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**Course Syllabus: Brand Management in a Digital Age**

Spring 2021

**Professor:** Thomas Hafen

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**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Review Sessions:** As Needed

**TA:** Molly Himmelstein, mhimmelstein21@gsb.columbia.edu

**Textbooks and Course Materials**

Textbooks: Kotler and Keller, Marketing Management, 15th Edition

Readings: See Detailed Outline of Class Session

**Course Description and Objectives**

Course Description: This course introduces the principles of brand management as practiced by industry leaders today. Although the implementation of marketing programs is undergoing a massive transformation from conventional to digital media, the underlying principles of consumer driven marketing remain essentially the same; we will discuss how great marketing, including digital programming, is driven by a sound understanding of consumer segmentation, brand positioning, distinct product benefits, and relevant in-market executions.

Upon completion of this course, you should understand essential marketing concepts and use them to develop marketing strategies. You will develop this understanding through core readings, basic frameworks, and case studies involving firms such as Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Unilever, Porsche, Nestle, Sephora, and Glossier.

This course is relevant for students interested in driving consumer demand regardless of career path. There are no prerequisites.

**Key Concepts Taught in This Course**

* Category and Competitive Dynamics
* Consumer Segmentation
* Brand Building
* Commercial Strategy and New Product Innovation
* Principles of Consumer Communication, Interactive Marketing, Social Media, and CRM

**Course Requirements/Descriptions of Assignments**

* One Page Assignments: 20%. Most classes you will turn in a write up on a case discussed in that session. Each assignment should be one single spaced page written up to the best of your ability according to the framework of the course:

o **Landscape**: Assess category and competitive dynamics

o **Who:** Consumer Target and Segmentation

o **What:** Product Strategy and Brand Purpose

o **How:** Communication/retail strategy

o **Strategic Recommendation:** Given the above, what should the strategy be going forward?

I will grade write-ups as “Complete” (10 pts.) “Incomplete” (7 pts.) or “Non-Existent” (0 pts). I will share individual feedback with those who get incompletes or with those who specifically request it. If you wish, you can have up to 1 week to resubmit the write-up for full credit. Late assignments are not eligible for resubmissions.

* Participation: 20%. Expectations are that you will come to each class prepared for discussion of the assigned materials. 100% attendance with cameras on is expected. Exceptions may be granted only in accordance with school guidelines. If you need to be absent for all or part of a class, or if extenuating circumstances require you to keep your camera off, please reach out directly to me and/or the class TA. We track both attendance and active participation—leaving class early, and any other indications of less than full engagement will result in a lower participation grade. You also need to carry your weight on your team to get full credit for the Marketing Management Project.
* Key Visuals: In order to practice developing your brand and help us get to know each other better, I ask two students per class to share key visuals from their lives in a power point slide they can email to me prior to class. Similar to the key visual in an advertising campaign, these visuals should help us understand your purpose and key attributes/interests. If participation slots are full and you still would like to present a key visual, please contact the TA. You will get participation credit for sharing these visuals with the class.
* Feedback: In order to maximize the value of the class I ask that one or more volunteer class captains stay in touch with their classmates and channel feedback in terms of positive reinforcement, suggestions for improvement, and topics the class would like to see emphasized. Class captains can provide informal feedback at any time; the TA and I will also have brief, informal meetings with captains after class on Week 4 and Week 10. We will also conduct an anonymous survey in-class in Week 7 and Week 12.

**Brand Management Project**

Your mid-term and final exams will assess yourability to apply concepts of the class to a brand of your choice. This should not be a brand that any team member has worked on in a professional capacity.

* Make sure that you are a member of a 6-7 person group by the beginning of Week 2. Please send your group name, brand chosen, and group members to the TA prior to Class 2. You will give a brief presentation on your brand and why you chose it at the beginning of Class 2 (no ppt necessary).
* Brand Immersion Experience: You are strongly encouraged to engage yourself in the brand and have an experience prior to the mid-term that involves your team connecting with the brand and its consumers.
* Mid-Term Check-In: 20%. (Week 6) Opportunity to make sure you and your group are on track for your class project. You will be expected to make a 10-minute presentation during the second hour of class where you provide an overview of the brand you have selected: category, consumer target, product strategy, brand purpose, and communication/retail strategy. An important part of assessing retail strategy will be store visits and on-line assessment.
* Final Brand Management Project: 40% (Week 13)
1. Assume that your team manages a brand of your choice. Assess category and competitive dynamics (landscape), consumer target (who), product assortment and innovation strategy (what), and communication/retail strategy (how). Make concrete and actionable recommendations as to how to best drive growth in the next 2-3 years.
2. Remember to use all relevant tools from the class, and include pricing strategy, incremental opportunity, and size of prize in your analysis. Also remember that you need to recommend a new emphasis or change in direction—not just report on something the company is already doing. Please assess the risks of your plan and what steps you could take to mitigate them.

