Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University

MASTERING CORPORATE INNOVATION / Electives / 2025

CONTENTS

RSM - a force for positive change

RSM *Erasmus*

FACULTY INFORMATION

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Canvas course link	*To be announced*

FACULTY BIO

Birgul Arslan is associate professor of Innovation and Technology Management at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Strategic Management from HEC Paris, France.

Her research focuses on success factors in interorganizational collaboration. She is interested in how organizations collaborate in the context of grand challenges such as the Ebola outbreak and antibacterial resistance. Her research has been published in top-tier management journals such as the Academy of Management Journal, Strategic Management Journal and Journal of Management Studies.

Birgul has professional experience in business intelligence consulting, in the domain of designing data and reporting systems for establishing mission-critical management information suites. She teaches strategic management and innovation strategy at MBA and executive MBA programs. She also designs innovation workshops for companies. Her teaching is based on active-learning principles, on case-based learning and simulations. She holds teaching awards and nominations for her undergraduate and MBA courses.

ABSTRACT

There is a ruthless hunt for the next blockbuster design, awesome product, or killer service. New technologies and powerful trends (think artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, blockchain) and humanity's grand challenges (e.g. climate change, pandemics, mass immigration) put immense pressure on organizations for constant adaptation and change. Clearly, innovating is no longer a choice but has become an imperative. This imperative demands a clear understanding of how organizations can manage their innovation activities.

In a business environment that is disturbingly in motion, innovation management translates into developing the right processes, structures, and strategies for continuous successful innovation. Once an organization builds its innovation management system, that magic blend will guarantee survival and increase the chances of industry leadership.
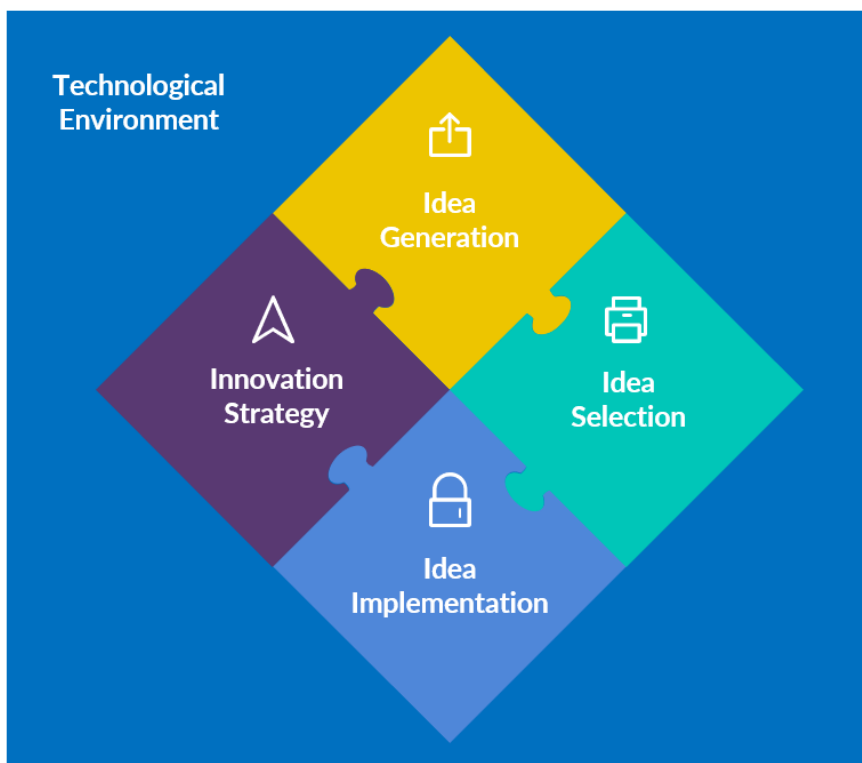
Innovation Management Engine

The five elements of the innovation management engine need to work in harmony to ensure organizational survival in turbulent industry contexts .

