Course Analysis

MF2046 Product Innovation, 6 credits

Autumn 2021

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1   Course information

The objectives of the course Product innovation are to give the course participants a broad overview of the field of innovation, engineering and management and to create a thorough understanding of the managerial challenges involved in innovative activities, through the presentation of theoretical models and frameworks as well as empirical illustrations. Furthermore, the course also provides the students with a set of analytical tools and methods that facilitate the identification of opportunities for innovation as well as their realization into new products and businesses. Particular emphasis is put on the application of presented models, frameworks, and methods through the use of case studies, discussions and a group assignment. The students work in group to propose a business plan and pitch the business plan to the class, professor, and guests during the final presentation session.

Course responsible teacher:

Jennie Björk

Other teachers in the course:

Mats Magnusson

Liridona Sopjani

Examiner:

Mats Magnuson

Learning activities:

The learning activities are organized in three different settings: 1) The lectures, which both aim to provide a theoretical expose of the field as well as providing real life examples from different organizations and invited guest lectures. In addition, the lectures also aim to be interactive through the use of both traditional lecture setups, group discussions and digital tools (e.g., Menti and Poll in Zoom) to facilitate an active, interactive and engaging learning, 2) Three mini cases are performed throughout the course. These are designed for the students so that they in a rather fast and easy way directly can apply their insights and presented theoretical concepts in practice, and 3) The project in the course in which the students in groups lead and execute a business plan. The students work on the business plan by applying the learned theoretical models and frameworks using a learning tool called 'PEAQS'.

Additional Comments

2 Students' view of the course

Summary of students´ view of the course based on for example LEQ survey and/or interviews or other activities.

Brief summary of students' responses from the feedback session in the end of the course:

The course feedback has been acquired through a course evaluation survey (LEQ) which received more responses than previous years but still have a very low response rate. Therefore, it is regarded as a rather limited source of data to get a good overview of all students' view of the course. This was expected and therefore the following measures were taken in order to get more feedback on the course: i) lectures both focusing on the overall course and specifically on the project also collected students view of the course both through discussions and with the use of Menti where all students could contribute with their view anonymously as well, and ii) questions and follow up to students after the digital exam. This year the exam was digital for the first time and it was indeed very important for us to get feedback on that.

Summarizing, the assessment of the course in LEQ and discussions are very positive. The Students find the lectures knowledgeable and engaging and appreciate the course. One should keep in mind the low response rate and that there could be other views on the course as well. The feedback also reveals some challenges in the course. The learning tool 'Peaqs' (was introduced when being developed last year) had some technical issues where the students were not able to work smoothly when multiple users navigating the tool. For example, the reports generated from Peaqs did not have the quality that they expected. Student also had different views on the positive or negative effect of the word limitation in Peaqs. However, also those who felt that the limitation of words in the tool held them back when explaining their ideas, later realized the importance of using lesser words to convey the ideas to be more precise. The Students find the workload is properly distributed, but they wanted more time on the mini cases. Students especially expressed that they liked the examples from practice and real life during the lectures as well as the pitch presentations.

3 Teacher analysis of the course

The analysis should present the development of the quality of the course as well as measures that have been taken after previous course analysis. The course's strengths and weaknesses based on the course evaluation and the teacher's reflection.

Course context

The course went as planned and the limitations brought by the pandemic (all lectures: Zoom), did affect the level of interactions. We tried to overcome this through more use of short breakout rooms, digital tools for engagement (Menti and Poll), time to just meet up on Zoom for questions or supervision and even though this was appreciated by the students we missed the interactions that one gets when we meet face-to-face. It is not only the lectures per se but the spaces that are created around the lectures for interactions, before, in the breaks and after. We truly hope we will run this course as normal, face-to-face, next year.

The digital tool that is used for the projects (Peaqs) worked as planned this year as many of the initial flaws (last year was the first year it was used and it still had quite a lot of room for development) had been corrected. Minor flaws identified have been reported to Peaqs.

One of the learning objectives in the course relates to that the students should know the current trends and practices within the field, this makes the content in the course naturally developing each year as the front-end of research and practice moves quite quickly in this field.

One continuous discussion regards the amount of supervision of the projects, this has changed back and forth over the years and it is apparent that students have different views on the amount of supervision needed. We also use "open feedback forum" in the course where students can come and ask questions and also take part and listen in on other project's questions. During regular circumstances we run this over lunch in relation to a lecture. This normally works very well and help facilitate the different levels of needed and wanted supervision. We did run this in Zoom this year but not that many groups took advantage of this and it is clear that it is easier to just raise small questions when meeting up before the lecture than as this year in Zoom. We will bring with us the feedback regarding supervision for next year's course.

Changes of the course before this course offering

This year the course was online due to the pandemic, it of course brought limitations in terms of interactions, that we normally always try to facilitate for.

The course's strengths (based on the students' experiences and the teacher analysis):

The course is valued by several students as it goes deep into the frameworks and theoretical models of product innovation. Students also expressed that it as the most structured course with very clear learning objectives and tangible examples that the students could relate to. The students appreciate that they are able to be more creative with their ideas as there are no barrier to choose the field they work on in the project. They are able to discuss with their fellow classmates and collaborate more with the required support. Students expressed that the intended learning outcomes were helpful and made the challenging areas easier for their learning process.

Areas for improvement of the course (based on student experiences and teacher analysis)**:**

- The instruction and improvement regarding:

  - Peaqs software is continuously developing and we will bring the feedback regarding the quality of the exported report and hope we can get a better situation next year. The benefit from the software is regarded as more valuable than the current small flaws.

  - For some students it is a challenge to formulate a profitable idea, students have proposed that if possible, it should be communicated even before the course start that they are allowed to work on ideas they come up with themselves, and also to bring ideas from previous courses and create a business plan around that. We will explore how to do this even more clear than what already is on the homepage for the course.

- We will continue to develop the Open Feedback Forum so that students can get regular feedback on their progress to improve their performance.

Proposed changes to the next course round:

Continue to secure functionality in Peaqs through providing feedback.

Additional Comments