



MANAGING GROWING COMPANIES
MGMT-GB . 2327 . 30

Professor Glenn A. Okun

E-mail

gokun@stern.nyu.edu
gokun1@mac.com

Phone

212 998 0780

Office

KMC 7-53

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to provide an understanding of the knowledge and skills that are required to manage and grow small to mid-sized firms. We will study the typical problems and opportunities that confront such organizations. Students will use a variety of disciplines including management, strategy and entrepreneurial finance in order to formulate courses of action based on incomplete information.

COURSE THEMES

The course focuses on these principal themes:

- How do managers work effectively with limited human and financial resources?
- How do small firms balance management and marketing needs against financial constraints?
- What are the unique managerial challenges of family-owned businesses?

COURSE METHODS

Each class will include discussion of readings and cases. Students will analyze cases with an action orientation, for example, what steps should we take in order to enhance value.

Classroom Contributions. The learning experience in a course like this one depends heavily on each student being prepared to actively participate in every class session. We all have expectations that will enrich the topic and direction of discussion in the course. This means that you need to be fully acquainted with the readings and cases for a given session. Positive participation includes attendance, active involvement in all in-class exercises and discussions, and maintenance of a classroom demeanor that encourages the participation of others. You will be evaluated on the quantity as well as the *quality* of your contribution and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following attributes: (a) Contribute to moving the discussion forward; (b) Offer a different, unique and relevant perspective on the issue; (c) Build on other comments of others; and (d) Include some evidence or analysis of inherent tradeoffs, i.e., demonstrate reflective thinking.

Attendance Policy. Attendance at all sessions is expected. Absences will significantly impact the class participation grade.

Laptop Policy. Laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used during class.

Written Case Analysis. Students will be required to prepare a written case-related analysis of “*Northwest Security Services*” due by 9 AM on March 8. It should be a maximum of 5 pages, excluding exhibits. The case analysis paper consists of in-depth written analysis and application of techniques and methods to a company’s growth challenges and opportunities. The paper should address the questions assigned in the syllabus. The case assignment will be graded for content and format. You are required to turn in papers that conform to professional standards of organization, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and paragraph/sentence structure. You may not discuss the case or share your work with anyone.

Group Project. See herein.

Late papers will receive a grade of F. Emails without attached papers or with attachments that are unreadable by Microsoft Word will be considered to have not been submitted and will also receive an F. An F will be quantified as a zero in the calculation of course grades. No extensions to the deadlines will be granted.

Honor Code. Students must adhere to the MBA Honor Code. All students are obligated to report to the instructor any suspected violations of the Code (see http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/scorp/committee.cfm?doc_id=4797).

Student With Disabilities. If you have a qualified disability and will require academic accommodation during this course, please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD, 998-4980) and provide me with a letter from them verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. If you will need to take an exam at the CSD, you must submit a completed Exam Accommodations Form to them at least one week prior to the scheduled exam time to be guaranteed accommodation.

Delivery. Reports should be sent by email to each of the following two addresses: gokun@stern.nyu.edu and gokun1@mac.com. Students must send two separate emails (not one in which the other address receives a copy upon delivery). Do not compress files. Please only use Word and Excel programs to produce and present your work. *You should use a return receipt (notification) flag option from your email system to allay fears of late delivery. This feature is available from the email system at home.nyu.edu.*

Required Materials.

Managing the Small to Mid-Sized Company: Concepts and Cases (Collins and Lazier), Irwin, 1995.

Case Packet

Grading Plan. The course grade will be based on the following components and weights:

Classroom Contributions:	20%
Case Report 1:	30%
Group Project:	50%

Instructor

Glenn A. Okun is Clinical Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship at New York University Stern School of Business where he teaches courses in entrepreneurship, private equity, venture capital, investment management and corporate finance. Mr. Okun advises corporations on financial and investment matters. He was President of Mitchum, Jones & Templeton, a merchant bank and broker dealer headquartered in San Francisco, California from 1998 to 2001. He previously served as a Director of Allen & Company Incorporated in New York. Mr. Okun invested in early and later stage financings of private companies in various industries. He also ran a small cap emerging growth stock hedge fund and a special situations portfolio. Mr. Okun has advised corporate clients on mergers, acquisitions and restructurings and has underwritten public offerings and private placements of securities. Mr. Okun began his investment career at the IBM Retirement Fund where he invested in mezzanine private placements, real estate, public emerging growth equities and oil and gas assets. Mr. Okun holds JD and MBA degrees from the joint degree program of Harvard University and a BA degree from Wesleyan University.

