



South-Eastern Finland  
University of Applied Sciences

**From 24<sup>th</sup> June to 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**5 ECTS**

**in Xamk Kouvola Campus**

## **Platform Strategies for Business in the Digital Age** **Learn how to design, launch, monetise and compete in a networked economy**

***MA, Diplomacy and International Relations, Marco Torregrossa, Finland (Italy)***

### **Description**

Platforms have been transforming entire sectors of the economy, marginalizing incumbents and enabling small startups to rise rapidly to global dominance. Many of the world's most valuable companies are platforms. 70% of the world's top 10 companies by market capitalization <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-strategy-and-corporate-finance-blog/if-youre-not-building-an-ecosystem-chances-are-your-competitors-are> (Amazon, Apple, Alibaba, Microsoft, Facebook et al) and 70% of the \$1 billion+ unicorn startups (Didi, Airbnb, Uber et al) operate open ecosystems that match buyers and sellers, gain enormous value and market share from network effects, and harness their users to innovate.

But even your local health club makes much of its money not by what it sells but by facilitating the interactions or transactions of others—just like farmers' markets or stock exchanges already do.

Regardless of your industry, now you can too. Unexplored potential for platformization lie in many domains and value chains. This interactive Platform Strategies course (the first ever in Finland) will teach you how to convert existing products and services to Minimum Viable Platforms and walk step by step through adopting a platform strategy.

You'll be able to apply the learning directly to your company, product, service, an existing platform or to a market that you are thinking to access.

### **Course Outcomes**

In this course you will learn a design framework to envision and rollout platform strategies that mobilize ecosystems. It will also equip you with immediately

actionable tools and techniques build, scale and govern your own platform. You will:

- Identify approaches to building two-sided or multi-sided B2B or B2C marketplaces and select the right one for you;
- Scan and mobilise the ecosystem and analyse platform adoption at firms like Amazon, Netflix, Airbnb, Tinder, Wolt with key success metrics and pitfalls;
- Define a go-to-market strategy to grow both supply and demand on the platform and build a strong network effect;
- Recognise and know how to compete in networked economies and winner-take-all markets.

After building your understanding and capacity, you will design a platform business model for your own or your next company with key strategic components (e.g. openness, cannibalization, competition) and a pathway for adoption. Together, we will build a roadmap with step by steps actions to validate your platform ideas and test it through a lean prototyping approach.

Basic knowledge of digitalisation, microeconomics and service design is recommended but not compulsory.

You need to bring forward in the classroom (either/or):

- One existing platform which you want to optimise
- One platform idea which you want to develop from scratch
- One example of an iconic platform which you want to analyse (eg Uber, Amazon, Google Android, Tinder)

A platform toolbox and success checklist will be provided before and after the course.



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## Assessment

Will be announced in the beginning of the course.

## Course Content

### 1. FOUNDATIONS

What makes platforms special and powerful? How are platforms fundamentally different than product firms? Why do platform businesses often generate winner-take-all outcomes?

### 2. PRODUCT-TO-PLATFORM

How can traditional products or services businesses be transformed into platforms? When does it make sense to undertake this transformation? How to address the barriers firms face in organising themselves in platform businesses?

### 3. DESIGN

Why is platform design different than product and service design? How to map the ecosystem and motivate users? How does a platform's architecture choices resolve conflicting interests of its multiple constituents? What should platforms own and what should they not?

### 4. LAUNCH

How many sides should a platform have? Which side should you start growing first and how? How to solve the chicken-or-egg problem, gain critical mass and ignite network effect? How to deal with competition and multi-homing?

### 5. PLATFORM CANVAS DESIGN

In this interactive hands-on session you will scan and mobilise open ecosystems and produce a platform business model for your own or your next company. We will utilize a proven Platform Canvas tool to facilitate the work. Working in groups, students review each other's canvas and prototype a Minimum Viable Platform.

### 6. MONETIZATION

How to choose a successful revenue model for platforms? Under what conditions should a platform subsidize the participation of one or multiple sides? How should the pricing structure change over the platform's lifecycle?

### 7. TOOLS

What tools can ease access to your platform, facilitate transactions, reduce frictions and provide further support to your users? What AI, tech and other third-party integrations should be embedded into the platform? How to optimise the matching between supply and demand? How to improve how your value proposition is communicated to your users?

### 8. GOVERNANCE

How much control should a platform take over the interactions it enables? What curation mechanisms will increase traction and ignite network effect on your platform? How to build a community and grow both supply and demand simultaneously? How to avoid legal risks and users bypassing your platform?

### 9. METRICS

What data strategy and metrics can be implemented to measure successful platform transactions? How do these metrics differ from those implemented by linear business models? How metrics should evolve in the growing phase of a platform?

### 10. POLICY AND REGULATION

Do platforms play by different rules and should they? When and how should platforms be regulated? Can platforms become anti-competitive monopolies? What antitrust and other policies platforms should watch out for?

### 11. NEW PLATFORMS

Why blockchain and cryptonetworks represent the new frontier of platform business models? How to design decentralised autonomous organisations and integrate distributed ledger technologies into a platform? What permission (private) and permissionless (public) approaches to implement to blockchain-powered platforms?

### 1:1 COACHING SESSION

Each student will get one customised coaching session with the instructor after the course.



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## A brief cv of the lecturer

### Marco Torregrossa

Marco Torregrossa is CEO at Euro Freelancers, a curated marketplace for consulting and legal services on-demand. He is former Secretary General, now Board Member, at the European Sharing Economy Coalition, a network representing companies in the on-demand economy. In that framework he has conducted governmental relations and public affairs for a number of platforms like Airbnb, Uber and Ebay.

In the last years Marco has led a number of training events across Europe to help organisations design, launch, monetise and scale their own digital marketplaces and use platform strategies to gain competitive advantage. He has trained more than 250 people from leading organisations around the world in public and private sector across industries.

His last masterclass took place on November 21 in Helsinki and was attended by large Finnish companies and SMEs.



More about Marco:

<https://about.me/marcotorregrossa>