in HRM upon. Indeed the H in HRM represents what it initially is all about, but in this course students will be asked to reach further than the ‘basics of the discipline’ and elevate HRM out of its traditional fashion.

The authority in this respect is professor René ten Bos, senior consultant at Schouten & Nelissen, a leading Dutch Consultancy Firm. As background information for some of the workshops, relevant chapters of his book “Organisational Behaviour” are included in the core course material

Throughout the core course we will bring into play the visions of David Ulrich, professor of Business at University of Michigan and author of books like “Human Resource Champions” and “Tomorrow’s HR Management”. For many years Ulrich has been pushing the bounds of traditional thinking in HR management. He has helped to develop and promote innovative ideas like learning organisations, ‘boundless’ organisations and how HR executives can become strategic business partners.

#### Workshops

##### Vision

1. HR Moves to the Executive Floor
2. Managing, Planning and Building for and with Diversity – moved from 4
3. What Do Leaders Really Do?

##### Instruments

4. The Generation Y Challenge - moved from 2
5. Managing Performance
6. ‘What gets measured, gets done’: HR & Balanced Scorecards

##### Integration

7. Managing Change
8. Culture - Inside and Outside the Skin
9. Ethics - the Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing?

#### Prescribed Textbook

Price, Alan. 2004. *Human Resource Management in a Business Context*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Thomson Learning

## 2.2 MARKETING MANAGEMENT

BSN's subject expert is Professor Paul Turken. Based on his long experience in the field, he determined the subjects and structure of the workshops and selected the articles that have been incorporated as the core of this module. For more than ten years, Paul Turken was a board member of BBDO NL, the number one advertising and consulting group in the Netherlands, where he held the post of Managing Director from 1994 to 2000. Prior to that he was a partner and senior consultant with WPM, specialising in turnaround management. In July 2001, Professor Turken stepped down from his post at BBDO NL. He now divides his time between running his publishing house 'Rainbow Pockets' and tutoring at BSN Netherlands and Rotterdam's Erasmus University.

### Workshops

#### **Vision** (The psychology of marketing)

1. Creating Raving Fans
2. Marketing and Emotions
3. Branding

#### **Instruments** (The means to create and maintain relationships)

4. Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM)
5. Direct Marketing and Electronic Marketing
6. Rebranding
7. Pricing and Added Value

#### **Integration** (Current issues and developments)

8. Retail Marketing
9. Globalisation
10. Ethics

### Prescribed Textbook

Kotler, Philip & Kevin Keller. 2005. *Marketing Management*. 12<sup>th</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall

## 2.3 OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

The course in Operations Management seeks to address the issues which distinguish service operations, particularly from those in other fields. Systems theory forms a useful basis for understanding and analysing the function and management of operational systems. The 'hard' and 'soft' systems techniques used are intended to provide a broad methodological framework.

The core course in Operations Management focuses on the interrelationships between systems, service and technical factors, product quality, capacity and productivity. At present the course is being improved by Professor Walther von Hainzl, utilising his extensive professional experience based on his current involvement in over 20 companies as director, owner or founder.

### Workshops

#### Vision

1. What is Operations Management?
2. Operations Strategy

#### Instruments

3. Design in Operations Management
4. Design of Products & Services and of the Operations Network
5. Layout & Flow
6. Process Technology
7. Job Design and Work Organisation
8. The Nature of Planning & Control
9. Capacity Planning & Control
10. Inventory and Supply Chain Planning & Control
11. MRP, ERP and JIT
12. Project Planning & Control
13. Quality Planning & Control

#### Integration

14. Operations Improvement, Failure Prevention & Recovery
15. Total Quality Management (TQM)

### Prescribed textbook

Slack, Nigel et al. 2004. *Operations Management*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Financial Times / Prentice Hall

## 2.5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Management also referred to as Corporate Finance or Managerial Finance, is an extremely interesting and challenging field of study. The preparation for this core course features a structure that slightly differs from the other course as it is based on a couple of assignments.

