APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2015/2016

GRA 6436 Managing Business-to-Business Relationships

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

Responsible for the course
Jon Bingen Sande

Department
Department of Marketing

Term
According to study plan

ECTS Credits
6

Language of instruction
English

Introduction
Most firms have at least some involvement in business-to business (B2B) marketing. By some estimates, between half and two thirds of all transactions in a developed economy take place in B2B relationships and more than half of all employment in most countries is found in B2B markets. B2B sourcing of products and services typically represent more than fifty percent of a company's total costs and more than ninety percent of e-commerce is B2B. Importantly, the structure of total value added to the economy has changed considerably over recent decades. For example, in most OECD countries the share of industry has fallen while services now account for well over sixty percent of total gross value added. Notably, the majority of service value added is B2B. Also, among what we typically consider as "industry value chains" (as introduced by Michael Porter), we see major changes. For example, what does it mean that more than sixty percent of Fortune 100 firms offer solutions rather than pre-developed goods and services? How can we understand value creation and claiming in such business-to-business relationships? How should managers develop marketing strategies for such companies? This course is designed to answer these and other strategic marketing questions.

Learning outcome
This course is designed to provide an introduction to the area of business-to-business relationships in marketing, with an emphasis on understanding the processes of value creation and value claiming in B2B-relationships. It will identify, review, evaluate and critique a variety of topics in the area. Considerable emphasis will also be placed on strategies for conducting empirical research on business-to-business marketing (e.g., as it relates to the thesis).

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the nature, structure, and distinguishing characteristics of B2B markets.
2. Show how marketing creates value for the B2B firm and its business customers, understand how value is created by identifying and solving problems, evaluate market opportunities and effectively segment a B2B market and develop value propositions..
3. Show how firms involved in B2B relationships can design governance structures that give incentives to create value and ensure efficient ways of distributing the value created between the parties.
4. Design effective marketing strategies for new and existing B2B products and services.

While we will draw on a number of different streams of work, the course is organized around my idiosyncratic perspective of business-to-business relationships. This course is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the literature. I have purposely restricted the required readings in order to dig deeply into each. A list of recommended readings will be provided.

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 spesific 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 list of articles from journals as well as book chapters will be provided. The journals include e.g., Journal of

Economics and Management Strategy, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Organization Science, Academy of Management Review, Strategic Management Journal, Harvard Business Review, Marketing Theory, The Journal of Law and Economics, Review of Marketing Research, Journal of Law Economics and Organization. The book chapters are amongst other from the Handbook of Business-to-Business Marketing and from various textbooks in B2B marketing and organizational economics.. A list of cases will also be provided. The cases may have to be bought from international databases such as European Case Clearing House, or Harvard Business Press. The cases will either be discussed in class or may be required for completing some of the assignmnets.

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

Recommended reading

Other:
An extensive list of recommended articles will also be provided on most of the topics in the course. The list consists of both old classics as well as cutting edge research from top journals.

Course outline
This course is divided into four sections.

1. Introduction: the difference between B2B marketing and consumer marketing, organizational buyer behavior, the tension between value creation and value claiming.
2. Creating value through B2B relationships: how firms can create value through identifying and solving valuable problems through B2B-relationships, how firms can segment B2B markets and formulate value propositions.
3. Claiming value in B2B relationships: how firms should choose efficient governance structures, such as incentive systems, relational contracts, and formal contracts.
4. Developing marketing strategies for both value creation and value claiming: value-based pricing, governance value analysis, and knowledge governance.

A detailed schedule with dates will be distributed during the first meeting.

Computer-based tools

Learning process and workload
A course of 6 ECTS credits corresponds to a workload of 160-180 hours.

A set of required readings will be assigned for each meeting. The readings will be a mix of scientific articles and case descriptions. Students are expected to thoroughly read and analyze all of the required readings prior to each meeting. My own style is to combine some lecture time with discussion time.

I may ask students to prepare discussion questions for specific readings. Depending on the number of course participants students may be asked to prepare discussion questions for more than one meeting. A copy of the questions should be distributed to each of the course participants prior to the meeting (TBD). The discussion leader(s) will have the responsibilities of leading the discussion and summarizing and synthesizing the readings with some brief closing remarks.

For each session, two students are assigned the role of scribes. Using an excel-sheet provided on It's learning, they will make notes of what all students contribute with during class. The scribes must hand in their notes to me the same day. I use the scribes' notes as additional reference material when judging class-participation grades.

To a large extent, the value of this course will depend on the students' level of preparation and participation in the discussion. Course credit will be given based on quality of class participation, hand-in assignments, and a written exam (see Evaluation below).

If students have to miss class on a particular day, it is the students' responsibility to get notes from a classmate. Let me know as soon as possible if you have to miss a class.

During the semester, if students experience any problem(s) with the class or any of the classmates I expect the students to report any problem(s) that they are not able to resolve themselves to me as soon as possible.

In this course class attendance is not mandatory. However, unexcused absence will result in a lower participation grade.

Please note that 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 text book.

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

30% - 3 written assignments
30% - Class participation
40% - Written examination (3 hours)

Students will be required to complete three different assignments during the course. The assignments can be written as a group project, with groups consisting of no more than three members. The assignments may also be completed on an individual basis. The assignments will be posted on It's learning 14 days before each deadline. Two of the assignments will require extensive use of spreadsheet analyses, for example using Microsoft Excel's Solver. Deadlines for handing in the assignments will be provided once the course has started. Each assignment should be no more than 3 pages long (plus appendices).

Class-participation is based on both the quantity and quality of participation in class discussions. However, sheer quantity of comments, with little depth or relevance to the focal issues, will not be rewarded (although not punished).

Note also that the topics we deal with in assignments and in class discussions are highly relevant for the final exam, so that working well with the assignments and prepare well for class discussions, also implies good preparation for the final written exam.

Form of assessment	Weight	Group size
Assignment	30%	Optional (individual or group of max 3 students)
Class participation	30%	
Written examination 3 hours	40%	

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 64361 continuous assessment accounts for 100% of the final grade in the course GRA 6436.

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 academy integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.