

INTOPIA: Applied Competitive Strategy

MHR 7421
Autumn 2017

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Reading packet All required course materials will be distributed via email or through Canvas.

There is an additional text that is not required but is recommended. **Thinking Strategically: The Competitive Edge in Business, Politics, and Everyday Life** by Aninash K. Dixit and Barry J. Nalebuff. It is available from Amazon.com and other bookstores.

Course Overview

The main course focus is on the international operations business simulation INTOPIA and your company's operations in it. Each company must be well prepared to make and execute decisions each week as indicated by the schedule. The flavor of the simulation and of the course as a whole is distinctly entrepreneurial. You will be a member of a 4 person team who comprises one of the companies in the INTOPIAN world. You and your teammates will be responsible for all aspects of your company's operations.

Each week in the course represents one financial quarter of activity in the INTOPIAN world. The first week of the course will be an adventure as we get acclimated, but after that we will settle into a routine. Our typical pattern will be to utilize Monday for initial negotiations among Intopian companies with the possibility of the occasional lecture on a Monday. Near the end of the quarter, we'll use Mondays for company presentations. Wednesday will be reserved interactions among Intopian companies and to finalize company decisions that will be due on Thursday morning. The goal will be distribute a "check run" of your decisions on Thursday for you catch any errors in your submissions and to distribute final results on Friday which will afford you the weekend to do your initial analyses. Wednesday class will be reserved for activities related to the INTOPIAN marketplace.

Each company will give a comprehensive company presentation near the end of the semester. Each company must keep a (rather informal) log or diary of deliberations, work papers, and general running history of the company for submission at the end of the academic quarter. This "diary" should accumulate naturally week by week as a byproduct of your work. It will be useful to type up two or three paragraphs a week to summarize. But 30 to 45 minutes of effort per week to keep up to date with the diary is the spirit of things here, not more. Your diary entries should reflect what you expected, your assumptions, and the outcomes. Understanding what did (or didn't) happen – and why – is important. You will learn both by keeping the diary and by reviewing it occasionally.

You will also be well advised to keep an informal personal journal – not to be turned in – of your reactions, insights, confusions, general thoughts and other personal mental events that occur during your INTOPIAN experience. This material will be very valuable to you in deepening your learning experience and in helping you to prepare your final assignment.

In Week 2, each company must submit a brief company strategy statement, suitable for framing—whoops, I mean suitable for distribution to the entire INTOPIAN marketplace, including an organization chart (with names and titles) and company name. Try to hold it to one page. Its purpose is to allow each company to position itself in the marketplace and to facilitate efficient market development and structure by increasing awareness and perceptions of other companies. Companies are free to modify the statement from time to time as they see a need to do so. **EACH COMPANY MUST E-MAIL ITS STRATEGY,**

CORPORATE NAME AND OFFICER ROSTER (NAME AND POSITION) TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE CLASS. TRY TO DO IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I WILL DETERMINE THE ADDRESS FOR GENERAL CLASS EMAILS.

In some circumstances, I may act as a representative of the board of directors of each company and I hope to meet or talk with the management at least once during the quarter. (I also fulfill other roles, as you will see.) Feel free to phone me (best to reach me on my cell phone at 614-256-1755) about ANY management problem, sooner rather than later. The cell number is generally more successful. Acceptable civilized phone hours are 9 am to 10 pm (though I may be out from time to time). If you e-mail me, please INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER(S). Phone messages/voicemail are probably the most efficient way to get my attention and the cell number is answered pretty reliably, though email also works pretty well. Be sure to leave substantive detail in your voicemails so that I can respond substantively to your voicemail recorder. Again, please leave me a callback number.

The *INTOPIA Gazette* is published weekly with frequent *Gazette EXTRAS* for news of extraordinary importance.

A written individual assignment will be due two days after the last day of class on Thursday, December 10. The Final Assignment must be submitted as hard copy; email alone is not acceptable. However, in addition to your hard copy submission, please e-mail it to me for backup. Instructions for the Final Assignment will be distributed in approximately Week 5 or Week 6.

Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Intopia Company Performance	50%
Company Presentations (including journal)	20%
Final assignment	<u>30%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

Course Schedule

A detailed course calendar follows on the next page. It is important to be at class on time because there are often important announcements each week. Companies adjourn to their headquarters and conduct meetings and negotiations and meet with Arthur DeBig as needed. The *Intopia Gazette* and the *Intopia Gazette Extra* are also published weekly. While the calendar represents the intended schedule for the course, it is subject to change as the course evolves.