The course is built around the five core elements of corporate innovation management: at the operational level, there is (a) idea generation, (b) selection, and (c) implementation; and at the macro level, there is (d) innovation strategy and (e) technological environment. In this course, we will focus on each of these elements in-depth from both theoretical and practical perspectives. My ultimate goal is to help you build the most effective innovation management engine in your respective organization.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

I want to equip you with the knowledge and skills for
- Transforming yourself to be more creative and lead others in this quest,
- Transforming your organization to foster innovative ideas from generation to execution.

Learning areas	Educational Goals: Upon completion of the course,
I. Content- related	You can outline effective organizational processes to cultivate, assess, and implement creative ideas.
	You can identify incremental, radical, and disruptive innovations in an industry.
II. Skills-related	You can build organizational processes and structures for fostering innovation.
	You can skillfully craft strategic responses to technological changes and disruptive innovations.
III. Attitude-related	You will commit to improving your own innovation potential.

FIT WITHIN THE RSM ERASMUS MBA AND RELATION TO THE RSM MISSION: A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE*

Our full-time MBA program aims at preparing the participants for the biggest most relevant challenges shaping global business, and the courses expose them to the theories and frameworks that help managers make the critical decisions in the future. This course is at the heart of identifying and analyzing the main technological trends, the threats and opportunities that these trends pose, and offering potential solutions to businesses to stay afloat in the resulting disruptions.

The course provides the participants with the skills to pursue innovations in the realm of grand challenges such as climate change, global health, and poverty. These challenges need to be addressed within organizations – businesses, NGOs, government agents, with the innovation and change management knowledge that the students will gain from this course.

Distribution of Positive Change topics:

Description	Total
Environment	X hours
Social	X hours
Governance	X hours
Other (External factors that encourage innovation, responsible innovation)	3 hours
Total hours	**3 hours**

* It's RSM's mission to be a force for positive change in the world. For this, RSM is committed to the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for defining 'positive change'. For the purpose of the RSM Erasmus MBA, we strive to provide our students with the opportunity to master competencies that enable them to successfully lead teams, business units and organizations while they navigate and accelerate transitions towards more just, sustainable and resilient societies. We report the amount of lecture time across all of our MBA courses that is devoted directly to such mission-relevant learning. We have further broken this down into environment, social, and governance related topics.

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TEACHING METHODS AND WORKLOAD

Information has never been as accessible as today in human history. Advances such as e-books, Wikipedia, massive online open courses (MOOCs), open-access scientific journals enable anybody to retrieve new information. Yet, knowledge remains an unearthed treasure buried under multiple layers of information bombardment and even misinformation. Therefore, transforming information into knowledge remains challenging. That is exactly where the ideal university learning experience comes in: helping you to filter through the right sources of information, transform that information into knowledge, and use that knowledge wherever applicable.

The major challenge in teaching innovation management is to develop the skills for decision making in the midst of infinite and often contradictory information flow about technology, markets, and competition. Added to the challenge is the fuzzy knowledge about the causes of firm success or failure and substantial trade-offs involved in innovation decisions. Therefore, innovation management can be more accurately described as an art. I believe that the role of the instructor is to facilitate the process through which you obtain the skills for innovation management. Therefore, I designed all aspects of this course - i.e. content, methodology, learning activities, and assessment, in a way that will help build your corporate innovation management skills in the most effective and enjoyable manner.

Content: No-nonsense. I created the content of this course based on two main complementary sources. My first source is the scientific literature. Knowledge in a domain is a set of causal relationships. I teach those causal relationships in corporate innovation management which have been supported by scientific evidence. My second source is the leading practitioner-oriented literature. This content makes the evidence-based knowledge more accessible and enjoyable.

Methodology: I teach this course using case-based learning which I have been trained for by the Harvard Business School, the leader in case-based teaching. Cases are compact models of real-world innovation problems and provide sufficient information and complexity to force our analytical thinking and decision making. With my guidance, you will collectively generate the intended knowledge through discussion. This makes learning enjoyable and memorable!

