

## Corporate Finance, Module 10, "Positive Net Present Values"

*Readings for the Fourteenth Edition (2022) of the Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans text*

(The attached PDF file has better formatting.)

The sections in this posting are for the *fourteenth* edition of the Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans text. You may also use the seventh through thirteenth editions; final exam problems can be answered from any edition.

{The Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans textbook is excellent. We say to read certain sections and to skip others. This does not mean that certain sections are better; it means that the homework assignments and exam problems are based on the sections that you must read for this course. Some of the skipped sections are fascinating, but they are not tested.}

Module 10 reviews some financial items often overlooked by budding entrepreneurs. One sometimes hears that a business will succeed if it meets an unfilled demand, so entrepreneurs should concentrate on finding these unfilled demands. At some business schools, this is a mantra: students are *trained* to find these unfilled demands.

This perspective considers the demand side but ignores the supply side. Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans say: "Look first to market values." Not only must there be an unfilled demand, but you must have some advantage over potential competitors in filling the demand.

*Illustration:* Suppose an actuary vacations one summer at a new resort. There are no insurance agents in the new resort, and the actuary tells his company that they should build an agency there and market their products. But the actuary has considered only the demand side, not the supply side. If the resort is in an area where the company does not now sell insurance, its peer companies can probably provide insurance more cheaply. The company may have a slight advantage if it gets its agent first into the area, but it is at a disadvantage in keeping profitable business from moving to competitors who can service the town more cheaply. The market is not always right. But unless you have an advantage over your competitors, be wary.

*Question:* The business sections of *Time* and other news-magazines describe entrepreneurs who find unfilled demands and make high profits by filling them.

*Answer:* Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans would say that the perspective is only half right. To succeed, a firm must fill a consumer demand. But unless it has a competitive advantage it won't make money. For every entrepreneur who finds an unfilled demand and makes high profits, there are half a dozen entrepreneurs who find unfilled demands and go broke.

*Question:* You make it sound as though one needs special training that others don't have to succeed. But entrepreneurs don't need PhD's to succeed. Many PhD's are poor, and many successful entrepreneurs don't even have college degrees.

*Answer:* Most graduate programs don't teach useful business skills. They train students to write theses; this may be useful to future authors, but it is useless for business.

Read Section 11.1 "Behavioral biases in investment decisions," Section 11.2 "Avoiding Forecast Errors," Section 11.3 "How competitive advantage translates into positive NPVs." These are stories and examples. Brealey, Myers, Allen, and Edmans build the theory from the examples, which are quite good.

Read Section 11-4 "Marvin Enterprises Decides to Exploit a New Technology: An Example." Marvin Enterprises is one of the best illustrations in the textbook, showing how to evaluate a new project.

This module shows the objectives of the textbook, but nothing is easily testable with multiple choice questions. Few points on the final exam are taken directly from this chapter.

Read the *key takeaways* on page 319.

Review end of chapter problems 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16.

Illustrative test questions, problems, and homework assignments are shown separately on the discussion forum.