Assessment – Coursework

This graded assessment accounts for **90% of your final grade** and comprises two separate assessment exercises: **Part A & Part** B which are both weighted equally at 45% of your final grade.

Submission deadline: **Friday 23rd August 2019, 11.59pm (UK time).**

Please note that whilst the submission deadline is Friday 23rd August 2019, 11.59pm (UK time), you are free to make your submission (Part A or B or both) at any time before this date. You do not need to wait until this day, or the day before or the week before.

Part A

In Part A, we assess learning outcomes related to topics 1, 2, 3, 7 & 10 by providing you with case study information on the leadership and strategic development processes which operate within the innovative context at Twitter.

The purpose of this brief is to provide you:

- Details of the coursework assessment: background to the case and questions

- Information on presentation and submission date.

- Guidelines to assist you in answering the questions

- The assessment marking criteria and feedback sheet for Part A.

Case Study Background & Questions

Read carefully the case evidence on **Twitter** which is contained in the following four sources:

1. Mark, K. & Parker, S. (2011) *Twitter* extracted from:

   Ireland, R.D., Hoskisson, R. E., & Hitt, M.A. (2013) *The Management of Strategy: Concepts and Cases*, 10th International Edition, South-Western, Cengage Learning, pages 371-377

2. Twitter (2016) *Annual Report 2015*, Twitter, Inc.
   <https://investor.twitterinc.com/financial-information/annual-reports/default.aspx>

3. Twitter (2017) *Annual Report 2016*, Twitter, Inc.
   <https://investor.twitterinc.com/financial-information/annual-reports/default.aspx>

4. Twitter (2018) **Annual Report 2017**, Twitter, Inc.

<https://investor.twitterinc.com/financial-information/annual-reports/default.aspx>

Each source covers a distinct period of Twitter's strategic development from start-up through achievement of stock market listing (IPO) to further development of the platform in the times of growing competition and online safety risks to users.

- **Source 1** provides a case analysis of Twitter's strategic development at start-up (2006-2011).
- **Source 2** reports on Twitter's strategic position and outlines the risks after achieving stock market listing (IPO) and presents remaining challenges related to Twitter and their industry in 2015.
- **Source 3** reports on Twitter's strategic position encompassing strategies to respond to growing risks and competition in 2016
- **Source 4** reports on Twitter's current growth directions in 2017, increasing Twitter's users' online safety and further future strategic choices in 2018.

All sources provide insights into the leadership, strategy and innovation practices within Twitter. Source 1 critiques Twitter's origins, current business model and future strategic choices, whereas sources 2 and 3 provide a corporate account on Twitter's mission, values, along with the content and direction of their strategic positions and future strategies for the given years.

Source 4 provides a corporate account on Twitter's current strategic position and warns of the risks the business currently faces. Your analysis of the Twitter Annual Reports should therefore be particularly critical in order to answer the below questions.

Part A of your coursework assessment requires you to answer two questions:

Questions

1. Using the Ashridge Sense of Mission Model analyse the case evidence to interpret whether Twitter's strategy show signs of a weak or strong sense of mission.

2. Using relevant strategic decision-making theory, analyse Twitter's existing strategic decisions to interpret if Twitter have pursued a deliberate or emergent strategy. In your answer, discuss to what extent you believe Twitter have built and sustained a long-term competitive advantage.

Both questions are equally weighed and you should review how grading is allocated in the Coursework Feedback Sheet.

Presentation

The assessment in Part A is a case analysis and you should note that case analysis is not a conceptual explanation or discussion but the application of concepts and frameworks to interpret the case information, analyse key events and statements, and reach evaluative judgements. The concepts and frameworks are covered in the workshops and prescribed reading and the guidance below gives you a few pointers on how you need to use this knowledge to answer the questions. In developing your analysis and arguments, you should use supporting evidence from the information contained in the case studies.

Your answers must only be derived from the information on Twitter contained in the four case evidence sources listed above. You are not required to consult other sources on Twitter or go beyond the end date of the fourth source (2017). The reason for this is that your analysis and evaluation is being assessed at this point in the organisation's development and not in the light of subsequent events. As a result, you should not include references on Twitter from the internet or other sources.

In terms of presentation, introduce each question indicating how you will structure your answer and conclude each answer with reference to your preceding arguments and the task required by the question. Do not present your answer in rigid report format but you may wish to divide your answer into sections which reflect the major elements of your analysis.

