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## A Word From the CSIG Chair

**Samina Karim**

**Northeastern University**

Competitive Strategy Interest Group Chair

Greetings, fellow Competitive Strategists! Welcome to the Fall pre-Annual Meeting edition of the Competitive Strategy newsletter. Thanks to the efforts of many people, we have another superb program scheduled for Berlin. As one of the largest and most active interest groups of SMS, we are offering two pre-conference workshops on Saturday. The Research and Paper Development Workshop, chaired by Emilie Feldman and Feng Zhu, will have a morning focus on theory development and afternoon roundtable sessions to delve deeper into manuscripts. This year we chose to replace our former Teaching Workshop with a more holistic Junior Faculty Professional Development Workshop; this is being organized by Asli Arikan and PK Toh and is open to all without any registration requirements.

For Sunday, Vikas Aggarwal (our Associate Program Chair) has assembled three fantastic panel sessions covering new empirical methods, theory building using computational models, and competitive environments of platforms and ecosystems. Finally, Kira Fabrizio, our Program

Chair, led the development of our twelve paper and presentation sessions for the main conference. Details are inside!

It has been my pleasure and an honor to serve as an officer over the last three years and to get to know many of our members. As my term as officer expires this year, I would like to thank the amazing set of officers with whom I worked, and recognize our representatives-at-large, reviewers and participants that have created a vibrant environment for exchanging ideas. A big thanks is also due to Olivier Chatain and Mahka Moeen, our newsletter editors, for creating and distributing our newsletters.

The annual business meeting for our Competitive Strategy Interest Group will be Sunday, September 18th, from 5:45pm to 6:45pm (please see program for location). It's a great opportunity to hear about this year's activities and our future plans, meet other



members of the interest group, and enjoy good conversations. If you would like to get more involved as a representative or officer, have ideas about how the Group can better support its members' professional development, or have any other suggestions then please reach out to

me ([samina@northeastern.edu](mailto:samina@northeastern.edu)) or any of the officers. I look forward to seeing many of you in Berlin!

Live long and prosper,

*Samina Karim*

## Welcome from the Berlin CSIG Conference Program

**Kira Fabrizio**

CSIG Conference Program Chair

It is with great pleasure that I announce to you the program of the Competitive Strategy Interest Group for the October SMS Conference in Berlin. Thanks to a fantastic group of volunteers, we have a strong and varied program. I think everyone will find something of interest and we all hope to see you in Berlin.

Our program starts on Saturday with two of our annual preconference workshops: the CSIG Junior Faculty Research and Paper Development workshop, organized by Emilie Feldman and Feng Zhu and the Junior Professional Development Workshop, organized by Asli Arikan and PK Toh.

For Sunday morning, Vikas Aggarwal has organized three excellent panels (see next section for details). The main program begins Sunday afternoon and offers five paper sessions, two common ground sessions and three panel sessions covering topics ranging from industry evolution to foundations of competitive advantage.

In addition to the colleagues mentioned above, I'd like to thank the 188 reviewers who were so generous with their time and expertise, the SMS Headquarters staff, and my fellow interest group officers, Samina and Vikas, for their excellent advice and support.

I look forward to seeing you in Berlin soon!

*Kira Fabrizio*



## Berlin CSIG Sunday Sessions

**Vikas Aggarwal**

Associate Program Chair

### **The Latest and Greatest in Empirical Methods for Strategy Scholars**

#### *Sunday Panel Session*

This popular session has become a regular fixture at the SMS conference. Drawing on recent developments in statistical methodologies, this year's panelists will cover some of the latest empirical tools of relevance to strategy scholars. Panelists will discuss issues of causal inference, identification strategies, and matching methods, focusing not only on the tools themselves, but also on examples of how these tools can be applied to address a broad range of questions in the field of strategy.

### **Theory Building with Computational Models: New Directions**

#### *Sunday Panel Session*

Computational models have led to many important theoretical advances in the field of strategy. Yet particularly from the perspective of non-modelers, it has often been difficult to marry empirical work with theoretical advances built on computational modeling foundations. This session will focus on demystifying the computational modeling landscape for current and future consumers and producers of such work. Panelists will describe the different classes of models used in the strategy field, explain their underlying assumptions, and discuss how these models can contribute new theoretical insights for empirical researchers across a broad range of strategic management phenomena.