The approximate time required to complete this course is:

Attending lectures:	6 sessions x 3 hours	18 hours
Class preparation	18 hours x 1 hour	18 hours
Case assignments:	5 cases x 3 hours	15 hours
Studying for final assignment:		12 hours
Final assignment		21 hours
Total (Number of EC (3))		84 hours

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Course: Mastering Corporate Innovation	Assessment formats		
Educational goals	**Case Assignments**	**Final Assignment**	**Total**
• Outline effective organizational processes to cultivate, assess, and implement creative ideas.	X		X
• Identify incremental, radical, and disruptive innovations in an industry.	X		X
• Build organizational processes and structures for fostering innovation.	X	X	X
• Skillfully craft strategic responses to technological changes and disruptive innovations.	X	X	X
• Commit to improving your own innovation potential.		X	X
Weighting factor	50%	50%	100%
Minimum grade required	7.0*	5.5 **	
When failed, resit option (Yes/No)**	Yes	Yes	
Form of examination (e.g. MC, Open-book, etc.)	Open-ended Qs	Open-ended Qs	
Group / Individual assessment (Group/Individual)	Individual	Individual	

In order to pass the course, case assignment component grade needs to be at least 7.0 and the final assignment grade needs to be at least 5.5. Grades are rounded according to the rounding provisions included in the Examination Regulations (ER) of the programme, and are expressed with 1 decimal point. Not meeting the minimum grade required for component grades determines a fail for the course. Participants can resit a failed component only once. There is no capping of the grade for a resit examination, unless determined by the faculty. The only exception is when the nature of the failed assignment allows for an improvement effort of the same assignment (capped at 5.5 for that component). For this particular course, the faculty has decided that case assignments **allow for a new resit and the final assignment allow for an improvement effort**.

Grade penalties for unauthorized late submissions will be automatically imposed. Penalties for unauthorised late submissions range from 10% to 20% deduction from the examination component depending on the hours/days late. Unauthorised late submissions 4 days or longer after the deadline without prior notification and a reasonable explanation for the late submission, will not be accepted.

*Case Assignments: The case assignments involve open-ended questions based on the case of the day. The questions are designed to help you create a meaningful mind map of case information and prepare you for in-class discussion, which will eventually help you gain better insights into the case problem. You must complete all case assignments strictly before your session. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the right file is uploaded to the course's online platform on the right time.

**Final assignment: The final assignment involves an in-depth report on the innovation activities of a company chosen by the participant. The report will describe the current innovation activities of the company, analyze their effectiveness, critique them with respect to the key learnings of the course, and suggest actions for improvement.

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Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism (Appendix B, Teaching and Examination Regulations -TER-)

The Examination Board defines fraud as "*the action or negligence of a student because of which it is impossible, entirely, or partially, to form a correct judgment about the knowledge, insight, and skills of them or another student*" (ER, 2024-2025). Examples of fraud are cheating, cribbing, plagiarism, freeriding in a team assignment, availability of unauthorized (study) material during a test such as mobile phones, contract cheating/outsourcing/ghost-writing, unauthorized use of generative AI, identity fraud, theft.

Confirmed cases of fraud/plagiarism will lead to (appropriate and proportional) sanctions as defined by the Examination Board in the Rules and Guidelines section of the Examination Regulations (ER). Repetitive cases of fraud/plagiarism lead to expulsion from the programme.

Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarising of the work of another person or group without acknowledgment, including submission of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

Using ideas from your own prior work (assignment) without referencing the work in your assignment is considered self-plagiarism.

Participants are required to adhere to the 6 principles outlined in the RSM AI guidelines with regard to the use of Artificial Intelligence Platforms such as ChatGPT and related software/tools. The unauthorised use constitutes violation of plagiarism/ fraud policy. For this particular course, the faculty **promotes an *restrained* use of AI**.

For more information about academic integrity and AI please refer to the Programme's Examination Regulations and RSM AI guidelines documents on the Student Hub.

Assessment / Deliverable:	Individual or group:	(Due) date and hand in location:	% of final grade:
Case Assignments	Individual	Before the session(s), online	50%
Final Assignment	Individual	TBA, online	50%

For all Canvas submissions, please make sure to include the student name and programme name in the title of the file submission, as well as within the document itself (on the cover page).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S) AND READINGS

There is no required textbook. Required readings and cases are provided via Canvas.

