Carnegie Mellon University
Master of
Software Engineering

17-612: Business Strategy
Fall 2021, 6 Units
Classes: Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Section A1: 8:35 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. in Room #265, 300 S. Craig Street
- Section B1: 7:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. in Room #265
- Section 41: 7:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. by Zoom (MSE Online program students)

Advisory Sessions:
- Weekly meeting of project Groups starting in Week 2. Dates/times to be announced.

Recitations:
- Only Section D1 (MSE Online program students): Wed., 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. by Zoom

Zoom classroom (for MSE Online program students only:
https://cmu.zoom.us/j/95367564966?pwd=TlRmSk8xdzNIcE5HL3lKRGR0Rzl4dz09
Meeting ID: 953 6756 4966
Passcode: 273521

Class Mode
The participation mode for this course is "In-Person Expectation" (IPE) for students in sections A1 and B1. These students are expected to be in the classroom during the course's scheduled meeting time. The participation mode for students in section 41 is "Remote only" (REO.) These students will attend remotely during the course's scheduled meeting time.

Instructors	Contact	Office Location & Hours
Prof. Vijay Sai Vadlamudi	vijaysai@cmu.edu	By appointment
Jim Berardone	jberardone@cmu.edu	Fridays 10 – 12 Room #275
	412-303-5065	and by appointment
Gregg Schoonover	gschoono@andrew.cmu.edu	Virtual by appointment

Teaching Assistants

Tejas Rai	trai@andrew.cmu.edu
Jinglun Ding	jinglund@andrew.cmu.edu
Tapasya Maji	tmaji@andrew.cmu.edu
Arence Chouhan	arencec@tepper.cmu.edu

Course Description. This course is intended to provide a basic introduction to a broad set of business topics that will aid our students in building successful technology leadership careers in their future. The scope of business topics includes Business Strategy, Product Strategy, Organizational Theory and Product Teams, Leadership, Tech Economics, Finance & Accounting, Sales and Marketing, and Ethics and Governance.

The course uses an interactive lecture format based on assigned readings and prepared materials. Each lecture will begin with an informal digital survey (not graded) or formal digital Quiz (graded) based on topics and materials previously covered.

There will be a Group Project with four Assignments during the course and a Group Final Presentation at the end of this course. There will be weekly Advisory Sessions with your instructors to discuss the project, assignments, and any topics of the lectures. In the session following an Assignment submission, the Group will give a presentation of their submitted work. The dates and times of these sessions will be announced.

Prior Knowledge.

Basic business acumen is a valuable start, experience is an invaluable asset.

Learning Objectives. After completing this course, you will:

- Experience building a company mission and strategy for a hypothetical tech business
- Understand the different size and shapes of technology organizations
- Understand how Product, Sales & Marketing functions operate at tech companies
- Be able to read and understand an Income Statement, Balance Sheet, and Departmental P&L for a typical tech company

Learning Resources.

You'll be provided with the class slides, recordings of class sessions and various papers and reports. You are responsible for purchasing the required book and a course pack as described below.

Book: INSPIRED
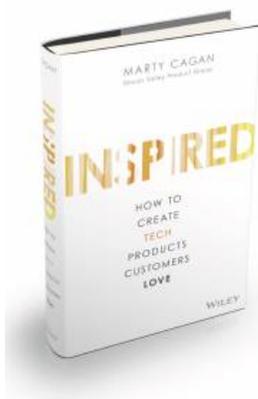
Author: Marty Cagan, 2nd Ed., 2017

How do today's most successful tech companies—Amazon, Google, Facebook, Netflix, Tesla—design, develop, and deploy the products that have earned the love of literally billions of people around the world? Perhaps surprisingly, they do it very differently than the vast majority of tech companies. In INSPIRED, technology product management thought leader Marty Cagan provides readers with a master class in how to structure and staff a vibrant and successful product organization, and how to discover and deliver technology products that your customers will love—and that will work for your business.

Wiley, 2017. Order it from Amazon. Available in multiple formats.

Coursepack: We have created a course pack at the Harvard Business Publishing website that contains required readings and a case study. You will need to create an account to access, if you do not already have one, and purchase the HBR coursepack.

https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/853450

Assessments. Students learn more by applying and explaining ideas to others, thus, the course requires the following activities:

- **Assignment 1:** Company Mission Statement and Organization (presentation slides)
- **Assignment 2:** Go-To-Market Strategy (presentation slides)
- **Assignment 3:** Financial Forecast (presentation slides)
- **Assignment 4:** Product Strategy (presentation slides)
- **Final Presentation:** Group presentation to the class of your business, including materials developed in Assignments 1-4.

Each group will submit their assignment then present their work in an Advisory Session. The dates/times of these sessions will be announced.