The **combined word count** of your answers to both questions must be **2000 words** and comply with the guidance provided.

The word limit for Part A **excludes** the cover page, reference list and appendices. This is subject to a +/- 10% allowance to the allocated word count.

Where a submission exceeds the stated word limit (allowing for the +10%) the maximum grade awarded will be P1. Appendices can be useful to provide additional information from your analysis but you must incorporate the key analytical arguments into the main body of your answer.

Guidance Notes

The assessment feedback sheet at the end of this section gives the marking criteria for the overall case analysis. Remember, in writing your solution to the questions you must not describe what the case says but use the concepts to analyse the information and use the evidence/facts in the case to support your analysis.

Question 1 asks you to critically review if Twitter has achieved a strong sense of mission. The question specifically asks you to use the Ashridge Sense of Mission model which part of your prescribed reading for unit is 2. Specifically you should apply

and discuss the four elements of mission (Ashridge model) to Twitter. When considering purpose and strategy, you should analyse the case evidence on mission, values and strategy. When doing this avoid being overly descriptive on the content of Twitter's strategy as you will soon exceed the word limit. Attempt to develop arguments and, if necessary, include supporting details in appendices. More crucially, you must address the central issue in the question of how the fifth element, a sense of mission, is achieved through the alignment of the employees' personal values with the organisation's identity and values. In doing this, consider the role played by the leadership and management approach at Twitter – particularly discussed in sources 2, 3, & 4 – to integrate the elements of mission, behavioural standards and values of the organisation, with those of the employees. You will also need to evaluate Twitter's mission based on the company's recent expansion and strategic developments to express and justify your opinion on whether Twitter have a achieved a strong sense of mission.

To answer **question 2** you will need to write a short essay by drawing on your learning of strategic decision-making theory and your prescribed reading from **Johnson et al, chapter 12**. Initially, you should commence your research by reading and examining the case evidence in order to identify a list of Twitter's strategic decisions. Once you have identified a list of these decisions in chronological order, your essay discussion should focus on how this decision-making relates to deliberate and/or emergent forms of strategy development. When doing this avoid being overly descriptive on the content of these decisions. Instead, you should ensure that the use the relevant theory to structure your discussion of case evidence. To develop your arguments further, a brief distinction between deliberate and intended strategy would be useful, followed by an in-depth discussion on which approach most closely resembles Twitter's strategic development. To reach conclusions on Twitter's competitive advantage, you should consider the sources of their competitive advantage (e.g. cost leadership, differentiation, focus etc.) and whether this has been sustained (e.g. through various types of isolating mechanisms). See **Grant (2012)**, Chapter 7 and **Unit 7** on Strategic Decision-Making in Innovative Contexts for further guidance.

Important Note:

Please ensure that Part A and Part B are submitted as separate documents. The documents should clearly be marked Part A and Part B and your matriculation number and module code should be clearly marked on the submission.

Please also note that it is the intention of the module team to use grademark on this module – so you may receive feedback in this format.

Turnitin: When uploading your file (either Part A or Part B) to Turnitin, please use your matriculation number as the file name. For example, your file name should take the following format "(401xxxxx Part A)" or "(401xxxxx Part B)".

Your name should not be marked in the submission.

Please note that it can take up to 24 hours to receive an originality report when using the Turnitin system.

Please ensure you include your reference list within your Turnitin submission.

Part A

<div align="center">**Coursework Assessment Feedback**</div>

Matriculation No.	Date of Submission:
Module: Leading Strategic Decision-making	
Part A: Twitter Case Study	Cohort:

Category	Grade	Comment
Presentation of analysis, use of appropriate concepts, and depth of understanding of the issues raised in the case. **(10%)**		
Critically examine Twitter's sense of mission using the Ashridge Model. (**35%**)		
Analyse Twitter's existing strategic decisions to interpret if Twitter have pursued a deliberate or emergent strategy **(35%)**		
Ability to reach coherent and logical arguments from the analysis, supported by case evidence. **(20%)**		

E	D	C	B	A
Fail (F1 – F5)	Marginal Pass (P1)	Satisfactory/ Good (P2-P3)	Very good (P4-P5)	Excellent (D1+)

General Comments:

Overall Grade:	Marker:

N.B. the percentages are shown as indications of the relative importance of each section and should not be taken as a precise indication of the marking scheme.

