Information Technology
Course

Case assignments

Session 1
Prepare case: Competing through Electronic Data Interchange at Papeteries Brun Passot
Questions:
1. What factors (business, managerial, technological) were critical for the successful development of the tele-purchasing applications at Brun Passot?
2. If you were a Brun Passot manager, what would be your position with respect to the ongoing internal debate mentioned in the case (i.e., favouring 'pushing SICLAD' versus 'diffusing the advanced EDI application')?
3. Assess the success potential of Brun Passot future projects for leveraging its EDI infrastructure, in particular the company's intent to broaden the business scope and geographical scale of its operations?

Session 1
Prepare case: Amazon.com versus BOL.de (1999)
Questions:
1. Is it justifiable for a company like Amazon.com to continue investing so much money and effort in a business operation that not only has never made a profit but is incurring heavier losses?
2. Will Bertelsmann benefit (or be hindered) by its physical organizational structure and management processes in its attempt to strengthen its position as an electronic commerce product/service provider? Defend your arguments.
3. In your opinion, what industries/companies would constitute a threat to Amazon.com and/or Bertelsmann’s BOL over the next three to five years? Explain.
4. What success factors do you think are critical for online books (and mass-media) sales and, more generally, for launching an electronic commerce business?

Session 3
Questions:
1. Is it justifiable for a company such as CompuNet to invest a lot of money and effort into the service side of its business when service accounts for only 15% of its total revenues?
2. Is it advantageous or rather adventurous for CompuNet to design Lotus Notes applications requiring an ISDN-based telecommunications infrastructure that is not yet available in Germany?
3. How will the competitive environment change over time considering CompuNet’s shift towards a multi-vendor service provider? More specifically, who are currently the main competitors and who will they be in the near future?
4. To what degree does/will the management complexity of a multi-vendor service provider require strategic partnerships? For what specific activities should CompuNet consider such partnerships and who should it consider as potential partners?

Session 4
Prepare case: The Tesco.com and Leshop.ch Experiences: Is Success at Hand?
Questions:
1. How can the Bon Appétit Group benefit from the acquisition of Leshop.ch? How about Leshop.ch?
2. What factors were critical for Tesco.com's success in the Internet-based grocery retailing business?
3. How would you assess the current revenue model of Tesco.com (in terms of its strengths and weaknesses)? How would you improve on it?
4. Beyond the information given in the case, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the different order fulfillment approaches (more specifically, in-store vs. warehouse-based)?

Session 5
Prepare case: Advance Bank
Questions:
1. Is the innovative use of IT one of Advance Bank's core competencies? Explain.
2. What should Advance Bank do next in order to further attract new customers and build loyalty among existing ones?
3. In your opinion, who will dominate the direct banking business in the long run? Will it be:
   . the large, branch-based banks,
   . the relatively new direct banks which operate only in a branch-less way,
   . other financial service providers such as insurance firms and credit card processing companies,
   . new entrants from outside the financial services industry such as large retail chains and software houses, or other players in other industries?

Session 6
Prepare case: Mondus.com (2001)
Questions:
1. What would you have done differently than mondus in designing, implementing and operating a business-to-business electronic marketplace?
2. If you were Rouzbeh Pirouz, the Chief Executive Officer of mondus.com, what strategic actions would you consider for the near- and medium-term to further enhance mondus' value-added and increase market share? Defend your arguments.
3. Beyond the context of small- and medium-sized enterprises described in the case, what unique features (in terms of capabilities as well as potential advantages and drawbacks) can electronic marketplaces offer to large companies? You may answer this question in generic terms and/or in the context of one or more specific industries.
4. What criteria should a company use when choosing an electronic marketplace for its procurement activity?
Session 7
Prepare case: Ducati (2000)
Questions:
1. Do you think that Ducati’s decision to exclusively sell through the Internet its MH900e motorbike model was a risky or a safe bet? Explain.
2. Since Italy is the main market for Ducati and the Internet penetration there is one of the lowest in Western Europe, is it advantageous or adventurous for Ducati to embark on a bold e-commerce strategy?
3. Following the successful online sale of the MH900e model, what do you recommend to Ducati’s top management to do next? In particular, do you think they should sell other products through the Internet? If so, how soon should they do it and what specific products should they offer?
4. “Success in the new economy will go to those who can execute clicks-and-mortar strategies that bridge the physical and virtual worlds.” Discuss the above statement and provide your views as to how companies can get the right mix of bricks and clicks in order to win the distribution channel war. You may consider one or more industries as a business context for your answer.