



HARVARD CLUB OF AUSTRALIA

# Growth strategy in a dynamic world

Tools and techniques to navigate the future



**Presented by Harvard Business School Professors  
Felix Oberholzer-Gee and Mihir Desai**

**Sunday 3 September to Friday 8 September, 2023  
RACV Healesville, Victoria**

# TOOLS & TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING AND EVALUATING COMPANY HEALTH

In this course for senior executives, board members and seasoned investors, Harvard Business School Professors Mihir Desai and Felix Oberholzer-Gee focus on one of the key challenges of leading and evaluating companies today: How do executives best allocate talent, capital and their own time when we know so little about what tomorrow will bring?

Throughout the course, the two faculty will introduce tools and techniques designed for sound strategic decision-making in the face of significant uncertainty. What is the most effective way to judge the health of your company? When do the numbers tell only half the story? Can you really see “around the corner?” Is it ever safe to ignore the herd? Through a mix of case study discussions, interactive lectures and hands-on exercises, course participants learn to become more effective stewards of their companies.

*“We are living through an unusual time. Financial markets, economic outlooks and geopolitics are manifesting a remarkable level of uncertainty. Are we living through a transitory moment or a new era? How does one navigate these unsteady waters? What can leaders do to ensure that they are prepared for this era? In our time together, we will work together to create a deep and intuitive sense for a set of tools that help create and measure value in today’s world. ”*

*Mihir Desai*



# DYNAMIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE

## Powerful results

Since 1998 Harvard Club of Australia has offered this five day residential program based on the renowned Harvard case study method. The case method engages you in a stimulating, collaborative process of identifying relevant issues and applying practical business lessons to your own situation and organisation. Step back from day-to-day responsibilities and reassess your situation with world-class faculty in a diverse network of accomplished executive peers. Immerse yourself in this proven learning experience, and develop a broader perspective of the challenges facing your organisation and your leadership capabilities.

And while you are learning you will be creating an opportunity for others to learn. The profit generated by this program allows the Harvard Club of Australia to offer a range of scholarship programs for Australians from all walks of life to attend programs at Harvard.

## WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS SAY

*"It was an inspiring and amazing experience to join the Harvard Club of Australia course. The quality of case studies, richness of discussion and caliber of participants made it exceptional".*

Anshuman Sengar,  
Partner, Kearney

*"This is an excellent program in all respects – Well researched content with case studies, right level of depth and intensity in the classes, professors who can balance the theory with practice and a collaborative learning environment with participants across industries to share and learn"*

Kallol Dutta  
Spark New Zealand

*"The learning experience I had through the Harvard Club Program was transformational – content was relevant and provocative; the facilitation was exceptional; and the entire experience was 'learner centric'. I highly recommend this training to any executives seeking to be challenged and wishing to be curious".*

Kate Zaia, Suncorp



## WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This program is designed for senior leaders with general management responsibilities in both private and public companies. It is also appropriate for board members and investors seeking tools and insights for evaluating organisation health and performance. Senior functional leaders with cross-organisational responsibility will also benefit from this program along with executives who need a broader perspective on company operations, and those who may become business unit or regional leaders. Any senior executive interested in developing a more comprehensive and integrated perspective on organisation performance and capability to meet new challenges will benefit from this program.

## TITLES OF PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

Title	%
Company Directors	8
Director Generals	18
CxOs	10
Executive Managers	20
General Managers	20
Senior Managers	19
Other	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

## PREVIOUS COMPANY DELEGATES

- ANZ
- ActewAGL
- AMP Control Group
- Airservices Australia
- Allied Petroleum Limited
- Bank of Queensland
- Boundary Bend Limited
- Brown Bros.
- Bunnings
- CSL
- Caltex Australia
- Centennial Coal Company Limited
- Cochlear
- Defence Science & Technology
- Department of Defence
- Department of Science & Industry
- Deutsche Bank
- DEXUS Property Group
- Endeavour Group
- GPT
- Haven Home Safe
- Honeywell
- International Health & Medical Services
- iCare
- Jetstar
- Kearney
- Kennards
- Kmart
- Link Group
- Macquarie Group
- Maxxia
- Mainbrace
- Mirvac
- National Australia Bank
- Nova Systems
- Petrogas Limited
- PGI
- Qantas
- ResMed
- REST
- Seven West Media
- Suncorp
- Westpac Banking Corporation
- Woolworths

# WORLD CLASS FACULTY



## FELIX OBERHOLZER-GEE

### ANDREAS ANDRESEN PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Felix Oberholzer-Gee is the Andreas Andresen Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. An award-winning instructor, his academic work and consulting are focused on competitive strategy and the effects of digital technology on corporate performance. His research has been published in the very best, peer-reviewed journals of his profession and profiled by media outlets around the world, including Financial Times, Le Figaro, New York Times and Wall Street Journal.

Oberholzer-Gee teaches competitive strategy in the HBS MBA program and in executive education courses such as the Harvard General Management Program. He serves as faculty chair of the Senior Executive Leadership Program for China, the Driving Digital Strategy and the Managing Turbulence programs. He has held various leadership roles at HBS, including chair of the MBA program and Senior Associate Dean for the school's global research centres. He is the author of best selling book *Better Simpler Strategy: a value based guide to exceptional performance*.

He is a co-host, with his colleague Mihir Desai, of the popular TED Audio podcast, After Hours. Among his happiest times are when he is cooking and eating (not necessarily in this order.)



