



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017

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

Line Lervik-Olsen, Matilda Dorotic

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", marketers 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 hands-on learning through marketing simulation, case-study discussions 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. This course is particularly directed toward applying the skills required to develop and implement effective strategic marketing decisions in a real-life setting. 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 diverse types of learning. The basic skills of developing and applying strategic marketing decisions as well as team cooperation the 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 strategic marketing issues that affect the firm performance.

Skill objectives :

- 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 competition through implementation of strategic initiatives

Knowledge objectives :

- What are the crucial marketing capabilities in modern environment?
- How diverse marketing drivers affect firm performance?
- 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

- Presentation of ideas and solutions in a clear and concise manner

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 selected in this course aim to deepen students' understanding of the complex strategic marketing issues that affect firm performance. In particular, the course addresses the role of marketing strategy and diverse marketing elements in driving business performance. As we progress through the course, students will gain deeper understanding of the impact and trade-offs between different marketing elements and marketing's impact on bottom-line performance, as well as the need to quantify the return on marketing investments. Besides highlighting "burning" issues for marketing managers, this course aims to provoke critical thinking and encourage students to think "outside the box".

Topics covered in the course include:

- The role of marketing in driving business performance
- Order of entry, pioneer advantage and competitor reactions
- Growth, market share and market conditions
- Short- and long-term marketing mix trade-offs
- Return on marketing investments

This course does not aim at teaching technical analytical skills and it does not require prior knowledge on advanced (econometric) methodologies, it aims primarily to develop student's appreciation of the need for a marketer to quantify the impact of selected marketing solutions.

Computer-based tools

Learning process and workload

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

The course workload is divided equally (50 %) between students' Markstrat group-work and the final written exam.

The group-work component consists of the team performance (4-6 students) in Markstrat simulation and two Markstrat-related assignments.

The exam component of the grade relates to a student's individual performance in a three-hours written exam, with questions linked to the lectures, readings and/or cases discussed in the class.

The class will be organized around discussing selected topics based on the assigned readings for the class, selected cases and marketplace simulation results. Students are expected to be prepared for the discussions in class. An application of strategic marketing topics will be the use of a marketplace simulation (e.g. Markstrat), where student teams compete against each other in running their companies in a fictional marketing environment. Two assignments in this course are linked to the learning from Markstrat simulation. In these assignments each Markstrat team (4-6 students) discusses marketing strategy concepts illustrated by the developing Markstrat market, with an intention to justify their strategic choices.

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

Students will be evaluated for their work in groups, but also for their individual performance (see section Learning process and Workload). The course workload is divided equally (50 %) between students' Markstrat group-work and the final written exam (see section Learning process and Workload). This workload is reflected in the examination too:

50 % - groupwork (4-6 students), performance in the Markstrat simulation and evaluations from two Markstrat assignments (group-based)

50 % - 3-hour written examination (individual)

According to the BI's grading policy this course is evaluated as a course with continuous assessment, in which the components are graded separately using points on a 0-100 scale and weighted according to the specifications above.

The mapping from numerical grades to letter grades will be done at the end of the course (after completing the course components) using the following scale:

75-100	A
65-74	B
55-64	C
45-54	D
35-44	E
0-34	F

Form of assessment	Weight	Group size
Markstrat performance	25%	
Assignment	25%	
Written examination 3 hours	50%	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. Candidates may be called in for an oral hearing as a verification/control of written assignments.

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

Honour code. Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and are values that are integral to BI's honour code system. Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the honour code system, to which the faculty is deeply committed. Any violation of the honour code will be dealt with in

accordance with BI's procedures for academic misconduct. Issues of academic integrity are taken seriously by everyone associated with the programmes at BI and are at the heart of the honour code. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honour code, please ask. The learning platform itslearning is used in the teaching of all courses at BI. All students are expected to make use of itslearning.