Assessment	Final Grade %		Grade	Percentage Interval
Pop Quizzes 3 x 5%	15%		A	90-100%
Assignment 1	15%		B	80-89%
Assignment 2	15%		C	70-79%
Assignment 3	15%		D	60-69%
Assignment 4	15%		R (F)	59% or below
Final Presentation	25%			

Course and Grading Policies

- **Late-work policy**: All work is expected to be handed in at the indicated due date and time. For fairness to the whole class, no late submissions will be accepted for the group work. In the first week of classes, you should receive a course schedule for each course; please use them to plan ahead. Each student is allowed one late submission for the individual homework assignments. You should immediately notify the course Instructors and TA(s) before the submission deadline that you will submit late. Late work must be submitted as soon as circumstances allow, ordinarily within 24 hours of the due date. If you have any questions you should raise them immediately rather than waiting for conflicts to arise.

- **Participation policy**. Class participation will be assessed by in-class engagement, including asking relevant questions based on a critical review of required readings, lectures, and

comments made by your peers. The lack of attendance, and the use of mobile devices, including phones and laptops, will be discouraged.

Recording of Class Sessions

Our evening section classes will be recorded so that students in this course can replay past class sessions. You are not allowed to share these recordings with anyone outside of this course. This rule is to protect your FERPA rights and those of your fellow students.

- We will make recordings available on Canvas as soon as possible after each class session (usually within 3 hours of the class meeting) on our Canvas website.

Course Schedule. The following schedule provides an overview of the topics and assignments. Please refer to the syllabus online in Canvas for specific lecture topics, reading assignments and due dates.

Class	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	Tue. August 31	Course Overview and Business Strategy	
2	Thu. September 2	Product Strategy	
3	Tue. September 7	Organizational Theory and Structures	
4	Thu. September 9	Product Teams	
5	Tue. September 14	Economics and Tech Sector	Assignment 1 due
6	Thu. September 16	Go-to-Market: Marketing	
7	Tue. September 21	Tech Economy	Assignment 2 due
8	Thu. September 23	Go-To-Market: Sales	
9	Tue. September 28	Financials 101	Assignment 3 due
10	Thu. September 30	Financials 101	
11	Tue. October 5	Management & Leadership	Assignment 4 due
12	Thu. October 7	Ethics & Governance	
13	Tue. October 12		Final Presentations
14	Thu. October 14		

Classroom Attendance. In order to attend class in person, I expect that you will abide by all behaviors indicated in A Tartan's Responsibility, including any timely updates based on the current conditions.

Facial coverings. If you do not wear a facial covering to class, I will ask you to put one on (and if you don't have one with you, I will direct you to a distribution location on campus). If you do not comply, please remember that you will be subject to student conduct proceedings, up to and including removal from CMU. Accordingly, I will be obliged to take other measures for the safety of the whole class.

Accommodations for Students Disabilities. If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

Academic Integrity. Honesty and transparency are important to good scholarship. Plagiarism and cheating, however, are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. If you are discovered engaging in either behavior in this course, you will earn a failing grade on the assignment in question, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

For a clear description of what counts as plagiarism, cheating, and/or the use of unauthorized sources, please see the University's Policy on Academic Integrity.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or cheating, please ask me as soon as possible to avoid any misunderstandings. For more information about Carnegie Mellon's standards with respect to academic integrity, you can also check out the Office of Community Standards & Integrity website.

In this course, certain assignments are to be completed individually and other assignments are to be completed together with your team. The team assignments will be clearly identified. All other items should be completed individually. If it's unclear to you, ask the instructor.

Student Well-Being. We are all under a lot of stress and uncertainty at this time. Attending Zoom classes all day can take its toll on our mental health. Make sure to move regularly, eat well, and reach out to your support system or me jberardone@cmu.edu if you need to. We can all benefit from support in times of stress, and this semester is no exception.

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. CMU services are available, and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at the Counseling and Psychological Services website. Support is always available (24/7) from Counseling and Psychological Services: 412-268-2922.

If you are worried about affording food or feeling insecure about food, there are resources on campus who can help. Email (cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu) or call (412-268-8704) the CMU Food Pantry Coordinator to schedule an appointment.

We must treat every individual with respect. We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values.

Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment.

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. They contribute to creating an unwelcoming environment for individuals and groups at the university. Therefore, the university encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. Anyone can share these experiences using the following resources:

- **Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion**: csdi@andrew.cmu.edu, (412) 268-2150
- **Report-It online anonymous reporting platform**: reportit.net username: *tartans* password: *plaid*

All reports will be documented and deliberated to determine if there should be any following actions. Regardless of incident type, the university will use all shared experiences to transform our campus climate to be more equitable and just.