### **Platforms and Ecosystems: The New Locus of Competitive Advantage**

#### *Sunday Panel Session*

In recent years platforms and ecosystems, such as those from Apple, Google and Facebook, have come to play an increasingly important role in enabling firms to create and sustain competitive advantage. How have platforms and ecosystems changed the rules of the game in competitive strategy? Leading scholars in this area will highlight issues at the forefront of research on this topic, focusing on questions such as how incentive, organization, and governance design in the context of platforms and ecosystems can influence innovation and the locus of competitive advantage. The session will aim to map out the frontier of knowledge on this topic, highlighting key open areas for future research.

*Vikas Aggarwal*



<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>September 18</b>			
08:00 – 09:15	139: The Latest and Greatest in Empirical Methods for Strategy Scholars <i>(Interest Group panel)</i>	Goldfarb; Mindruta; Rawley; Somaya; Wu	Tegel
09:30 – 10:45	138: Theory Building with Computational Models: New Directions <i>(Interest Group Panel)</i>	Billinger; Posen; Stieglitz; Workiewicz	Tegel
11:15 – 12:30	140: Platforms and Ecosystems: The New Locus of Competitive Advantage <i>(Interest Group Panel)</i>	Cennamo; Gawer; Piezunka; Zhu	Tegel
16:15 – 17:30	59: Ecosystems <i>(Paper Session)</i>	Dykes & Markman; Ting & Shi; Wang & Cuervo-Cazurra; Fabrizio & Kim	Tegel
17:45 – 18:45	Business Meeting	All Competitive Strategy Interest Group Members	TBD

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>September 19</b>			
11:00– 12:15	63: Firm Scope <i>(Paper Session)</i>	Arikan; Lechner, Lorenzoni & Tundis; Vidal; Hawk & Pacheco de Almeida	Tegel
13:30 – 14:45	62: Foundations of Competitive Advantage <i>(Common Ground Session)</i>	Stoelhorst & Bridoux; Hatch; Campbell, Pahnke, Sirmon & Rhymer; Witt & Carr; Lynch, Jin & Ali; Teng & Quelin	Tiergarten III
15:00 – 16:15	67: Competitive Advantage & Performance Persistence <i>(Common Ground Session)</i>	Chacar & Zhao; Wibbens; Reinhardt; Brenes, Ciravegna & Pichardo; Vaniala, Luoma, Tikkanen, Frösén & Cho; Landau, Kreutzer & Hummel	Bishop

<b>Tuesday September 20</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
11:00 – 12:15	60: Reputation, Status, and Signaling <i>(Paper Session)</i>	Goldfarb, Zavyalova, & Devanatha Pillai; Kim; Changphao; James	Schinkel I/II
15:45 – 17:00	58: Categories & Industry Evolution <i>(Paper Session)</i>	Bhawe, Zahra & Neubaum; Syakhroza, Paoella & Munir; Schmidt & Kuusela; Ehrig	Lincke I/II
17:30 – 18:45	61: Rivalry and Imitation <i>(Paper Session)</i>	Beckman, Kirsch & Lee; Thatchenkery & Katila; Hauptmann, Ambos & Ambos; Kim & Youm	Tiergarten II

## CSIG Junior Faculty Research and Paper Development Workshop

Saturday, September 17, 2016 9:00am - 4:00pm

### Co-organizers (CSIG Reps-at-large)

Emilie Feldman, *University of Pennsylvania*

Feng Zhu, *Harvard University*



### Panelists

Juan Alcacer, *Harvard Business School*

Olivier Chatain, *HEC Paris*

Alfonso Gambardella, *Bocconi University*

Giovanni Gavetti, *Tuck University*

Javier Gimeno, *INSEAD*

Constance Helfat, *Tuck University*

Phanish Puranam, *INSEAD*

Marvin Lieberman, *UCLA*

Evan Rawley, *Columbia University*

Jasjit Singh, *INSEAD*

Brian Wu, *University of Michigan*



## Call for Participants

### Competitive Strategy SMS Junior Faculty Professional Development Workshop Saturday, September 17, 2016, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Please join us for the Competitive Strategy Interest Group's first annual SMS Junior Faculty Professional Development Workshop at the upcoming SMS conference in Berlin, Germany. The workshop will be held on Saturday, September 17th 2016 from 9am-12pm and is open to all conference participants from all interest groups who are currently working as faculty at an academic institution. **Registration is NOT**

**required for this workshop.**



The 2016 SMS Junior Faculty Professional Workshop is organized by Asli Arikan (Kent State) and PK Toh (UT Austin), and will feature the

following distinguished scholars as panelists: Olivier Chatain (HEC Paris), Aaron Chatterji (Duke), Andrea Fosfuri (Bocconi), Samina Karim (NorthEastern), Peter Klein (Baylor), Margaret Peteraf (Dartmouth College), Hart Posen (U. of Wisconsin-Madison), and Zur Shapira (NYU).

