



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016

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 keep 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 class discussions, case-studies and marketing simulation of running a firm.

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. This course is particularly directed toward applying skills required to make effective strategic marketing decisions in real-life setting.

Skill objective :

- Identify key strategic marketing issues in the contemporary market environment.
- Analyze customers, markets, brands, competition and marketing effectiveness.
- Apply analytical skills to formulate objectives and strategic initiatives using market insights.
- Develop strategies to beat the competitors through implementation of your strategic initiatives.

Knowledge objectives :

- What are the crucial marketing capabilities in the new market environment?
- How a customer-centric orientation versus product-centricity enhances the firm value?
- 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

All courses in the Masters programme will assume that students have fulfilled the admission requirements for the programme. In addition, courses in second, third and/or fourth semester can have specific prerequisites and will assume that students have followed normal study progression. For double degree and exchange students,

please note that equivalent courses are accepted.

Compulsory reading

Collection of articles:

A number of scientific and/or managerial articles are compulsory literature. In addition students need to acquire a set of 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 (sometimes 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 (econometric) methodologies, it aims primarily to develop student's appreciation and understanding of 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 cover the following aspects of marketing strategy:

- Developing Strategic Vision for Future Success (Market(ing) Orientations)
- Analyzing Markets and Developing Market Capabilities
- The Role of Marketing in Building Firm Value
- Analyzing the Return on Marketing Investments
- Managing for Future Success (Novel Trends and Challenges for Marketers)

In this course we use an online simulation (game), which places students in teams that run a virtual corporation; making decisions on its behalf in a realistic simulation of a real market experience.

Computer-based tools

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

Examination

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

25 % - Markstrat performance -> 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

25 % - 2-hour written examination (individual) – questions linked to readings, lectures and cases.

Form of assessment	Weight	Group size
Markstrat performance	25%	
Assignment	25%	
Class participation	25%	
Written examination 2 hours	25%	Individual

Specific information regarding student assessment will be provided in class. This information may be relevant to requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several components of the overall assessment. This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam components) and one final exam code. Each exam component is graded using points on a scale from 0-100. The final grade for the course is based on the aggregated mark of the course components. Each component is weighted as detailed in the course description. Students who fail to participate in one/some/all exam components will get a lower grade or may fail the course. You will find detailed information about the points system and the mapping scale in the student portal @bi.

Examination code(s)

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

Examination support materials

BI approved exam calculator

Bilingual dictionary

Permitted examination support materials for written examinations are detailed under examination information in the student portal @bi. The section on support materials and the use of calculators and dictionaries should be paid special attention to.

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. All retaken examinations will incur an additional fee. Please note that you need to retake the latest version of the course with updated course literature and assessment. Please make sure that you have familiarised yourself with the latest course description.

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.