## MIHIR A. DESAI

### MIZUHO FINANCIAL GROUP PROFESSOR OF FINANCE

Mihir A. Desai is the Mizuho Financial Group Professor of Finance at Harvard Business School and a Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. Professor Desai's areas of expertise include tax policy, international finance, and corporate finance. His academic publications have appeared in leading economics, finance, and law journals. His work has emphasized the links between corporate governance and taxation and the internal capital markets of multinational firms. His research has been cited in The Economist, BusinessWeek, The New York Times, and several other publications. His general interest publications include opinion pieces on a variety of topics in The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, and The New York Times.

Professor Desai has taught extensively as an award-winning teacher at HBS and at Harvard University. As a second-year professor teaching finance in the required curriculum, he received the Student Association Award for teaching excellence from the HBS Class of 2001. Most recently, Professor Desai has been active in delivering various executive education programs at HBS, including the General Managers Program (GMP), on campus and around the world. From 2010 to 2014, Professor Desai was the Senior Associate Dean for Planning and University Affairs, where he was part of the senior management team of the Business School focused on integration with the rest of the University. His professional experiences include working at CS First Boston, McKinsey & Co., and advising a number of firms and governmental organizations.

# INDICATIVE CASES AND PROGRAM CONTENT

The program content will explore tools that help set a strategic direction when the future is highly uncertain. In addition to interactive lectures, faculty and participants will debate cases such as the ones listed below where senior executives face all types of uncertainty:



## **JUDGING THE SPEED OF TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION** **TESLA**

We often know the long-term trajectory of technology. In cars, electrification is all but certain. However, for executive decision-makers, the speed of change is often as important as the final destination. Is now the time to bet on electrification? If so, what will the industry look like? Where is the sweet spot for your investment? Is Tesla really well-positioned?



## **KEEPING UP WITH (FUTURE) CUSTOMERS** **TIKTOK**

No executive is surprised by the fact that customer centricity plays a big role in a company's financial performance. But how do you distinguish short-term fads (that will yield disappointing results) from fundamental changes you must accommodate? Is TikTok the former or the latter? Are we seeing a fundamental break in how the best companies build customer relationships?



## **THE DATA ADVANTAGE** **DISCOVERY BANK**

"Data is the new oil," many analysts claim. But for every company that successfully exploits its data advantage, we see many others that fail to do so. Looking at Discovery's transition from a healthcare insurance company to a provider of financial services, we ask how data can help build a sustainable competitive advantage.



## MANAGING THE DIGITAL TRANSITION

### WALMART

Why is it so difficult to incorporate digital technology in traditional businesses? What can we learn from successful companies? We look to Walmart, a retailer that has long struggled to make its digital investments pay off, to see how the retailer eventually managed to make its ecommerce business take off.



## THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF PATIENCE:

### PELTON

High-growth companies often show hockey-stick-like projections of their business prospects. When are these projections likely to be real? When do they reflect wishful thinking? Looking at Peloton's strategy, can we tell the difference?



## SIZING FUTURE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

### STRAVA

The company was founded by two serial entrepreneurs who had been co-founders in a prior venture. They now have to decide whether or not to accept the Series A investment terms from their venture capitalists. They wonder how big the Strava business can be and whether this is the right time to attract additional capital given substantial uncertainty in the public markets.



## SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL POLICY

### APPLE

Even the most successful companies must balance shareholder interests against the longer-term preservation of a company's ability to seize significant business opportunities. We follow Apple to better understand how the company combines strategy and financial policy to generate value. In the face of shareholder pressure, when is it right to return cash to your investors?



## FUTURE-PROOF M&A

### NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Broadening a company's scale and scope to make the business more sustainable in the face of great uncertainty is an attractive idea. But it is hard to get these benefits in practice. When will M&A truly lower corporate risk? We study Canadian Pacific's Bid for Norfolk Southern, one of the largest railroads in the United States, to better understand how to value scale and scope in an uncertain world.

# OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



## LOCATION

Nestled in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, RACV Healesville is located in the heart of the Yarra Valley, just over an hour drive from Melbourne Airport.

## VENUE HIGHLIGHTS

The venue offers state of the art conference facilities showcasing the magnificent mountain views. Accommodation rooms offer first class amenities and a range of club facilities are available including gym, pool, golf and more.

## PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Visit [www.harvardclub.org.au](http://www.harvardclub.org.au) for an Application Form or contact, Anita Pike, Program Manager, [programs@harvardclub.org.au](mailto:programs@harvardclub.org.au)

Applications and payment are due four weeks before the program start date.

Early registration is recommended.

## COMPANY SPONSORSHIP

We offer a range of pricing options for companies willing to send teams and/or sponsor multiple participants.

## PROGRAM FEE

A\$11,500 + GST per participant.

The program is fully residential and price includes all meals, accommodation and instruction material. Parking at RACV is complimentary. All personal expenses and room services are not included. A bus to and from the venue will be provided. Those not using the bus will need to organise their own transport to the venue.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact a program team member:  
Anita Pike, Ben Attfield, Program Managers, or  
Melinda Muth, Program Director

**02 8916 6384**

**[programs@harvardclub.org.au](mailto:programs@harvardclub.org.au)**

**[www.harvardclub.org.au](http://www.harvardclub.org.au)**

