Management in the Digital Economy

Objectives: The research seminar aims at developing students' ability to manage organizations in the digital economy. The course focuses particularly on management challenges of platform-based businesses such as Airbnb, Dropbox, or Amazon. In this course, students will:

- Gain an understanding of key managerial challenges in the digital economy
- Understand key strategies, tools, and approaches to address these challenges
- Develop an understanding for different growth strategies for platform-based businesses
- Develop analytical capabilities to assess and pursue business opportunities in the digital economy

Course structure:

The course consists of two parts. In the first half of the semester, we will meet on a weekly basis. You will learn key concepts, challenges, tools, and approaches of managing in the digital economy. The course is case-based, i.e. you will learn topics in the context of selected real-world case studies.

The entire class will meet six times during the first half of the semester (Wednesdays, 11am – 13pm; starting April 18th) (Rooms will be announced on campus-online).

- Class 1: Kickoff meeting (April 18th)
- Class 2: Business Models and Business Model Innovation – the Udemy Case (May 2nd)
- Class 3: Experimentation-driven Management (Lean Startup) – the Dropbox Case (May 9th)
- Class 4: Growth Strategies I (Organic Strategies) – the Airbnb case (May 16th)
- Class 5: Growth Strategies II (Inorganic Strategies) – the Amazon case (May 23rd)
- Class 6: Managing Growth Challenges – the Uber case (May 30th)

Class preparation is the most important assignment for the sessions. In addition to each week's case, you are required to read 1-2 selected articles to prepare for an informed discussion. I expect you to be familiar with the core material during each discussion and to have developed a personal point of view concerning the issues that arise in the material. Preparation means that you read the materials, consider the issues raised by the case and assignment questions, and carry out appropriate analysis in order to arrive at a thoughtful position concerning the options that face the firms and managers in the case. Unless you have thought about and adopted a personal position about the questions raised in these cases, it is difficult to learn from others' contributions. Thus, I will take your class participation into account in your grade for the course.

In the kickoff meeting, I will assign cases to groups of up to 4 students. In each subsequent meeting, the respective group will present the assigned case. Subsequently, we will discuss the case and learn more in-depth about the underlying concepts.

In the second half of the semester, you will develop a short paper. For the assignment, you can work in groups of up to four students. The paper will present a case study of a platform-based business of your choice that faced a strategic challenge. The paper will present the case firm's strategic options and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. The paper will require you to collect some primary data (e.g., interviews). Each paper will be a maximum of 20 pages (1.5 line spacing), plus exhibits and references. An electronic version of the report will be due by July 31st, 2018.

A one-page outline of your group paper will be due by June 15th, 2018. The outline should contain enough information on the main points and should indicate whether you have access to sufficient information to carry out a thoughtful analysis.
You will present their cases in a final class meeting (July 8th). This will allow you to learn from each others’ cases and receive feedback for your final paper.

Your final paper may be structured and written in form of a business case study (as those presented in the course). Thus, you should set up a core issue, outline strategic options and discuss their advantages and disadvantages, and provide a separate analysis of the issue. During the course of the class, you will be familiarized with case study design.

**Examination:**

- Case presentation and class participation (50%)
- Written assignment (50%)

**Workload:**

- Class Meetings: 14 hours
- Reading of selected cases and papers: 40 hours
- Preparation of case presentation: 26 hours
- Group project (incl. preparation of presentation and written report): 100 hours

**Credits:** 6 ECTS

**Primary target audience:** Master Students in business administration, primarily in the specialization **Management** ("große Vertiefung") / **Strategic Management** ("kleine Vertiefung")

**Course leader:** Karl Täuscher

**Application:** The course is limited to 20 participants to allow for a sufficient level of individual guidance. Course participation is granted on a first-come-first-serve basis based on registrations in campus online. Registration deadline is April 17th, 2018.