

Course outline for

SME MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Course Objectives

To create understanding about the reality of small and medium enterprises in different cultural and socio-economic settings from a managerial and organisational perspective. To demonstrate the role and importance of the small and medium enterprises in economic development and in the creation of value.

Course Contents

The course has two main perspectives on SMEs – an internal perspective where the managing of SMEs is in focus, and the external perspective that looks at SMEs in their roles in economic development.

Topics include: definition of SMEs; international comparison according to the GEM report (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor); competitive advantage in SMEs; strategic management for SMEs; corporate governance for competitive advantage in SMEs; managing people in SMEs; innovation in SMEs; diagnosing SME performance; networking among SMEs; SMEs and added value generation and the role of the SME sector in economic development; cultural aspects on SMEs; SMEs in the Baltic region.

Learning Outcome

After successful completion of the course the student should be able to understand the different conditions for SMEs in different countries; to have an understanding about general managerial issues related to SME operations; to know how to analyse SME performance; to understand how value is created and its relation to customer value.

Teaching methods

The course will be based on lectures, thematic seminars and a class discussions.

Required Textbooks

Jones, O., Tilley, F.: *Competitive Advantage in SMEs*. Wiley, London, 2003.
ISBN: 0-470-84334-9. (275 p).

Lind, P.: *Furnischool – Diagnosing Organisations*. Linköping University, 2002.
ISBN: 91-7373-426-8. (59 p).

Attendance

Attendance is compulsory and will influence the final grading (see below).

Thematic Seminars

Four seminars scheduled on Wednesdays 13.00 – 15.00 starting in the second week. At each seminar two groups will prepare and present a theme (Power Point presentation) selected from the following list of topics:

1. The SME sector in (one of) the Baltic States – development and trends.
2. Russian SME management in comparison.
3. Baltic States SME management in comparison
4. The technology level in Swedish SMEs in international comparison.
5. How does technology and human resources make SMEs competitive?
6. Potential for partnerships between SMEs in the Baltic region?
7. What are the competitive challenges for SMEs in the Baltic region?
8. Select one SME on Gotland and do a SWOT analysis (cf. Furnischool).

Discussion Paper

Lectures on November 24 and 30 will be based on discussion papers focusing on vital SME functions. The papers will be distributed at the beginning of the course and have the following titles:

Lind, P.: *Exposing Management Control – the Closing of Alstermo Bruk.*

Lind, P.: *Competitiveness through increased Added Value – a challenge to Developing Countries.*

Lind, P., Sepulveda, E., Nuñez, J.: *On the Applicability of a Computer Model for Business Performance Analysis in SMEs. A Case Study from Chile.*

Each student will read the discussion paper prior to the actual lecture and reflect upon a number of specified questions. Each student should also be prepared to give a brief presentation on the reflections during the lecture.

Teaching Schedule (tentative):

TIME	TOPIC
Nov 2, 13 -16	Introduction to the course; The Role of SMEs in Economic Development; Review of the GEM report
Nov 3, 10 -12	Chapters 1 and 2 (Competitive Advantage in SMEs)
Nov 9, 09 - 12	Chapters 3 (Strategic Management for SMEs) and 4 (Corporate Governance for Competitive Advantage in SMEs)
Nov 10, 10 -12	Chapters 5 (Sustainability and Competitiveness) and 6 (Human Resource Management: Managing People in Small Organisations)
13 - 15	Thematic Seminar #1

Nov 16, 13 -16	Chapters 7 (Employee Share Ownership in SMEs) and 8 (Managing Creativity)
Nov 17, 10 -12 13 - 15	Chapters 9 (Innovation in SMEs) and 10 (Networking) Thematic Seminar #2
Nov 23, 13 -16	Furnischool – Diagnosing Organisation
Nov 24, 10 -12 13 - 15	Customer Value vs. Added Value in SMEs (discussion paper to be distributed) Thematic Seminar #3
Nov 30, 13 -16	Exposing Management Control (discussion paper to be distributed) On the Applicability of a Computer Model for SMEs (discussion paper to be distributed)
Dec 1, 10 - 12 13 - 16	Thematic Seminar #4 Summing-up and final discussion. Each student prepares 5 comments / questions to be handed in at previous lecture.

Evaluation

Evaluated seminars, discussions and presentations. Attendance in class. Written exams. Course grades are Pass with Distinction, Pass and Fail.

Office Hours

By prior appointment.