The workshop will include presentations and Q&A on the following topics:

- Managing your research pipeline
- Managing the R&R process
- Managing your role as reviewers for journals
- Managing balance in your junior faculty life (work-life, research, teaching, service)

Each panelist will present for about 10-15 mins. The rest of the time will be allocated to discussions, Q&A sessions and a coffee break that allows further interactions.



This workshop is meant to be interactive, in a way that we believe is helpful for junior faculties. Please feel free to contact the organizers if you have further questions.

Asli: [aarikan@kent.edu](mailto:aarikan@kent.edu)

PK Toh: [pk.toh@mcombs.utexas.edu](mailto:pk.toh@mcombs.utexas.edu)

## Commentary

### Using Business Simulation Games in the Classroom

**Tomasz Obloj, HEC Paris**

**Why simulations?** Over a recent decade we have seen a proliferation of business simulation games designed with a specific purpose of providing students with an interactive, hands-on learning experience in the area of competitive strategy. The universe of such games is very diverse, ranging from 1-hour to 3-days to weeklong modules. Similarly, while most games typically focus exclusively on building a startup and making decisions pertaining to the product-market competition, some are more complicated or focused, and incorporate issues of the tragedy of the commons, triple bottom line performance evaluation framework, choice between competition and collaboration, management of an M&A process, implementing a strategic change, and many others. These interactive tools are also either team-based (usually 5-7 students per team, with well defined roles) or single person exercises. Finally, the competition can play out against other students (/teams) or



**Happy MBA students**

*Photo credit: HEC Paris*

alternatively, all students (/teams) replay in parallel the same scenario where they face a computer-managed competitive environment. While combing through the supply of simulation games is a daunting task, the richness of the offer ensures that one can pick a simulation that is particularly well suited for the curriculum needs.

The interest of using such games as a complement to the competitive strategy or industry and competitive analysis courses is multi-fold. First, at least in my experience, they tend to create an exciting and bonding experience for students – while this should not be the sole (or even the most important) criterion for selection of pedagogical tools, it helps. Second, such games can be fruitfully used in various places of the curriculum, making it a flexible module. They can be scheduled at the end of the competitive strategy course, allowing students to put their lessons learned to practice. In such case though, the instructor should make sure that there is sufficient time for debriefing. They can however also be placed before the module and serve as a recurring reference point throughout the rest of the course. In one case, I have successfully used such simulation between the basic and advanced courses, using it first to summarize the key issues and second, to kick-start the next module. Third, business simulation games work well with a wide range of audience. I have used them in programs ranging from Undergraduate to Executive Education.

Finally, (and especially relevant for custom executive programs), many simulations allow parts of the game to be “played” online facilitating a blended approach.

Although business simulation games put an instructor in a role of a moderator, thus seemingly decreasing the burden of responsibility and prep time, some issues remain crucial. The mapping from choices to outcomes is governed by the engine of the simulation – its algorithm. Thus, it is very important that when choosing a particular simulation, one understands the logic and basic math behind the algorithm. At times this logic can be quite arbitrary hence often putting the instructor in a tough spot when challenged (as is often the case) by a losing team. I’ve experienced simulations that were designed in a way that a well executed differentiation strategy would always dominate a well executed cost leadership and vice versa – it all depended on the assumed parameters such as the elasticity of demand, size of the segments and relative growth rates. While algorithms are, understandably, proprietary, my experience has been that developers are willing to share the basic structure of the relationships between choices and outcomes – often, the functionalities even allow us to alter and tailor this structure to some extent. Similarly, business simulations, at least the ones I have used, do not substitute for a strategy course. This is why I referred to them as a useful complement to the core course. They allow few key takeaways, such as the value of consistent choices or clear positioning, but remain fairly superficial and mechanical. There is therefore an important trade-off to consider as in the same number of hours, the scope of the

material that can be covered in a more “standard” class (such as case-based) is significantly greater.

All in all, when looking to diversify the pedagogical approaches, be it by bringing some of the content online, combining various content delivery methods, and enhancing our own learning, business simulation games offer one attractive alternative. In the end, we all care about and are responsible for how much and what our students learn. Providing them with active and engaging learning environments seems more than necessary today (cf. Freeman et al., 2014). By carefully choosing which simulation game (or any other active learning tool) we use and meticulously tailoring it to the audience we can, I believe, do a better job.