SUGGESTED EXTRA READINGS, JOURNALS AND WEBSITES

For those of you, who are eager to deepen their understanding of corporate innovation management, I provide relevant, accessible, insightful **supplementary material** available on Canvas. These supplementary materials are not required readings but:

- If you are interested in learning more, they are the best sources to dig deeper into the topics that we will cover,
- You can consult them in the future whenever you feel like you are forgetting your knowledge about innovation management,
- They are just awesome pieces to read.

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl;">Session #1</td><td colspan="2">Session 1 – Idea Generation and Innovation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topics:</td><td>Where do creative ideas come from?
What is the difference between creativity and innovation?
How can individuals and organizations become more creative?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Case: (Required pre-reading)</td><td>"Kickboxing" Around the World: An Intrapreneurship Revolution? (SCG595-PDF-ENG) Jeremy Dann</td></tr>
<tr><td>Supplementary Material:</td><td>

• Amabile, T. M. (1997). Motivating creativity in organizations: On doing what you love and loving what you do. *California management review*, *40*(1), 39-58.

• Amabile, T. M., & Pratt, M. G. (2016). The dynamic componential model of creativity and innovation in organizations: Making progress, making meaning. *Research in organizational behavior*, *36*, 157-183.

• Dyer, J. H., Gregersen, H. B., & Christensen, C. M. (2009). The innovator's DNA. *Harvard business review*, 87.

    For the scientific version, check out: Dyer, J. H., Gregersen, H. B., & Christensen, C. (2008). Entrepreneur behaviors, opportunity recognition, and the origins of innovative ventures. Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 2(4), 317-338.

• Lehrer, J. (2012). 'Annals of ideas. Groupthink. The brainstorming myth', The New Yorker.

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<tr><td rowspan="4" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl;">Session #2</td><td colspan="2">Session 2 - Idea Selection</td></tr>
<tr><td>Topics:</td><td>How can companies weed out bad ideas and select the good ones?
What is the best way to manage a portfolio of innovation projects?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Case: (Required pre-reading)</td><td>One Ring to Rule Them All? Forging Immortality Technology (IN1904-IN1905) Spencer Harrison, Philip Gylfe</td></tr>
<tr><td>Supplementary Material:</td><td>

• Courtney, H., Lovallo, D., & Clarke, C. (2013). Deciding how to decide. Harvard Business Review, 91(11), 62-70.

• Blank, S. (2013). 'Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything'. Harvard Business Review (May): 65-72.

• Cooper, R.G., and Kleinschmidt, E.J. (2002). 'Optimizing the stage-gate process: What best-practice companies do (I) & II', Research Technology Management, 45 (5).

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	Session 3 – Idea Implementation	
	Topics:	What are the best approaches for successfully completing complex innovation projects? Why is implementing innovation so difficult? How can leaders overcome implementation difficulties?
	Case: (Required pre-reading)	Mastercard Labs (A) (Abridged) (9-422-082) Linda A. Hill; Sunil Gupta; Emily Tedards; Julia Kelley
Session #3	Supplementary Material:	• Rigby, D., Sutherland, J., & Takeuchi, H. (2016). Embracing agile—Harvard business review. • Barton, D. Carey, D. Charan, R. 2018. One bank's agile team experiment. Harvard Business Review (March-April). • Kuratko, D. F., Covin, J. G., & Hornsby, J. S. (2014). Why implementing corporate innovation is so difficult. Business Horizons, 57(5), 647-655. • Sull D. Turconi S., Sull C., & Yoder, J. 2017. Turning Strategy into Results. MIT Sloan Management Review. • Kanter, R.M., 2006. Innovation: the classic traps. Harvard Business Review, 84(11), pp.72-83. • Goyette, K., 2019. Five Things the Leaders Do to Stifle Innovation, Harvard Business Review

	Session 4 – Innovation Strategy	
	Topics:	What are the different types of innovation? How can incumbents defend against disruptive innovation?
	Case: (Required pre-reading)	Ripple: The Business of Crypto (719506-PDF-ENG) David B. Yoffie, George Gonzalez
Session #4	Supplementary Material:	• Pisano, G. P. 2015. You need an innovation strategy. Harvard Business Review, 93(6), 44-54. • Suarez, F. F., Utterback, J., Von Gruben, P., & Kang, H. Y. (2018). The hybrid trap: Why most efforts to bridge old and new technology miss the mark. Sloan Management Review, 59(3), 52. • Birkinshaw, J., and Gibson, C. (2004). 'Building Ambidexterity into an Organization', MIT Sloan Management Review

