ULB Solvay Lifelong Learning
BRUSSELS SCHOOL. ECONOMICS. MANAGEMENT

EMBA-2527-113-Business Model Innovation

Name of lecturer(s) & Email	Level, Status, Timing	ECTS, CH & HW/GW*, Online
Benjamin BEECKMANS benjamin.beeckmans@solvay.edu	Level 3 Track - Innovation & Entrepreneurship Between 14-11-2026 and 06-12-2026	3 20 & 66 4

Description of the course unit

"Course Description: Business Model Innovation – Designing the Future of Enterprise
In today's rapidly shifting world, business success is no longer determined solely by operational efficiency or technological advantage. The organizations that thrive are those that dare to reimagine the very logic of how they create, deliver, and capture value. This course on Business Model Innovation invites students to think boldly and act strategically—to become architects of the next generation of businesses.
Through a blend of theory, case studies, and hands-on experimentation, this course explores how innovative business models can become powerful levers for competitive advantage, growth, and impact. Students will dissect breakthrough models from startups and global corporations alike—understanding how companies like Dropbox, Tesla, Patagonia, and Fairphone have not just entered markets, but reshaped them.
The course is built around a central idea: that business model innovation is not just about products or services—it's about rethinking assumptions. Students will explore tools such as the Business Model Canvas, the Value Proposition Canvas, circular economy principles, and ecosystem mapping to ideate, test, and refine new models. They'll also be challenged to confront real-world tensions between innovation, profitability, and responsibility.
A strong emphasis is placed on aligning innovation with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives. Students will learn how to embed sustainability and ethical governance at the heart of their business models—designing ventures that not only succeed in the market but also contribute positively to society and the planet. In a world increasingly driven by stakeholder expectations, climate risk, and social justice, these skills are not optional—they are foundational.
Throughout the course, students will work in teams to develop their own innovative business model for a real or hypothetical organization. This capstone project provides a laboratory for creativity, experimentation, and feedback—culminating in a pitch that is both visionary and viable.
Whether you aspire to launch your own venture, drive change within a company, or consult on strategy and innovation, this course provides the mindset, frameworks, and practical tools to become a change agent. You will leave not only with new skills, but with a new lens through which to view the future of business."

Course unit Chapters

"Unit 1: Rethinking the Logic of Business
Objective: Challenge conventional thinking and introduce the strategic importance of business model innovation.
Content Includes:
- What is a business model? BMI 55 Business Models
- Why innovation at the model level outperforms product-level innovation
- Disruption vs. transformation
- Key Tools: Business Model Canvas (intro), Strategyzer Business Model Growth frameworks

Unit 2: The Anatomy of Innovative Business Models
Objective: Break down and reconstruct the building blocks of successful business models.
Content Includes:
- Customer segments, value propositions, channels, revenue models
- Freemium, subscription, platform, and circular economy models
- Business model archetypes across sectors (tech, retail, fintech, etc.)
- Modeling and Management of the Value Chain
- Key Tools: Business Model Patterns, Value Proposition Canvas
- Tesla Case study
- Output: Diagnostic of an existing company's business model and growth strategy

Module 3: Scalability and Sustainability
Objective: Position scalability and sustainability and responsibility as drivers of innovation, not limitations.
Content Includes:
- How Megatrends are reshaping markets
- ESG: Designing for purpose, inclusion, and circularity
- Key Tools: Triple Layer Business Model Canvas, Impact Gaps Canvas
- Hilti and Patagonia Case studies
- Output: Opportunity analysis for a business model redesign

Module 4: Prototyping and Testing Business Models
Objective: Teach students to de-risk innovation through rapid iteration and customer validation.
Content Includes:
- Lean Startup principles
- MVPs for business models
- Testing key assumptions (problem-solution fit, revenue streams, cost structure)
- Key Tools: Experiment Board, Validation Matrix
- Dropbox case study
- Output: Field-tested hypothesis and iteration plan

Module 5: From Concept to Pitch – Selling the Business Model
Objective: Develop the strategic communication and persuasion skills to present a bold, viable model to stakeholders.
Content Includes:
- Storytelling for business models
- Visual tools and financial narratives
- Investor and stakeholder alignment strategies
- Key Tools: Business Model Storyboard, Pitch Canvas
- Output: Final team pitch of an original business model innovation"

*CH - Contact Hours, HW - Homework, GW - Group Work
** Learning Objectives are available in the Lifelong Learner's Handbook

Learning outcomes of the course unit

1. Design Disruptive and Scalable Business Models MBA students will develop the strategic ability to design and reinvent business models that challenge industry norms, unlock new markets, and drive sustainable competitive advantage—using advanced tools such as the Business Model Canvas, value innovation, and platform thinking.
2. Embed ESG as a Source of Innovation and Value Creation. Students will learn to integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) priorities into the core of business model design—not as constraints, but as powerful catalysts for innovation, differentiation, and long-term stakeholder trust.
3. Apply Systems Thinking and Megatrends to Innovate Across Ecosystems. Students will gain the capacity to think beyond the firm by mapping and leveraging complex ecosystems—identifying new value flows, partnership opportunities, Megatrends and network effects that enable transformative business models.
4. Experiment Rapidly Using Lean and Agile Innovation Methods. Students will apply lean startup, agile experimentation, and evidence-based iteration to reduce risk and accelerate the innovation process—moving from concept to validated business model with real market potential.
5. Craft and Communicate Visionary Business Model Pitches. Students will master the art of articulating bold business model innovations in a compelling, investor-ready format—combining strategic clarity with storytelling to persuade executives, boards, and venture capitalists alike."

Teaching Methods
Lecture, Interactive Lecture, Directed Discussion, Case Based Learning

Learning Activities
Lectures, Readings, Case Studies, Group Work,.......

Learning Objectives (Check Academic Rules & Regulations)

- Learning Objective 1.1: Reinforcement
- Learning Objective 1.2: Reinforcement
- Learning Objective 2.1: Reinforcement
- Learning Objective 2.2: Mastery
- Learning Objective 3.1: Reinforcement
- Learning Objective 3.2: Reinforcement

Assessment methodology / Students Use of Time and Load

Group Assignment

- Final team pitch of an original business model innovation
- 100%
- Due 6 December 2026
- Jury

Evaluation scale
0-20

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Initiative
Will your course tackle ESGs (environmental, social and governance) content? : Yes
How many of your contact hours are dedicated to ESG (environmental, social and governance) content? : 2
How many of the contact hours declared above contain climate solutions for how organisations can reach net zero? : 0
Please describe how your course contribute to the ESG (max 500 words)? : This course on Business Model Innovation contributes to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) objectives by equipping students with the tools and mindset to design sustainable, inclusive, and ethically governed business models. Through case studies, frameworks, and hands-on projects, students learn to integrate environmental stewardship, social impact, and transparent governance into the core of business strategy. The course emphasizes long-term value creation over short-term gains, encouraging future leaders to innovate not only for profitability but also for planetary and societal well-being. In doing so, it prepares students to become responsible entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs capable of driving meaningful changes within organizations and across industries.

Readings

Required

- Case Studies: HIlti, Tesla, Dropbox, Patagonia.

Notice: The information available in the course outline is subject to change. Please keep yourself informed at all times by regularly checking your Front Office Portal hosted on Canvas.

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