This should be a 15-minute Power Point presentation which will be uploaded to the class portal prior to the presentation.

**Device Policy**

Use of non-essential technology that detracts from student focus on class material and discussion is not allowed.

**Detailed Outline of Class Sessions**

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|  |  |  |  |  | Topic | Reading/Assignments |
|  | **Week 1** | Course Introduction | Basics of Brand Management |  |
|  |  |  | **Prepare:** Come prepared with examples of brands that are well-marketed/not well-marketed |
|  |  | Assess the |  |  |
|   |  |  | Landscape |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Assess the | Category Evaluation | **Classroom Presentation:** Your group should |
|  | **Week 2** | Landscape |  | come prepared to present the brand for your |
|  |  |  |  | class project. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | **Read:** Marketing Success Through |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Differentiation--of Anything by Theodore Levitt. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Competitive Dynamics | **One Page Assignment:** Ikea invades America |
|  | **Week 3** | The “Who” | Consumer Segmentation | **Read:** Kotler and Keller, Chapter 4. |
|  |  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Black and Decker Case |
|  |  |  |  | Study |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Week 4** | The “Who” | Segmentation and | **Read:** Kotler and Keller, Chapter 9. |
|  |  |  | Targeting |  |
|  |  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Porsche: The Cayenne |

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| **Week 5** | The “What” | Commercial and | **Read:** Kotler and Keller, Chapter 13. |
|  |  | Innovation Strategy |  |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Cialis Case Study: Getting |
|  |  |  | Ready to Market |
| **Week 6** | Mid-Term | **Prepare and Present:** Marketing Management Project Check-In |
|  | Check In |  |  |
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| **Week 7** | The “What” | Customer Service | **Read:** Kotler and Keller, Chapter 14. |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Starbucks Customer |
|  |  |  | Service**Job/Interviewing Workshop** |
| **Week 8** | The “What” | Retail Strategy | **Read:** Kotler and Keller, Chapter 16. |
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|  |  | Pricing | **One Page Assignment:** JC Penney |
| **Week 9** | The “Why” | Brand Purpose and | **Read:** Kotler Chapter 11 |
|  |  | Positioning | Lululemon (Short Case) |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Dove: Evolution of a Brand |
| **Week 10** | The “How” | Communication and | **Read:** Kotler Chapter 17 |
|  |  | Execution |  |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Mini-USA: Finding a New |
|  |  |  | Advertising Agency |
| **Week 11** | The “How” | Communication in Mass | **Read:** Kotler Chapter 18 |
|  |  | and Interactive | **Watch:** Wendy Clark, Coca-Cola Liquid and Linked Marketing |
|  |  | Environments |  Presentation (Youtube June 4, 2013) |
|  |  |  | **Watch:** Bob Hoffman, The Golden Age of Bullsh\*t |
|  |  |  | (Youtube) |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** Glossier: Co-Creating a Cult Brand with a Digital Community  |
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| **Week 12** | The “How” | Interactive Marketing, | **Read:** “Use New Tools To Build Traditional |
|  |  | Social Media, and CRM | Consumer Relationships” by Tom Hafen and Kevin |
|  |  |  | Knight. (World Advertising Research Council, May |
|  |  |  | 2018) |
|  |  |  | Kotler Chapter 19 |
|  |  |  | **One Page Assignment:** [Sephora Direct Case Study:](https://hbr.org/product/sephora-direct-investing-in-social-media-video-and-mobile/511137-PDF-ENG) |
|  |  |  | [Investing in Social Media, Video, and Mobile.](https://hbr.org/product/sephora-direct-investing-in-social-media-video-and-mobile/511137-PDF-ENG) |
| **Week 13** |  | **Prepare and Present:** Marketing Management Project Presentations |
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The instructor reserves the right to modify or change the course syllabus as needed during the course.