Benchmarking and Business Intelligence

Objectives

The first module (Prof. Mircea Epure) aims at providing the participants with tools to analyze the performance of organizations from different sectors. Participants are prepared for real-life managerial analyses that are based on concepts such as profitability, productivity, price indices and outputs and inputs mix. Business economics rationales are employed to provide answers to specific objectives including:

- Identifying the factors that affect productivity and their specific influences.
- Isolating the effect of productivity on firm profitability.
- Assessing firm results in static and dynamic competitive environments.
- Choosing the right competitors to benchmark against.
- Using productivity and profitability tools for assessing entrepreneurship, acquisitions or divisional performance.

The second module (Prof. Mar Sánchez) focuses on the user-applied business intelligence tools used for controlling firm operations and outcomes. It is thus a natural extension of the first module of the course, describing, among others, how specific business software is used. The CEO and middle managers from different divisions of business firms make important decisions on a daily basis. These decision makers need the appropriate analytics tools implemented onsite in order to control results and perform forecasting activities. Thus, it is crucial to be aware of the software available in the market and, most importantly, to understand why any company—individually of its size and sector—has to use business intelligence tools at all times.

Description

“Benchmarking and Business Intelligence” is a second-term course in the MSc in Management and the MSc in Finance and Banking degrees, at the Barcelona School of Management. It comprises twenty 90-min lectures, serving as a core course for students specializing in Business Analytics, and as an elective course for students specializing in Finance and Banking, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship.

Contents

Module 1 (Prof. Mircea Epure)

1. Definition of performance monitoring and benchmarking in competitive settings
   - Internally oriented assessments: Monitoring
   - Externally oriented assessments: Benchmarking

2. Linking performance monitoring and benchmarking analysis with profitability ratios and analysis of financial statements
   - Quick review of financial statements’ (profitability) analysis
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> Decision making for improved profitability and applications in competitive settings

3. Profitability and productivity changes
   > Absolute and relative changes (index numbers); computations in the presence and absence of prices
   > Multifactor productivity, profit margins, output and input prices, and output-input mix

4. Benchmarking in multidimensional settings
   > Output maximization and input minimization, fixed and variable inputs
   > Using productivity and efficiency to set future targets and reform operations

5. Business economics applications of benchmarking assessments
   > Business firms applications of benchmarking tools (e.g., acquisitions, divisional performance)
   > Public sector applications of benchmarking tools (e.g., financing policies for venture creation, regional spending)

Module 2 (Prof. Mar Sánchez)

1. Business analytics: Definitions and importance
   > Definitions, origins and evolution
   > Why Business Analytics?

2. Software solutions to support the decision making process
   > The challenges of diversity and poor quality of information
   > A different solution for each user type: analysis, reporting, scorecarding. Gartner Report

3. Best practices to successfully implement Business Analytics
   > Basic steps to implement Business Analytics. The importance of the sponsor
   > Reports for the scope of the project (IDP) and requirements (IDR)
   > Critical success factors. Up and cross-selling inside the company

4. Change Management
   > Risk management
   > Business Analytics as a continuous process

5. Current Paradigm
   > Business Analytics 2.0 or Social Business Intelligence
   > Big Data. The power of Data Discovery with Visual Analytics
Methodology

The course combines lecturing by the professors with general debates and applied discussions on business cases and exercises. Participants will also engage in presentations of reports on cases or project assignments. Activities will require both individual and group work.

Evaluation criteria

The final grade of “Benchmarking and Business Intelligence” will be the average of the two grades corresponding to each of the two modules. For each module, grading will be done through class participation (30%), group analyses of case studies and exercises (30%) and a final project (40%).

Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason can have consequences in the final grade. As with all courses taught at the UPF Barcelona School of Management, students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. If the course is again failed after the re-take, students may have to register again for the course the following year.

Bio of the professor

Mircea Epure is Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics and Business, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), and Affiliated Professor at the Barcelona School of Management and the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics. He has a PhD degree in Business Economics and Administration from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Prior to joining UPF, he has visited Växjö University in Sweden and IESEG School of Management in France, and has taught at Toulouse Business School. Mircea’s research focuses on management and accounting topics in economic organisations. He has taught Business Economics, Economic Organizations and Markets, and Management Accounting courses at various institutions.

Mar Sánchez has been an International Business Management Executive for more than 16 years, with successful experience in Business Intelligence consulting, covering all different phases: start-up, growth, maturity and turnaround stages. She has contributed to improving business processes, developing new businesses and leading projects implementations. Mar has worked internationally in top tech companies like Oracle in Amsterdam, Paris, Copenhagen (Europe) and California and Florida (US). At the moment, Mar is VP Sales & Marketing Manager at ClearPeaks—an international firm specialized in business intelligence consulting based in Barcelona.