MKTG 505 C&D – MARKETING STRATEGY

Spring 2015

- TENTATIVE -

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Teaching Assistant: A teaching assistant is available to provide help on Marketing Engineering and Markstrat. Contact information will be available on Blackboard.

A. Course Learning Objectives
This course focuses on marketing strategy from a decision making perspective by linking marketing decisions and strategy to business performance. The assumption is that everyone has acquired a basic knowledge of marketing management from the preceding Marketing Management course. Therefore, this course builds on the topics explored in Marketing Management by focusing on specific marketing strategies (e.g., developing and launching innovative products, building customer loyalty) and critical marketing tools/processes (e.g., STP and conjoint analysis, choice models) in greater detail and accentuating the integrative nature of the marketing function through the development of a marketing plan and use of simulation software (i.e., Markstrat).

The overall class material, lectures, cases, and objectives consist of four major categories. First, the course will review the Fundamentals of Marketing Strategy, including tools and processes with special emphasis given to market research methods and analytical tools used in marketing decision-making.

Second, specific marketing problems and decisions focused on Innovation-Based Marketing Strategies will be examined in detail—such as developing and launching innovative products and innovating through services.
Third, specific marketing problems and decisions focused on Customer-Based Marketing Strategies will be examined in detail – such as building customer loyalty and managing customer portfolios through acquisition, expansion, and retention strategies.

Fourth, the integrative nature of marketing strategy and the critical importance of Executing Marketing Strategies to its ultimate success will be addressed in two ways.

1. Teams will compete with one another in a simulated business environment. Each team will evaluate industry and marketing data and make product development, marketing mix (4Ps), and overall business decisions to achieve the highest stock price for their company across multiple decision cycles. Many concepts from previous classes and this course will be utilized in this dynamic and competitive environment to reinforce the trade-offs, imperfect information, and complexities associated with making marketing decisions.

2. Each team will develop, write, and present a Marketing Plan based on a real problem using the frameworks, tools, and processes outlined in class and readings.

Some critical success factors for business leaders include framing the business issue or problem (frameworks), outlining the steps for solving problems (processes), collecting data and applying analysis tools to inform problems (data collection and analyses), and weighting and integrating information to make choices (decisions). Thus, the overall objective of the readings, lectures, in-class exercises, assignments, and cases will focus on these critical success factors.

B. Course Description
To achieve the course objectives, we will use a combination of different learning formats. Some sessions are primarily lecture based on the presentation and discussion of material. Reading the assigned material prior to class and active involvement during the lecture will increase the value you gain from the class, as well as make it more interesting for everyone. During some sessions, in-class exercises function to make the topic more “real,” not just an academic exercise.

A second type of session will include a case, data analysis, or Markstrat discussion, usually related to the same topic as the previous lecture. Similar to the expectations in your other classes, case preparation is paramount to making the class discussion valuable.

Each team will write up each case by answering the assigned questions (listed on Blackboard). These write-ups should be submitted on Blackboard before class starts. At the beginning of each case discussion, one class member will open the case. If you are asked to undertake this task, you will come to the front of the room and outline the case. Each outline should cover the following points:

1. Major problem or issue in the case
2. Key data, context, and analyses relevant for making a decision
3. Recommendation and explanation for this approach rather than other possible choices

The outline should take no more than 2–3 minutes. The format should be similar to what you would do if a senior executive asked for your thoughts about a problem. It should be a logical argument for what should be done and why. You should take an unambiguous position and support it rather than just outlining possible alternatives. However, the format of the dialogue is not as important as the logic and clarity of thought. If you are not prepared, please let me know before class so that I know not to call on you. For some cases, I may ask another student to present an alternative view. As we progress through the case during class, you should be prepared to answer specific questions about your analysis or recommendations.

You will complete a number of written assignments, focused on applying an empirical technique to solve a specific marketing problem (e.g., segmenting customers, determining the trade-offs among product attributes). These techniques will be reviewed in. Each of these assignments will require the use of the Marketing Engineering software in Excel (see Assignments on Blackboard for details).

Each team will compete against 4 to 6 other teams within a simulated business environment using Markstrat. Marketing decisions involving new product development projects, product attributes, pricing, advertising, and resource allocation will affect each firm’s market share and financial performance.

As the last requirement of this class, each team will develop a marketing plan. I will outline the specifics of the project and describe appropriate topics during the first session. Each group must identify a specific strategic marketing issue within a business context in which the team can access the required data. In many cases, these marketing plans might result in performance-enhancing changes for the firm involved. Each team will hand in its written plan during the last class period and provide a short, 20–30 minute presentation of the plan. This structure of this project gives each person an opportunity to participate in a strategic planning process focused on a real problem, using the tools and knowledge gained from the lectures and readings, and deliver the recommendations in both written and presentation formats.

C. Course Materials

1. Textbooks:
   - The following are required texts:
   - Recommended (but not required)


2. **Course-Related Readings and Cases:** Copyrighted required readings and cases are included in the course binder. Also, please keep in mind that our institution adheres to copyright law, so any copyrighted material should not be copied or duplicated in any manner. Available at the UW Bookstore.