*Tomasz Obloj*



#### *References:*

Freeman, S., Eddy, S. L., McDonough, M., Smith, M. K., Okoroafor, N., Jordt, H., & Wenderoth, M. P. (2014). Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. *Proceedings of the National*

## Announcement

### **EDEN Doctoral Seminar on Advanced Strategic Management At IESE Business School, Barcelona, November 21-25, 2016**

IESE Business School, INSEAD, and EIASM (European Institute for the Advancement of Management Studies) are organizing the **EDEN Doctoral Seminar on Advanced Strategic Management**.

**WHERE:** IESE Business School, Barcelona

**WHEN:** November 21-25, 2016.

The week will consist of lectures, discussions, and presentations, and aims to bring the participants up to speed on the state of the art in Strategic Management research. The target audience is doctoral students from all over the world, preferably in their second or third year of study, who have covered the basic Management and Strategy courses and are actively developing their own research agenda in the field of Strategy.

The **Faculty** line-up includes Bruno Cassiman (IESE Business School), Alfonso Gambardella (Bocconi University), Matthew Grennan (Wharton), Maria Guadalupe (INSEAD), Mike Ryall (University of Toronto), Giovanni Valentini (IESE Business School), and Govert Vroom (IESE Business School).

**Topics** covered in the Seminar will include:

- Value-based strategy
- Modern methods and models for empirical work in strategy
- Innovation strategy and productivity
- Business models and strategy
- Product market competition and the internal organization of firms
- The interplay between firm strategies and markets: Theory and evidence

Applicants will be selected on a competitive basis and only accepted and fully-registered applicants may participate. The application deadline is September 30, 2016.

For more information on the application process and registration fees, please visit [http://www.eiasm.org/frontoffice/eden\\_announcement.asp?event\\_id=1201](http://www.eiasm.org/frontoffice/eden_announcement.asp?event_id=1201)

## Call for Volunteers

### Competitive Strategy Interest Group

The Competitive Strategy interest group of the Strategic Management Society invites nominations for three Representative-at-Large positions and one Officer position. The representatives-at-large will serve two-year terms and the officer will serve a three-year term, all starting in January 2017.

Nominations, including nominations of others and self-nominations, may be sent via e-mail to Samina Karim ([samina@northeastern.edu](mailto:samina@northeastern.edu)). Please use the subject heading "CSIG nomination" in your message.

Representatives-at-large typically help organize one specific activity, such as the teaching or research workshop, or the newsletter editor. They may also help in other activities so as the organization of the main program, Sunday workshops, or reviewing of proposals.

The officer position entails a three-year term whereby you will serve as Assistant Program Chair (primarily arranging the 2017 Sunday workshops), then Program Chair (arranging the 2018 conference program), and then Interest Group Chairperson (during 2019).

Please submit nominations by October 1, 2016. On-line voting will occur after the conference, and candidates will be informed of election results by approximately January 1.

Questions regarding the Competitive Strategy Interest Group elections may be sent by email with the subject heading "CSIG Election Question" to Samina Karim ([samina@northeastern.edu](mailto:samina@northeastern.edu)).





## Competitive Strategy Interest Group Officers & Reps

(Officers through December 2016)

- **Chair:** *Samina Karim*  
 samina@northeastern.edu
- **Program Chair:** *Kira Fabrizio*  
 kfab@bu.edu
- **Associate Prog. Chair:** *Vikas Aggarwal*  
 vikas.aggarwal@insead.edu
- **Representatives-at-Large:**

<i>Asli Arikan</i>	2015-2016
<i>Olivier Chatain</i>	2015-2016
<i>Emilie Feldman</i>	2015-2016
<i>Mahka Moeen</i>	2016-2017
<i>PK Toh</i>	2016-2017
<i>Feng Zhu</i>	2016-2017
- **Newsletter Editors:**  
*Olivier Chatain & Mahka Moeen*  
 csig.news@gmail.com

### CSIG Business Meeting

Please join us for the Competitive Strategy Interest Group Meeting at the SMS Conference. The meeting will be held from 17:45 to 18:45, Sunday, September 18 (Location TBA). The Business Meeting is one of the best ways to connect with IG members, the Officers, and your Representatives-at-Large. We hope you will plan on attending to learn more about IG projects and initiatives and make your voice heard. We look forward to seeing you there!

### Colophon

The next issue of the Competitive Strategy newsletter will be distributed in Spring 2017. Please send any contributions or comments to Olivier Chatain at [chatain@hec.fr](mailto:chatain@hec.fr) or Mahka Moeen at [mahka\\_moeen@kenan-flagler.unc.edu](mailto:mahka_moeen@kenan-flagler.unc.edu).

Photos of Berlin courtesy of [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

- *Olivier Chatain*
- *Mahka Moeen*