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	Session 5 – Disruptive Innovation	
	Topics:	How can incumbents defend against disruptive innovation?
	Case: (Required pre-reading)	We will use a simulation for understanding the competitive dynamics under disruptive innovation.
	Preparatory Material:	Watch the video on the definition of disruptive innovation: http://www.claytonchristensen.com/key-concepts/
Session #4	Supplementary Material:	• Christensen CM., Raynor ME., and McDonald R., 2015. What is disruptive innovation? Harvard Business Review, 5(5), p.2017. • Charitou, C.D. and Markides, C.C., 2003. Responses to disruptive strategic innovation. MIT Sloan Management Review, 44(2), pp.55-63A.

	Session 6 – Technology Management	
	Topics:	How do technologies evolve? Where do they come from? What are the techniques that companies can use to manage technological developments? What are new technologies? What kind of an impact can they have on industries?
Session #5	Case: (Required pre-reading)	AI Wars (723434-PDF-ENG) Andy Wu; Matt Higgins; Miaomiao Zhang; Hang Jiang
	Supplementary Material:	• Core curriculum reading: Technology Strategy (8127-PDF-ENG) Pai-Ling Yin • Nagji, B., Tuff, G. (2012). Managing your innovation portfolio. Harvard Business Review (May): 67-74.

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ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Case assignments involve open-ended questions based on the case of the day. The questions are designed to help you create a meaningful mind map of case information and prepare you for in-class discussion, which will eventually help you gain better insights into the case problem.

You must complete all case assignments <u>strictly before your session</u>. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the right file is uploaded to the course's online platform on the right time.

Case assignments involve creating a presentation that conveys and explains your message to the reader clearly. The presentation template is provided beforehand, with questions to be answered based on the respective case.

Grading of case assignments will be based on the following criteria:

- Answering all questions meeting minimum requirements
- Demonstrating an in-depth analysis of the industry/firm/phenomenon
- Suggesting a detailed, feasible and well-justified recommendation

As you prepare the presentation, favor **full sentences** over listing words, because your text must make sense to the reader. This does not mean to use long paragraphs. Strike a balance between brevity and length. Always justify your arguments with **case facts**. Recommend a **detailed action plan** that would be the best for the company given its goals, resources, and situation. Consider potential hurdles to your plan.

You should **not** use external resources specific to the case and the case company. The course material and the case itself contain all the knowledge and information you need for the final assignment.

The following is a great source for sound case analysis:

> ⭐ *Student Guide to the Case Method: Note 2 - Performing a Case Analysis by Van Weelden & Busuttil*

The **final assignment** is a report on a company's innovation management practices. The aim of this assignment is to identify the weaknesses of these practices based on the course knowledge and provide meaningful and feasible recommendations to the company. The exercise will also help the participants identify key difficulties that people (including themselves) face in innovation activities and generate a personal plan for improvement.

The participants will choose a company that they want to work on. The company can be a scale-up or a medium or a large enterprise that has innovation activities (successful, or not). Start-ups are not suitable for this exercise as they tend to focus on the MVP of a single product at their stage. When choosing a company, it is ideal that participants have connections with people in innovation related functions so that they can interview them and access information. The name of the company can be kept confidential if necessary.

Grading of the final assignment will be based on the following criteria:

- Providing a complete analysis of the corporate innovation management principles and practices in the company for at least three of five aspects of innovation management (idea generation, selection, implementation, innovation strategy, and technology development);
  - o describe the current innovation activities of the company,
  - o analyze their effectiveness,
  - o critique them with respect to the key learnings of the course,
  - o suggest actions for improvement.
- Linking the critique for each aspect of innovation management to course content.
- Linking the recommendations for improvement to course content.
- Providing actionable and feasible recommendations.
- Providing a personal development plan on how to improve own innovation management knowledge based on the difficulties observed in interviewees, or oneself.