

NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  
P11. 2110 (002) Strategic Management  
Faculty: Michael Zisser  
Semester: Fall 2005  
Time: Tuesday, 4:30-6:10

Contact Information for Michael Zisser

E-mail: [mzisser@universitysettlement.org](mailto:mzisser@universitysettlement.org)

212-453-4559

fax: 212-475-3278

Office Hours: Immediately after class or as arranged

Classroom: Silver Center, Room 712

## Course Objectives

Strategic Management aims to prepare current and future managers of public service organizations for leadership roles by focusing on the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to manage these organizations.

The successful operation of public service organizations (including governmental agencies and non-profit organizations) requires a basic understanding and mastery of a number of areas, including: defining and redefining organizational purposes; accurately reading changes in the internal and external environments; handling the complex trade-offs between demand for services and resource constraints; maintaining the commitment and productivity of employees; guiding the organization toward continuous improvement of systems to meet client needs; generating sufficient resources to maintain organizational growth and stability; providing overall organizational leadership; helping to shape and resolve key organizational choices; and understanding the costs and benefits and risks of taking actions. Thus, managers need to be comfortable and skillful in thinking, deciding, and acting **strategically** both in organizational affairs and in matters affecting their capacity for leadership.

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to have achieved the following:

- (1) a deeper understanding of the manager's role as leader, strategist, planner, designer of structure, and creative problem-solver;
- (2) a good understanding of the role of personal and community values in leading and managing organizations;
- (3) an enhanced ability to diagnose critical short term and long term issues confronting an organization and make recommendations for strategic solutions;
- (4) a good sense of the strategic implications of organizational structure and process;
- (5) the ability to tailor strategies to promote implementation of specific objectives;
- (6) an understanding of various management tools and their applications to public service organizations;
- (7) an appreciation for the concepts of time, unpredictability, chance, failure, limits of power and other sobering forces that influence effective management performance.

## Requirements

- (1) Active involvement in class;
- (2) A critical analysis of one or more of the readings related to themes discussed in class (due Session 6 of the semester);
- (3) One or two short exercises assigned on an unannounced basis in response to issues raised in class (due within 48 hours of the assignment);
- (4) Maintain a Semester Daily Journal that reflects, on a regular basis, your responses to assigned readings, class discussions, issues of the day, extra books you have read related to the course, books you have read which have influenced your thinking as a manager, work experiences that have been influenced by or have influenced what has happened in class, etc; due Session 13 of the semester.

## **Grading**

Class involvement 25%; analysis and short exercises 25%; Journal 50%.

## **Required Readings**

- (1) Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, (first published 1532)
- (2) New York Times and other periodicals (for daily issues)
- (3) Kevin P. Kearns, Private Sector Strategies for Social Sector Success
- (5) Gregory Dees, Jed Emerson, Peter Economy, Strategic Tools for Social Entrepreneurs

## **Recommended Readings**

The 9/11 Commission Report (Chapters 11-13), W.W. Norton edition  
Robert Rubin, In An Uncertain World, (Chapter 2), Random House  
Steven Levitt, Stephen Dubner, Freakonomics  
Others as noted in class

## **Course Topics and Readings**

Session 1 (September 6): Introduction to the course objectives, instructional materials, requirements, grading, professor, and students; Introduction to definitions of strategic management

Discussion of key concepts and issues, including: definitions of strategic management, what are the distinctions between strategic planning, strategic management, and strategic action; differences between strategic, tactical, and long range issues; how have the fields of management, planning, and organizational design evolved and learned from each other; of what use is this class.

Session 2 (September 13): Managers and the Managerial Context: Mapping the Realities of Thought and Action in Strategic Terms

What do managers actually do every day? What are the contextual issues that influence and affect strategic management? What do they not tell you – and what can't be described - in the textbooks about management realities?

Readings: articles

Session 3 (September 20): Managers and the Managerial Context, continued

Readings: Kearns (selected chapters) and Dees et al (selected chapters)

Session 4 (September 27): Managers and the Organizational Context – Key Operational Factors

Discussion of key concepts and issues related to strategic management, including: how to read and understand organizational structure and purpose; the relevance of mission and culture; the traditions of style; differences between public, private, and non-profit sectors around key variables; the effects of scale; constituencies and stakeholders; the variety of change or learning styles; variations in organizational psychology.

Readings: Kearns and Dees continued

Session 5 (October 4): Managers and the Organizational Context, continued

Session 6 (October 11): Strategic Assessment vs. Management vs. Planning: Case Studies

Knowing what role to play in what situations. Understanding the difference between your role and what the organization is about.

Readings: Recommended Books, Handouts

Session 7 (October 18): Strategic Assessment vs. Management vs. Planning: Case Studies continued

Session 8 (October 25) The Marriage of Programmatic Substance and Strategy

Discussion of the relationship between substantive program and policy issues, organizational issues, and strategic management. Consideration of the ways in which strategic management is influenced, constrained, enhanced, etc., based on the actual work being performed by the organization. Factors to be considered include budgets, participant capacity, leadership capacity, spatial capacity, etc.

Session 9 (November 1): The Influence of Value Structures and Social Philosophies on Strategic Management and Leadership

Examining and challenging the main elements of influence, persuasion, control, style, insight (and so on) available to a manager. How do different qualities or characteristics of leadership affect individual, group and organizational performance or the failure/success of particular plans and strategies?

Readings: The Prince

Session 10 (November 8): Value Structures, continued

Session 11 (November 15): Organizational Maintenance & Organizational Growth: Is There a Choice?

Session 12 (November 22): Assessing Risk, Handling Loss, and Being an Entrepreneur

Session 13 (November 29): Managerial Success or Successful Strategic Management

Discussion of alternative forms/styles of evaluation, measurement and control, assessment, including: performance vs. outcome measures for programs; organizational health and stability; leadership investment; image and reputation, etc.

Session 14 (December 6): What Is Strategy Really About, and Does It Really Relate to Management

Whimsical thoughts on Strategic Management. Does it exist? Can you define it? Would you recognize it if it was in front of you? Do you train managers, grow them, clone them, or steal them?

Session 15 (December 13): Exam Week