



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015

## GRA 6409 Strategic Marketing Issues

### Programme

Master of Science in Business, Master of Science in Business (Marketing), Master of Science in International Management, Master of Science in Strategic Marketing Management, Specialization Course

### Responsible for the course

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### Department

Department of Marketing

### Term

According to study plan

### ECTS Credits

6

### Language of instruction

English

### Introduction

The purpose of marketing strategy is to transform company resources to satisfy customers' current and future needs more effectively and efficiently than competing alternatives. However, requirements to become a successful marketing manager have surged in recent decades, demanding new critical understanding of consumer reality and new competences in management. To address these challenges and secure their "seat at the boardroom table", marketing managers are required to develop deep insights of strategic marketing issues and demonstrate the value and return on marketing investments. This course is centered on the notion of building managerial skills that increase such relevance for business through a combination of action-based, hands-on learning through marketing simulation, case-study discussion and class discussion in lectures.

### Learning outcome

Strategic marketing focuses on developing the critical insights and analytical skills required to identify the key strategic issues companies are facing in the market they compete in, and the skills required to develop and implement effective marketing strategies.

#### *Skill objective :*

- Analyze customers, markets, competition and marketing effectiveness
- Identify key strategic marketing issues
- Formulate objectives and strategic initiatives
- Obtain support to implement a strategic initiative

#### *Knowledge objectives :*

- What are the main marketing capabilities, what is marketing and what is market orientation?
- What are the drivers of market dynamics and the key challenges in marketing strategy?
- How a customer centric organization enhances the value of a customer portfolio?
- How companies innovate and develop a strong portfolio of products?
- How companies create value for customers and develop sustainable competitive market positions?
- How to prove marketing's return on investment and link marketing outcomes to the financial return of the company?

#### *Attitude objectives:*

- Critical reflection and thinking, developing deep customer and strategic insights
- Appreciation for the complexity of marketing decisions and business in general

### **Prerequisites**

Prior knowledge of marketing management. Please note that this course is work-intensive, although the workload is not difficult, students with significant time-constraints or large workload from other courses are advised to carefully plan their time-management. Dropping this course after its start creates numerous difficulties to your team members.

### **Compulsory reading**

#### **Collection of articles:**

A number of scientific and managerial articles are compulsory literature. In addition students need to acquire a set of HBS cases.

#### **Other:**

A list of compulsory readings will be provided on it's learning or in class.

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.

### **Recommended reading**

#### **Books:**

Larréché, Jean-Claude, Hubert Gatignon, Réme Triolet. 2003. Markstrat online : student handbook. StratX International

### **Course outline**

The topics in this course are grouped around the most important business goals and skills that we want students to master. To reflect the fact that students need to acquire skills from multiple complementary sources, this course integrates several types of learning. The basic skills on developing and applying strategic marketing decisions and team cooperation students will practice in a marketing simulation that is run throughout the course. Lectures and case studies are intended to deepen students' understanding of the complex marketing issues and provide progressive novel thinking that goes beyond the skills that could be acquired through the simulation. Lectures are structured so to provoke critical thinking and encourage students to think "outside the box". Since this is the last course in the master program, it builds on all the previous marketing courses that students had and requires students to integrate the knowledge and apply it at a higher level. Case studies are the third skill-building aspect of the course. The selected case studies encourage students to justify their solutions in the manner that marketing managers are expected to do in companies' boardrooms (using simple tools as Excel sheet). However, this course does not aim at teaching technical analytical skills and it does not require prior knowledge of advanced methodologies, it aims primarily to develop student's appreciation and understanding the need for a marketer to quantify the effects of potential strategic marketing solutions. To facilitate discussion and learning for the case discussions students may be divided into two groups, if there is a need for that.

Topics of the lectures are building up in the following order:

#### **Developing Strategic Vision for the Future Success**

- Requirements for Customer Centricity
- Where Marketing Went Wrong?

#### **Developing Market Capabilities and Creating Value**

- The Role of Marketing in Building Firm Value

#### **Managing For Future Success, Proving Marketing's Worth**

- Marketing and Firm Value
- Return on Marketing

#### **Marketer's skills for the future**

- a. Balancing Acquisition and Retention
- b. Understanding the Impact of Brand Equity
- c. Marketing Analytics and Value Management
- d. R&D skills (proactive thinking): co-creation, service innovation, social media.

### **Computer-based tools**

Markstrat simulation

### **Learning process and workload**

The class will be organized around discussing selected topics illustrated by articles, cases and simulation results. The students are expected to be well prepared and highly involved in the discussions. An application of the discussed topics will be the use

of a marketplace simulation (e.g. Markstrat), where student teams compete against each other in a fictional marketing environment. Students will be evaluated for their work in groups but also for their individual performance (in the exam and class discussion).

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/It's learning or assigned readings. An absence from the class and team-work will have direct consequences on the student's grade (see the section Examination).

### **Coursework requirements**

The coursework requirements include:

- preparation for lectures and case-study discussion
- active participation in the marketing simulation
- preparation of assignments

### **Examination**

Your course grade will be based on the following activities and weights:

25 % - Markstrat performance (groups formed by the instructor(s)) -> groups of 4-6 students, grades based on team performance in the industry

25 % - Assignments (group based, 4-6 students) -> grading based on quality of the proposal and learning experience, average grade across assignments

25 % - Class participation (consist of 2 parts):

1) quality of the class- and case study contribution (quality of the answers evaluated rather than quantity); (1/2 of this grade)

2) peer evaluation of the work in group (1/2 of this grade) (each student grades peers' contributions to the team and assignments, grades are confidential and sent directly to the instructor(s). The peer evaluation is based on three questions with Likert scales from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (fully agree):

- A) The team member actively participated in preparations and discussions,
- B) Quality of the member's participation and proposed solution was high,
- C) I have learned new things through interaction with this team member.

If a team member was not present/participating in more than 50% of decision-making his/her peers will have to indicate that.

25 % - Two-Hour Written Exam (individual) – points 0-100, questions linked to readings, lectures and cases.

To get a final grade in the course, students need to complete and achieve a passing grade in all parts of the evaluation.

In this course class attendance is mandatory. Absences can result in a lower score. Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam elements) and one final exam code. Each exam element will be graded using points on a scale (e.g. 0-100). The elements will be weighted together according to the information in the course description in order to calculate the final letter grade for the course. You will find detailed information about the point system and the cut off points with reference to the letter grades on the course site in It's learning.

### **Examination code(s)**

GRA 64091 continuous assessment accounts for 100% of the final grade in the course GRA 6409.

### **Examination support materials**

A bilingual dictionary. If a calculator is needed for the exam, the students will be informed at lectures and through Itslearning.

Examination support materials at written examinations are explained under examination information in the student portal @bi. Please note use of calculator and dictionary in the section on support materials.

### **Re-sit examination**

It is only possible to retake an examination when the course is next taught.

The assessment in some courses is based on more than one exam code.

Where this is the case, you may retake only the assessed components of one of these exam codes.

Where this is not the case, all of the assessed components of the course must be retaken.

All retaken examinations will incur an additional fee.

**Additional information**

**Honor Code**

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.