### Syllabus

Before you can make justified decisions on what is most interesting or relevant to your situation / organisation, mastering the basics of the discipline is a prerequisite. Hence, this preparation commences with the compulsory reading of the syllabus "An unexpected introduction and in depth vision on Financial Management" by Dr. Tjalling Palmbergen RA

### Assignments

At the heart of this core course are 10 assignments, each covering a particular aspect of financial management. In preparation for the conference in The Netherlands, you are to select at least 4 of these assignments to carry out and eventually deliver a presentation on your findings during the conference.

1. Du Pont chart
2. The Costs of Financial Management
3. Benchmarking
4. Improvement of Results
5. Budgeting
  
6. Profit margin
7. Activity Based Costing (ABC)
8. Economic Value Added (EVA)
9. Balanced Scorecard
10. Incentive Issues

## 2.5 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INTERNET STRATEGY

In its current version this core course is not designed according to the 'vision – instruments – integration structure', but intends to provide a fine balance between Information Management and Internet strategy.

The first two clusters of workshops provide insight in the actual discipline of managing information. Examples of questions that a manager may encounter and which will be dealt with in these workshops are; What is information? Which tools to manage the information do I have of my disposal? How (based on which criteria) do I make a sound decision with regards to the possible implementation of an MIS? What about the ethics? How much (and which) information does my staff need for execution of their tasks? How is this being determined and evaluated?

Although the Internet is 'merely' a tool, mastering the knowledge and skills that enable managers to determine how – and to what extent – this tool should be incorporated in one's business, has become an issue of increasing importance over the past ten years. Hence the final section of this core course is dedicated in its entirety to the development of a suitable Internet Strategy as envisaged by the Dutch Internet strategy specialist Dr. Ben Tiggelaar.

Despite the hype creation by the end of the nineties and subsequent disappointments, many entrepreneurs and managers comprehend the fact that Internet could (should) play a critical part in their business strategy. They have also been made aware that simply adopt and implement a new technology is usually no guarantee for success and that the interaction between technology and ordinary user is the real factor that determines what happens in the social and economical environment.

### Workshops

#### Information Management 1

1. Information Systems in Context
2. Data and Information
3. Quality Issues in Online Publications

#### Information Management 2

4. Security and Controls
5. The Strategic Alignment of e-Commerce, IT and Organisational Strategies
6. Business Intelligence Methodologies, Agile with Rigor?

#### Internet Strategy

7. Internet and the Digital Economy
8. Internet- and E- Business Strategy
9. The Strategy and Technology Toolbox
10. The On-Line Marketing & E-Commerce Strategy

### Prescribed Textbooks

Stephen Haag, Amy Philips & Maeve Cummings. 2007. *Management Information Systems for the Information Age*. 5th Edition. New York. McGraw-Hill College

Tiggelaar, Ben. 2003. *Internet strategy 2.0*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cape Town: Financial Times / Prentice Hall: Boesenkool, André (English version provided by BSN)

## 2.6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic Management aims to focus on the strategic, cross-organisational interrelationships between planning, external and internal markets, quality, productivity and performance in organisations.

The course is structured in four sections (instead of three). The first section presents a generic overview of strategy, elaborating on various visions. The section continues with the actual setting of strategic objectives, because there is little use in managing a strategy if you don't know what it is you aim to achieve.

Section 2 is dedicated to the assessment of the various options through which the set objectives could be realised, which is part of the planning process. This also involves a thorough analysis of the environment with which your organisation interacts as well as an overview of useful instruments in both respects. Subsequently a final choice from the alternatives considered should be made, which is the theme of the third section.

The emphasis here is on the importance of excellent leadership and decision-making skills.

The final section deals with the implementation of the chosen strategy, in which process the value of learning from (strategic) failure as well as dealing with ethical dilemmas take central stage.

### **Section 1: Strategic objectives**

1. History of Strategy
2. Strategic Intent

### **Section 2: Strategic options**

3. Strategy and Environment
4. Strategic Planning

### **Section 3: Strategic selection**

5. Bridging the Leadership Gap
6. Decision - Making

### **Section 4: Strategy implementation**

7. Learning from Failure
8. Ethics and Dilemmas

### **Prescribed Textbook**

Johnson, Gerry & Scholes Kevan. 2005. *Exploring Corporate Strategy*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Harlow: Financial Times / Pearson Education