	Mon 8/21	Tu 8/22	Wed 8/23	Th 8/24 or Fri 8/25
1		Introduction and Team Formation		
	Mon 8/28	Tu 8/29	Wed 8/30	Th 8/31 or Fri 9/1
2		Intopia Q1/Q2 Decisions		Q1/Q2 Results Distributed
	Mon 9/4	Tu 9/5	Wed 9/6	Th 9/7 or Fri 9/8
3		Intopia	Q3 Decisions Due	Q3 Results Distributed
	Mon 9/11	Tu 9/12	Wed 9/13	Th 9/14 or Fri 9/15
4		Intopia	Q4 Decisions Due	Q4 Results Distributed
	Mon 9/18	Tu 9/19	Wed 9/20	Th 9/21 or Fri 9/22
5		Intopia	Q5 Decisions Due	Q5 Results Distributed
	Mon 9/25	Tu 9/26	Wed 9/27	Th 9/28 or Fri 9/29
6		Intopia	Q6 Decisions Due	Q6 Results Distributed
	Mon 10/2	Tu 10/3	Wed 10/4	Th 10/5 or Fri 10/6
7		Intopia	Q7 Decisions Due	Q7 Results Distributed
	Mon 10/9	Tu 10/10	Wed 10/11	Th 10/12 or Fri 10/13
8		No class (Fisher reading day)	No decisions	
	Mon 10/16	Tu 10/17	Wed 10/18	Th 10/19 or Fri 10/20
9		Intopia	Q8 Decisions Due	Q8 Results Distributed
	Mon 10/23	Tu 10/24	Wed 10/25	Th 10/26 or Fri 10/27
10		Intopia	Q9 Decisions Due	Q9 Results Distributed
	Mon 10/30	Tu 10/31	Wed 11/1	Th 11/2 or Fri 11/3
11		Intopia and Team Presentations	Q10 Decisions Due	Q10 Results Distributed
	Mon 11/6	Tu 11/7	Wed 11/8	Th 11/9 or Fri 11/10
12		No class		
	Mon 11/13	Tu 11/14	Wed 11/15	Th 11/16 or Fri 11/17
13		Intopia and Team Presentations	Q11 Decisions Due	Q11 Results Distributed
	Mon 11/20	Tu 11/21	Wed 11/22	Th 11/23 or Fri 11/24
14		Intopia and Team Presentations	Q12 Decisions Due	THANKSGIVING
	Mon 11/27	Tu 11/28	Wed 11/29	Th 11/30 or Fri 12/1
15		Intopia and Team Presentations	Q13 Decisions Due	Q13 Results Distributed
	Mon 12/4	Tu 12/5	Wed 12/6	Th 12/7 or Fri 12/8
16		Course Wrap Up Final Assignment Due		

COURSE SCHEDULE

SESSION 1

Tuesday, August 22, 2017

Course Introduction and Orientation and Company Team Formation

We will go over key aspects of the Intopia simulation and the course. Most importantly, we will form teams of four members each that will remain together throughout the quarter. We will also distribute software for the course. Bring at least one laptop per group. If all goes extremely well, we will attempt to do the startup practice exercise listed for next week and described in your reading packet entitled *Decision Exercise with Print Out*.

While not required until the next class period, you will benefit greatly if you have already read the **INTOPIA Executive Guide** and **INTOPIA Q&A** prior to class.

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SESSION 2

Tuesday, August 29, 2017

INTOPIA: You will be preparing to Execute Quarters 1 & 2. It will be a zoo.

READINGS: You should have read the **INTOPIA Executive Guide** and **INTOPIA Q&A** prior to class. You will need to know it thoroughly and the sooner you get started the better informed (and less mystified) you will be about the INTOPIAN world. It may help to divide the reading chores among your team members. For example, let each team member concentrate on a different functional area purely for purposes of learning the mechanics, not necessarily for the way you organize the business.

Be sure you have carefully read this course calendar.

Bring at least one laptop per group. Each company must be well prepared; there is a lot to do. We shall try to allow some time for each company who wishes to do so to make a brief (2-3 minutes) oral statement to other companies concerning its marketplace stance. Some time will be allowed in Quarters 3 and 4 for companies who wish to present after the Quarter 1-2 session. **Each person must have done the Decision Forms Exercise. This can be found in the document entitled, “Web-based Decision Input Instructions for INTOPIA.doc” which has been previously sent to you.**

READINGS: Review Pankaj Ghemawat and Jan Rivkin, “Creating Competitive Advantage,” Harvard Business School note from your MBA 980 reading packet

Submit Organization Chart and Company Name. One person must be designated as president.

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See calendar for other class sessions

Final Assignment due by Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 6:15 pm