**MARKETING STRATEGY (MBA)**

# A. Course Learning Objectives

This course focuses on strategically analyzing and solving marketing problems from a decision makers’ perspective. Specifically, the course has two key learning objectives:

1. Understanding and effectively using the fundamental frameworks, processes, and analysis tools of marketing strategy
2. Using the “first principles” of marketing strategy to solve business problems

Most of the frameworks, processes, and analyses developed by marketing researchers, consultants, and managers are focused on solving four fundamental marketing problems.

1. All customers differ
2. All customers change
3. All competitors react
4. All resources are limited

Using the relevant marketing frameworks, processes, and analyses to solve each of these four underlying marketing problems is termed the ***First Principles of Marketing Strategy*** and represents the focus of this course. Specifically, the first two lectures provide an overview of marketing strategy, introduce each of the First Principles of Marketing Strategy, and outline the basic research methods and analyses needed in marketing strategy. The next six lectures provides an in depth coverage of the First Principles of Marketing Strategy. Finally, the last two sessions focus on executing marketing strategies in two different ways. Teams will compete with one another in a simulated business environment (MarkStrat) using the First Principles of Marketing and each team will solve a “real marketing problem” using the frameworks, tools, and processes outlined in class and readings.

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., cluster 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 (Markstrat).

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

I will use the “Tell-Show-Do” sequence to give you hands-on experience in using the course materials for making marketing decisions. The first part uses lectures to present and discuss course topics. 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,” and not just an academic exercise. The second part of many sessions will often include a case, data analysis, or Markstrat discussion, usually related to the same topic as the lecture. Similar to the expectations in your other classes, preparation is paramount to making the class discussion valuable.

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 firms’ market share and financial performance.

# C. Course Materials

1. ***Textbook*:** Robert W. Palmatier and Shrihari Sridhar, *Marketing Strategy: Based on First Principles and Data Analytics*, (Palgrave McMillian, 2017).
2. ***Software:*** The following are required software packages:
   1. ***MarkStrat:*** Marketing strategy simulation package.
   2. ***Marketing Engineering:*** An Excel-addin package that allows you to perform a large number of different marketing analyses.

# D. Teaching Method and Performance Evaluation

There are four components to the course grade:

1. ***Class Participation (14%).*** Your individual participation grades depend on the quantity and quality of your contributions, answering questions, engaging in in-class exercises, asking insightful questions, offering applicable work experience examples, and evidencing general engagement in the class.
2. ***Markstrat Simulation (25%).*** 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 finish decisions by the weekly assigned deadline. Your overall results will be evaluated based on 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 we will participate in a Markstrat debriefing discussion, during which each team will outline its strategy, what worked, and what did not work in a “case-like” discussion format (i.e., from your seat, without handing anything in). 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.
3. ***Case Replication Assignments (4x9=36%).*** We will be covering five cases through the duration of the course, and you should turn in four of the five cases (a team can skip one case). These case slides should be submitted in the form of PowerPoint slides, due by before class begins (in print, before class starts) on the day of the case session. I will lead class discussion of the cases, but may call on any and all teams to discuss their analysis of the case. If you have supplemental notes for your slides, please print me a copy of your slides in Notes view. Your case slides write-up is designed to highlight your ability to execute and translate the results of the marketing case in a managerially relevant and implementable manner. All work is to be printed and handed in.
4. **Final Exam (25%):** The exam will be closed-book, and will help us assess your understanding of the core conceptual materials discussed in the class. During the course sessions, we will provide you more details about the types of questions that will be covered in the exam, and I will provide you some guidelines for preparing for the exam.

# D. Class Schedule

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Session** | **Week** | **Topic** | **Cases and Assignment** | **Chapter** |
| 1 | 1.1 | Overview and Benefits of Marketing Strategy |  | 1 |
| 2 | 1.2 | Overview of First Principle’s Approach (con’t) |  | 1 |
| 3 | 2.1 | Principle 1: All Customers are Different  Managing Customer Heterogeneity |  | 2 |
| 4 | 2.2 | Segmentation and Targeting Concept and Demonstration | MeXL (Dentmax Case) Demo | 2 |
| 5 | 3.1 | Markstrat Session 1 and/or Case Assignment | **Pacific Case Assignment** |  |
| 6 | 3.2 | Positioning Concepts and Demonstration |  | 2 |
| 7 | 4.1 | Markstrat Session 2 and/or Case Assignment | MeXL (Infiniti Case) Demo |  |
| 8 | 4.2 | Principle 2: All Customers Change  Managing Customer Dynamics |  | 3 |
| 9 | 5.1 | Markstrat Session 3 and/or Case |  |  |
| 10 | 5.2 | Choice Models Concept and Demonstration | MeXL (TKL Case) Demo | 3 |
| 11 | 6.1 | Markstrat Session 4 and/or Case | **ABB Case Assignment** |  |
| 12 | 6.2 | Principle 3: All Competitors React  Managing Sustainable Competitive Advantage |  | 4 |
| 13 | 7.1 | Markstrat Session 5 and/or Case |  |  |
| 14 | 7.2 | Principle 3 (con’t): Managing Brand-Based Competitive Advantage |  | 5 |
| 15 | 8.1 | Markstrat Session 6 and/or Case |  |  |
| 16 | 8.2 | Principle 3 (con’t): Managing Offering-Based Competitive Advantage |  | 6 |
| 17 | 9.1 | Markstrat Session 7 and/or Case |  |  |
| 18 | 9.2 | Conjoint Concept and Demonstration | MeXL (Exteriors Case) Demo | 6 |
| 19 | 10.1 | Markstrat Session 8 and/or Case | **Kirin Case Assignment** |  |
| 20 | 10.2 | Principle 3 (con’t): Managing Relationship-Based Competitive Advantage |  | 7 |
| 21 | 11.1 | Markstrat Session 9 and/or Case |  |  |
| 22 | 11.2 | Principle 4: All Resources are Limited  Managing Resource Tradeoffs |  | 8 |
| 23 | 12.1 | Markstrat Session 10 and/or Case |  |  |
| 24 | 12.2 | Response Models Concept and Demonstration | MeXL (BRT Tribune Case) Demo | 8 |
| 25 | 13.1 | Markstrat Session 11 and/or Case | **Syntex Case Assignment** |  |
| 26 | 13.2 | Integrating the Four Principles |  | 9 |
| 27 | 14.1 | Review of Markstrat Performance |  |  |
| 28 | 14.2 | Review of First Principles of Marketing |  | 9 |
| 29 | Final Exam | | | |