Making good decisions is a key to success. In fact, managers spend the majority of their time making decisions. Thus, managers that can make better decisions in a timely fashion are more likely to outperform others. This course is designed to develop your skill in using spreadsheets to make better decisions faster. The focus of the course will be on selecting and applying decision making approaches to realistic business problems, rather than focusing on the computational underpinnings of decision making. Thus, completing this course will make you a powerful Excel modeler, and a competitive candidate for many junior and senior managerial positions.

Microsoft Excel will be used to implement business models. You will learn how to use Excel to effectively organize, analyze and present information. Specifically, you will learn how to use advanced tools such as macros, goal seek, solver, simulation, and data tables. Some of the modeling issues that will be covered in the course are:

- Choosing the best alternative amongst several competing ones
  - E.g., which model will best describe consumer behavior with my products?
- Find the most important factors for a decision
  - E.g., what is more important for investors – valuation of competing companies or my price-to-earning ratio?
- Conduct a sensitivity analysis
  - E.g., is the pricing strategy valid given changes in the assumptions regarding the market?
- Cope with uncertainty
  - How can we deal with unstable demand for our products?
- Create effective models that are easy to understand, re-useable and flexible.
  - Will my CEO understand the model? How can I make it interpretable and flexible?

To achieve the course objectives, we will be using real-life business modeling scenarios from many business disciplines. Thus, the course is relevant to all business majors. Some examples:

1. **Accounting/Finance**: Given a certain cash flow and several loan options with varying terms and interest rate, what would be your optimal borrowing strategy?
2. **Marketing**: Given consumer demographics, what are the ideal locations for new Starbucks branches that attract the most buying power?
3. **Operations**: Given a certain usage pattern of two bank branches – should we combine them into one? Should we change the number of cashiers in each branch?
4. **General Management**: Given an expectation for competitors’ bids, what should your bid on a project be?

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1 Dr. Zvi Drezner (Instructor) has been published in various academic journals. You can contact Dr Drezner at zdrezner@fullerton.edu for more information about the course.