SCHEDULE

February 2

V I E Framework

Case:

“Yellowtail Marine Case #28”

Reading:

Text, Chapters 1-4

February 9

The Quality Strategy

Case:

“Granite Rock Case #5”

Reading:

Text, Chapters 5-6

February 23

Vision and Core Value Application

Case:

“L.L. Bean Case #10-11”

Reading:

Text, Chapter 7

March 2

Human Resource Issues & Change

Case:

“Joan Fabrics Case #9”

“U.S. Office Products (A & B)”

Reading:

Text, Chapter 9

“How to Make People Decisions”

March 9

Implementation/Core Values

Case:

“Randy Hess Case #17”

March 23

The Family Business

Case:

“Northwest Security Services”

The Nexus Between Strategy & Finance

Case:

“The Boston Beer Company”

Reading:

Text, Chapter 11

March 30

Service vs. Product Businesses

Case:

“Jamison & Leary Case #8 ”

“Dan Gordon”

April 6

Slow Growth Strategies

Case:

“University National Bank Case #21-22”

Reading:

Text, Chapter 8

Strategy vs. Tactics from a Venture Capitalist

April 13

Marketing

Case:

“Lost Arrow Cases #12-14”

Reading:

Text, Chapter 10

What Businesses Can Learn from Non-Profits

April 20

Nexus of Strategy and Marketing

Case:

“Boston Beer Company: Light Beer Decision”

Reading:

*Knowing a Winning Business Idea When You See One
Growth Outside the Core*

April 27

Building an Innovative Company

Case:

“Giro Sports Case #3-4”

Divisional Expansion

Case:

“ING Direct”

Reading:

The Questions Every Entrepreneur Must Answer

May 4

International Expansion

Case:

“Gordon Biersch Brewing Company”

Case:

“Shurgard Self Storage: Expansion to Europe”

Questions for Northwest Security Services:

- Evaluate Bob's process for establishing the NSS advisory board. What could be improved?
- Who should set dividends in order to avoid conflicts of interest? Create a specific policy and method of making dividend decisions. Should non-employee family members be represented in this process?
- Should there be a different set of benefits for non-family employees than those available to family employees?
- Devise a specific plan for effecting the managerial transition from Keith to Mike and Grant.

Group Project

The major assignment for the course will be a group project that involves assessing Build A Bear Workshop, ticker symbol BBW (relying on publicly available information as of March 31, 2026). The objective of this group assignment is to write an evaluation of the firm's performance and strategy, presenting your analysis as well as suggested revisions to the strategy and implementation. Groups will be expected to address the following questions and issues:

- Diagnose the assigned firm and its opportunity.
- What are the strengths, weaknesses and risks of its current strategy?
- How effectively has the firm utilized its resource set to create shareholder value?
- What changes would you recommend in order to increase shareholder value?

Please present your analysis with specific information regarding the risks, required resources and necessary deals as well as the timing involved. Describe and explain the value enhancement that you believe that your strategy and plan of implementation will create. Substantiate your recommendations with analysis.

Written Report. Your report is due, by 9 AM, May 1. Each group should submit two copies of its final report.

Late papers will receive a grade of F. Emails without attached papers or with attachments that are unreadable by Microsoft Word will be considered to have not been submitted and will also receive an F. An F will be quantified as a zero in the calculation of course grades. No extensions to the deadlines will be granted.

Text. The report should not exceed 20 double-spaced typed pages with normal margins, excluding exhibits, tables, figures, appendices, and references. The name of the firm analyzed, the names of the team members responsible for the report preparation, the date, and the course number should be on the *front* page.

Exhibits. Exhibits should contain specific types of analyses, such as financial ratio analyses, break-even charts, decision tree analyses, organization charts, etc. In general, exhibits should contain any information that is relevant, but would take up too much space if included in the body of the paper. Exhibits should not be used as strictly an extension of textual material.

References. Footnotes should be used to acknowledge sources quoted in the text. The bibliography should list all the sources referenced or quoted in the body of the text in alphabetical order by author.

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