Innovation for Profitable Growth and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

This course explores the organizational and management requirements that generate and determine the viability of new-growth opportunities. Specific focus is placed on management of processes that drive innovation and greatly improve your probability of achieving profitable results and sustainable competitive advantage. New product creation, innovation, development, and management topics will be covered using lectures, group discussions, case studies, and projects.

Syllabus

Gary Hamel, quoted in a recent Wall Street Journal section: “I think we are now moving to a creative economy where even knowledge itself is becoming a commodity. Knowledge advantages dissipate very quickly, so everyone is in a kind of perpetual race to invent the next thing, to create some new form of value..... the most important differentiator will be how fast you can create something new.”

This course focuses on the critical activity of innovation and how to manage it successfully. It will provide you with pragmatic frameworks that should be useful in your career.

Few activities can be as rewarding for a firm as the creation of a winning new product, yet most innovation efforts fall short of expectations, frustrating everyone involved and wasting valuable and scarce resources.

This course uses relevant cases and Clayton Christensen’s powerful book, “The Innovator’s Dilemma” to explore the processes and values required for innovation success and the forces that lead successful companies astray. You will learn that most innovations are incremental (sustaining) because firms focus on their best customers and that radical (disruptive) game-changing innovation is extremely difficult for firms due to that rational focus. You will learn how to manage this dilemma for innovation success at all levels.

The classes are highly interactive and participative. Your classmates’ shared experiences and insights enhance the learning process.

Course Structure

The reading assignments and cases require you to prepare for each class in a serious manner. Doing so will greatly strengthen your learning and will make your class time
more productive and enjoyable. In addition, the class format reinforces the importance of collaboration for innovation and marketing success.

The assignments for a class should be prepared in advance of that class. These require the identification of key issues, problems, and opportunities; the articulation and evaluation of alternative approaches to deal with identified problems; the selection of a preferred strategy; and the formulation of a concrete action plan to implement the strategy. From the comparison in class of different approaches, we intend to highlight the nature of the tradeoffs, the importance of assumptions, personal values and orientations in the decision making process, and the usefulness and limitations of an informed, analytical approach.

The course has a mixture of new and “classic” cases. The latter ones offer the opportunity to discuss fundamental and timeless issues and challenges faced by companies. Please study them in that spirit and do not dismiss them because they seem “old”. Ask yourself: what can you learn from this situation that is generalizable to companies that I am interested in today?

Design Project
One of the takeaways from this course should be an understanding of “design thinking” and the “design process”. In that regard, you will be assigned a project to be done with your team that requires use of design thinking and the design process. The project will proceed in phases with in-class presentations and critiques at the end of each phase.

Grades
Class participation 50%
MidTerm Exam 15%
Exam (final) 15%
Design Project 10%
Discretionary 10%

Your grade will be weighted in your favor. Strong participation in class with quality comments and insights but perhaps a less than excellent exam(s) would result in most of your grade being weighted to class participation, for example.

Assignments - Cases and Readings . (see the assignment schedule)

Book: The Innovator’s Dilemma by Clayton Christensen (available in paperback, any edition will do)

Cases: Most classes will include discussion of an innovation case and discussion of specific creativity/innovation/new product development topics.

Professionalism
You are expected to attend all classes, come prepared, arrive on time, keep your phone off and away, leave only at the end of the session, and show respect to your classmates by
listening when they are speaking. To encourage you, everyone will start the semester with 5 extra credit “professionalism” points.

Loss of points:
- unexcused absence: 2 points
- arrive late or leave early: 1 point
- electronic interference: 2 points

Special Accommodations
If you have been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP services, please let me know and we will arrange a time to discuss your specific needs.

Honor Code
You are expected to adhere to the College of Charleston’s Honor System.

School of Business learning goals addressed by this course are:
- **Effective Communications**: Students will write professional documents that are technically correct and concise and make effective presentations utilizing technological tools and ability utilizing relevant discipline specific knowledge.
- **Ethical Awareness**: Students will recognize and be able to appraise ethical dilemmas involved in business decisions and competently engage in discourse aimed at resolution of these dilemmas utilizing relevant discipline specific knowledge.
- **Global Awareness**: Students will recognize and examine the global implications of business decisions while evaluating and integrating innovative applications of these implications utilizing relevant discipline specific knowledge.
- **Problem Solving Ability**: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills in identifying and evaluating problems and opportunities in the business environment and apply analytical techniques to formulate creative solutions utilizing relevant discipline specific knowledge.

Jim Kindley  Adjunct Professor, Marketing
Mr. Kindley was a Senior Lecturer of Marketing in the Cox School of Business at SMU in Dallas from 1996 to 2018. He has taught at The University of Missouri, The University of South Carolina, and The College of Charleston where he also served as director of the MBA program for four years. He has taught marketing fundamentals, marketing strategy, and innovation courses to undergraduates, MBA students, and executives.

Mr. Kindley has been a group product manager at Rubbermaid, vice president of marketing at Bissell, vice president of marketing at Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing Co., president of American Designer Pottery, and has participated in several start-up businesses. He currently consults with companies to improve their capabilities to develop successful new products. He also provides creative services for consumer products firms.

Mr. Kindley served on the board of directors of the Williamson-Dickie Mfg. Co. for seventeen years until it was recently sold to VF Corporation. He is presently an advisor and mentor to several entrepreneurial businesses.
Mr. Kindley has an MBA from Harvard, a MS in Product Design from Illinois Institute of Technology, and a BS in Industrial Design from Georgia Tech.

Kindley  Spring 2021  College of Charleston  
**MBAD 505 Creativity and Innovation**

Book – *The Innovator’s Dilemma* by Clayton Christensen (any edition)  
*Available on Amazon*

Cases and Readings available at the HBS Publishing course pack. An access number will be provided prior to the start of the semester.