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GMGT 4010
Take-home Multi-functional Team Midterm Examination Instructions
(Subject to change before the exam)

PAPERS ARE DUE AT 4:00PM ON THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2020 to the designated Assignment folder. Note, late papers will receive late penalty as described in these instructions and the course outline. Please go to **Ivey Publishing** website Iveycases.com to purchase the exam case “*General Motors and the electric car revolution: Boom or bust*”. The easiest way to find the case is to type in the Publication code **9B19M049** in the “Search” box at the top right corner of the home page. Feel free to search for further financial information, if you wish, as long as you provide a reference and the information is limited to the period before June 2019.

Assignment

Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors Company (GM), and her leadership team are aware of your group’s skills in strategic analysis. They are asking you to help them assess the situation and to **recommend a competitive strategy for the company for the next five years**. Please prepare a report that provides your assessment of their operational situation and your strategic recommendations, considering strategy formulation as well as implementation issues. Please use the format given in the “**Structure of Case Analysis Report for the Midterm Exam**” (see page 4-5 of this present document) and follow these **Midterm Examination Instructions**. Within the case, possible issues, orientations, opinions (such as views on electric cars), and even growth options may have been provided. You may choose to use them or not based on your own judgment; you do not need to agree with any of them. Please remember that the creativity and unique thoughts shown in your strategic alternatives are key to developing an excellent case analysis report. Keep in mind that your task is to develop strategic analysis for the company following the provided guidelines, not to resolve a particular issue raised in the case (e.g., a particular mission on electric cars), even though they might be highly relevant to your analysis.

Submission Instructions

The paper must be less than **2,200 words AND** printed on a **maximum of 7 pages** (excluding all exhibits and title page) in double-space with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch (2.54cm) margins on all sides. You must use paragraphs and headings in keeping with the provided structure guidelines. Please do not use fancy fonts. Avoid extended use of bold or italics also. Papers that grossly violate these guidelines may receive a failing grade (e.g., using a font smaller than the one specified here, or using single space text in the body of the paper). Points may be deducted for other violations, such as **3% points will be deducted for any text beyond the 7 page or a word count of over 2200.**

Students are required to submit an **electronic copy** of the case analysis report to the designated folder for Midterm Exam on UM Learn (**one file only**) before the deadline. Please name your file in the following format: **GMGT4010–Midterm–Group_**. Don’t submit to a wrong folder! **Each page of the report should contain a footer specifying the group number and the page number.** No hard copies are needed for the submission. The papers will be accepted before the deadline if you wish.

Team Number:

Section **D01**

Page 2

Late papers will be penalized as follows: 10% points will be deducted for each 24-hour period or part thereof that the paper is late (To clarify: “part thereof” here means 10% will be deducted for papers that are late by a few minutes, half an hour, or one hour, etc. up to 24 hours). Exceptional circumstances that might affect a student's ability to meet this deadline must be brought to the instructor's attention prior to the deadline. Don't forget to save multiple soft copies to avoid any chance of losing your disk, computer crash, or other such problems.

External Research

You are not required to conduct any further external research on the company and its industries. Search for or use of any information or data regarding this company and its industries *after* the time of the case, **2019** in this case, will be subject to hind-sight bias and will be considered a violation of university policy on Academic Integrity. Be sure to provide references on a separate page for any search *before* the time of the case and attach this page at the end of the paper. This page may contain only references and can be in addition to the text-pages and exhibits.

(Continue to the next page to check the required report structure)

Structure of Case Analysis Report for the Midterm Exam (Summer 2020 only)

Note: These guidelines are intended to help you get the structure right on the case report; meeting them does not guarantee a quality work. Try to use textbook concepts when conducting analysis. All advices on section length (e.g. about half page) are for friendly guidelines only, not intended to be requirements in exams. The instructions on basic structure such as major section headings (e.g., Key Issues) and the number of paragraphs, however, are mandatory. Please write up your arguments in each section; do NOT use bullet points.

Limit the text to 7 pages (12 font, double-spaced, 1" (2.54cm) margin on all sides), with a maximum word count of 2200, excluding tables and figures.

Key Issues (preferably 3-6 issues; about half page)

- Obvious and pressing issues, hidden problems, and long terms challenges **facing the company**. These issues set a direction in terms of where your strategic alternatives should focus. Please describe them (and number them) in order of importance.

External Assessment (3-4 paragraphs, about 1 page). **Three** opportunities/threats in total based on your Exhibit 1, not three each.

Note: Don't mention the name of the company when discussing the opportunities/threats; focus on the **strategic group** of which the focal company is a member. Do NOT give recommendations here as to what firms can do or should do with respect to these opportunities and threats.