PART B

In Part B, we require you to write an essay on the following topic.

Essay Topic:

With reference to leadership literature and practical examples, critically evaluate the following statement: "Emotional intelligent leaders have the ability to inspire employees as they are more likely to be in tune and in sync with those around them"

Marking schedule for Part B:

10% of marks are allocated to the **presentation** of the essay. The student's work should be typed with clear use of paragraphs and headings. Typographical and spelling errors should be avoided.

10% of marks are allocated to appropriate **referencing** of content. Students should familiarise themselves and make use of the APA referencing system and should cite and reference material properly. Students should make use of a range of resources (books, journal articles etc) and the literature used should be appropriate to the arguments made.

60% of marks are allocated to the **analysis** presented in the essay. Students should examine appropriate theoretical concepts and frameworks. Students should demonstrate an awareness of the wider context and present an in-depth discussion of current issues. Better students will demonstrate critical analysis skills and communicate their arguments in a clear and coherent manner.

20% of marks are allocated to the **conclusions** drawn. The conclusions should identify the key themes or issues under consideration. Conclusions should be well supported from the analysis and highlight the significance of arguments, evidence and insights

Guidance Notes on Part B:

You must refer to relevant literature throughout the essay. This can be in the form of textbooks, journal articles, or relevant web-based material. Student are directed in particular to the following databases which they may find useful in developing their essay:

- ABI Inform Complete (Proquest)
- Ingenta
- Science Direct
- Sage Online

In particular, the following journals may be helpful to you in relation to the prescribed topic:

- Leadership Quarterly (Available on Science Direct)
- Leadership and Organisation Development Journal (Available on ABI Inform)
- Team Performance Management (Available on ABI Inform)
- Journal of Management Development (Available on ABI Inform)
- Group and Organisation Management (Available on Sage Online)

You may wish to refer to relevant theory or you may wish to cite relevant research or examples to support your arguments. Remember all material cited <u>must</u> be referenced using the APA Referencing system. Also please refer to the University guidance notes on the avoidance of Plagiarism.

Please remember to structure your essay appropriate. **<u>You should use headings</u>** – and include an introduction, main body and conclusion/recommendations sections. Please do not label the main body as "main body".

You should avoid using footnotes in your essay.

Please ensure you use UK English spelling in your writing – so avoid "z's" such as "organization" and use the UK English spelling of "organisation" instead.

Bullet points and numbered lists should be avoided in your essay – focus on strong, well-supported arguments from the literature.

Please use "justify" alignment and 1 and a half or double spacing. Your font should be a suitable size (usually 11 or 12 font size).

While we do not specify a particular number of references/citations to be included, you should include at least a minimum of _**15 different journal articles**_ in your essay.

Please answer the topic posed. Your essay should **<u>NOT</u>** be a summary of leadership theories. You need to specifically address the topic and question posed.

The word count for Part B must be **2000 words**. This **excludes** the cover page and reference list. This is subject to a +/- 10% allowance to the allocated word count. Appendices should not be included in your Part B submission. Where a submission exceeds the stated word limit (allowing for the +10%) the maximum grade awarded will be P1.

Important Note:

Please ensure that Part A and Part B are submitted as separate documents. The documents should clearly be marked Part A and Part B and your matriculation number and module code should be clearly marked on the submission.

Please also note that it is the intention of the module team to use grademark on this module – so you may receive feedback in this format.

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Your name should not be marked in the submission.

Please note that it can take up to 24 hours to receive an originality report when using the Turnitin system.

Please ensure you include your reference list within your Turnitin submission.

Coursework Assessment Feedback

Matriculation No.	Date of Submission:
Module: Leading Strategic Decision-Making	
Part B: Essay	Cohort:

Category	**Comment**
Presentation of the essay. Clear use of paragraphs and headings and the text is free from typographical and spelling errors. **(10%)**	
Referencing of content. Consistent use of APA Referencing throughout the essay with adequate citation support for arguments being made. (**10%**)	
Analysis. Comprehensive examination of appropriate theoretical frameworks and models. Strong arguments presented with critical insights and good communication skills in evidence. **(60%)**	
Conclusions. Clear identification of key themes and issues. Synthesis of core arguments and formulation of insights and recommendations as appropriate **(20%)**	

General Comments:

Overall Grade:	Marker:

N.B. the percentages are shown as indications of the relative importance of each section and should not be taken as a precise indication of the marking scheme.