2. **CANVAS:** Non-copyrighted readings and other class materials, e.g., slides and materials used in class.

3. **Software:** We will be using two pieces of software: 1) MarkStrat and 2) Marketing Engineering.
   - We will discuss in the first class how to purchase/download.

D. **Teaching Method and Performance Evaluation**

This course is a seminar, so participation and meaningful contributions to class/case discussions is essential. The details of each assignment and the specific due date are listed on Blackboard and are in the course pack. No assignments will be accepted after the due date without preapproval. There are five components to the course grade:

1. **Class Participation (25%).** Your individual participation grades depend on the quantity and quality of your contributions, including opening a case, answering questions, engaging in in-class exercises, asking insightful questions, offering applicable work experience examples, and evidencing general engagement in the class.

2. **Marketing Analysis Assignments (15%).** Each of the three written assignments counts for 5% of your total grade (2 individual and 1 team assignments). Each of these assignments is graded based on how well you perform the analysis and interpret the results in answering the assigned questions.

3. **Written Case Analyses (15%).** Each of the three cases write-ups count for 5% of your grade (3 team assignments). These case write-ups should be uploaded to Blackboard or handed in at the beginning of the session for which the case has been assigned.

4. **Markstrat Simulation (20%).** Each team will run a business, in competition with the other teams in a dynamic environment. The simulation software (Markstrat) is very sophisticated, so you will need to buy research reports, evaluate past performance, respond to competitive actions, and make numerous marketing decisions. Each team will need to upload its decisions by the weekly assigned deadline and then download
its performance, prior to making the next week’s decisions. I recommend that you pick one person from each team to perform the up- and downloading, because the system will only use the most recent upload.

Your overall results at the end of 6-8 decision rounds will be evaluated on the basis of the stock price, which determines your final standing in Markstrat. In addition, near the end of the quarter, I will summarize the final results, and the teams will briefly (5-10 min) present their strategy, what worked, and what did not work (based on a short slide deck). Your team’s final standing and your discussion of the effectiveness of your strategy will serve to determine your final grade for this portion of the class.

5. **Marketing Plan (25%)**: Each team will select a “real-life” marketing problem and develop a marketing plan to address this problem. Teams will develop both written plans and presentations. The last 1-2 class sessions will be dedicated to presentations of each team’s marketing plan to the rest of the class. The written plan is due at the beginning of the final class session. The project should be treated as if your team has been retained as a consultant to develop a marketing plan for a specific problem. The deliverable is a written report and presentation to the client’s senior management (weighting of the overall grade will be split evenly between the two formats). Everyone on the team receives the same grade, unless a majority of the group members submit an explanation in writing of why the grades should differ among group members. Any such explanation must be submitted on the same day as the team’s presentation. Grading will be as follows: 5% for project plan, 10% for written plan, and 10% for presentation.

   a. **Problem Statement and Process Plan**: Each team should develop a short (1-page) problem statement and process plan/timeline for their project early in the quarter (see assignments for actual due date and project template). This document should clearly describe the problem or issue your plan will address, the data to be collected and analyzed to inform decision making, and the timeline for accomplishing the project. This project plan forces you to think through the steps needed to address the problem and gain approval for your project idea, similar to the process when a strategy consultant outlines the project specs with a client prior to beginning work. This project plan represents 5% of your grade.

   b. **Consulting Support**: Each team is allocated two hours of my time for advisory support. You may set up meetings and/or conference calls to use me as an advisor. My support will be as if I were a technical consultant, not the professor of the class. We may also meet during lunch and before/after class, if requested.

   c. **Elements of Marketing Plan**: The written portion of the plan should be no more than 10 pages, excluding exhibits and figures. The plan should address the following points: executive summary, problem or objective, process used
to make decision, overview of data collection and sample, analysis/results, and recommended actions.

d. **Data Collection and Analysis**: Each team must ensure that its chosen context allows for some data collection. Every project must include some data collection and analysis to inform the decision. You may use data collected previously for another purpose or data available from existing databases or online. I recognize the short duration of the course and therefore will make allowances as needed.

**E. University Policies**
The University of Washington’s policies/procedures regarding academic misconduct will be strictly enforced.

**Academic Honesty**: The University Rules, including the Student Code of Conduct, and other documented policies of the department, college, and university related to academic integrity will be enforced. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism or cheating, will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct.

**Special Needs Policy**: If you have any special needs related to your participation in this course, including identified visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability that may influence your performance in this course, you should meet with the instructor to arrange for reasonable provisions to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all the requirements of this course. At the discretion of the instructor, some accommodations may require prior approval by Disability Services.

**G. Course Schedule**
The tentative course schedule outlines the lecture topics, cases, and readings. You should consider the due dates fixed, but otherwise, the schedule may be altered at the instructor’s discretion, depending on the flow of the class.