- Description of the strategic group (similar strategy, direct competitors)
- Opp/threat #1: topic sentence that clearly specifies the **opp/threat** for the strategic group; then provide **evidence** for the opp/threat
- Opp/threat #2: ditto
- Opp/threat #3: ditto

Internal Assessment (three paragraphs, about 1 page). **Top Three** strengths/weaknesses from the Exhibit 2; a total of three, not three each.

- Str/weakness #1: topic sentence that clearly specifies the strength or weakness; then provide evidence, and V,R,I evaluation of the strength (separate sentence for V.R.I.). If it is a weakness, no need to go through VRI; simply discuss whether it can be transformed into a strength in the future.
- Str/weakness #2: ditto
- Str/weakness #3: ditto

Financial Diagnosis (about half page or less) – Exhibit 1 for this section

- Use this section to interpret the ratios in the Exhibit 3. Use various comparisons and financial ratios to diagnose the company's financial situation. Remember to comment on the company's overall financial health and capacity to carry on future investments that might be part of your strategic alternatives.

Current Strategy (about half page)

Note: focus on what the company is *currently* doing; do NOT discuss what it can or should do in the future.

- Business strategy (topic sentence defining the strategy such as differentiation, followed by detailed explanations)
- Functional strategy (summarize major functional practices); also discuss global strategy, corporate strategy, etc, whenever applicable

Implementable Business-Level Strategic Alternatives (a total of **TWO** alternatives; about 1-1.5 page; the most important section of the case report!!)

Note: (1) Business level strategies are expected, though corporate level strategies are accepted. Please do not propose functional level strategies (HR, marketing, etc.) as explained in Chapter 4, which focus on operational changes that aim to improve *internal* efficiency and effectiveness. (2) Business strategies represent major moves in the way the company competes on the market. They often involve significant investments or divestments that carry long term impact on the company's competitiveness. These strategies are *externally* oriented, often answering the question of what to serve, who to serve, where and how to compete. (3) Business level strategic alternatives, often developed based on existing/potential strengths/weaknesses and available environmental opportunities/threats, should deal with key issues (including the pressure for growth). (4) Two alternatives need to be significantly distinctive; they often take the company in quite different directions. (5) Both strategies should go beyond a general goal (e.g., international expansion, leading technology) and discuss what the company needs to do exactly. (6) Both alternatives should be plausible and appealing, supported with solid reasoning and strong arguments. Note that **using status quo or current strategy (that is, continue to do what has been doing) as an strategy alternative demonstrates weak creativity; I need to see your OWN original ideas.** Selling off the company is not an option of strategy in the exam.

- Alternative #1: topic sentence specifying the strategy, followed by the explanations of what it is exactly and why it is considered a good strategy, with respect to the analysis in previous sections
- Alternative #2: ditto

Criteria and Evaluation of Alternatives by Criteria (about 1 page; second most important section!) – Exhibit 2-3 for this section

- First paragraph: list 3 criteria and **justify** them one by one (that is, why these, not others?)
- Then, 3 paragraphs corresponding to the three criteria, each paragraph using one criterion to compare the two alternatives

Recommendation and its Implementation (2-3 paragraphs) - Exhibit 4 for this section

- Recommend one strategy based on the evaluations in the previous section
- Discuss major issues/challenges regarding the implementation of the strategy
- Discuss the limitations of the recommended strategy with respect to the identified key issues and other potential issues that might emerge when the strategy is adopted. Offer suggestions on possible solutions if you can.

Exhibits (append all exhibits to the end of the paper in the following order)

- Exhibit 1: External Assessment. A table that presents the five forces evaluations and significant PEST factors associated with the focal strategic group. Please follow the *Template of External Assessment* when preparing the table.
- Exhibit 2: Internal Assessment. A table that presents VRIO assessment of the company's internal resources and capabilities. Please follow the *Template of Internal Assessment* when preparing the table.

- Exhibit 3: Financial Analysis. A table that presents financial ratios of multiple categories, such as profitability, leverage, liquidity, etc., as well as any useful historical comparisons such as sales increase/decrease. No specific ratios are mandatory. All depends on your analysis and needs.
- Exhibit 4-5: Two Exhibits of Net Present Value (NPV) projections (five years starting from the year of last available financial data) corresponding to the two strategic alternatives respectively; put key assumptions, with brief justifications, either at the bottom of the tables or on a separate page. Please refer to the **Westover Inn case** in your case package for a template of NPV.
Important: if you choose to create NPV exhibits, NPV will be one of the three criteria comparing the two strategic alternatives in the criteria and evaluation section.

(Continue to the next page to get a sample title page)



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