Media and Entertainment: Strategy Consulting Projects (Ava Seave) SP2022

Media & Entertainment: Strategy Consulting Projects Spring 2022

**Update: 3.11.22**

Course: B8685-1

Days & Dates:  T and Th, 2:00 to 3:30

Kravis 690 (tentatively)

**B Term: classes run from March 21 through April 29.**

Final project can be delivered between May 2 to May 13, given the exam scheds of the students and the client sched.

Credits:  1.5

**Classes are in person; meetings with companies can be remote or in person**

**Adjunct Associate Professor Ava Seave**

Phone:  212 222 0025 (office off campus/messages) or 917 279 6270 (mobile)

Office hours:  By appointment

Email:  [as2486@columbia.edu](mailto:as2486@columbia.edu)

**CA: Sarah Taub**

917-344-0386

STaub22@gsb.columbia.edu

**General Course Description**

Very helpful, but in no way a requirement:  One media course and/or one strategy course and/or professional experience at a media company.

In “Media & Entertainment: Strategy Consulting Projects,” the concepts and theories introduced in previous media and strategy courses will be applied in a practical way to problems brought to the class as projects from real companies and their managers.

The ultimate goal of this class is for students to have team experience in helping companies recognize and solve strategic media problems.

Among the techniques the students will work on

* Industry mapping
* SCP: Structure/Conduct/Performance analysis
* Market sizing
* Defining the goals of a project
* Defining and understanding scope
* Value propositions and Value curves
* Mapping Business Systems
* Introduction to Business Canvas and Minimal viable product

The half-semester course will introduce techniques to perform strategy consulting for media companies and teach students how to apply these techniques to real projects from real companies. In the seventh week, the teams will present their findings to the sponsoring companies.

To master these skills, each week students will be given specific tools to work through each concept and will to apply these concepts in several ways:

* to current situations of well-known companies and industries
* to a case about an evolving media SaaS company and to a case about a French media company
* to the company project they have been assigned to

Each team will do brief presentations in 10 out of the 12 classes. The teams will have an opportunity to work in a break out room for a portion of each class.

The class is limited to 28 students. There will be four teams of seven members each. Team work, and active participation in each and every class will be required.  Check in meetings (zoom or by phone) with sponsor companies are required each week. Collaboration is expected and encouraged throughout the course.

The class may be assigned some readings throughout the class which will be applicable to certain problems we will be discussing.

**Which companies?**

**All 4 clients are CONFIRMED**

* [**DailyFX**](https://www.dailyfx.com/)**--news and research on the currency, commodity and index trading community**(project description below)
* [**Haymarket Group**](https://www.haymarketmedicalnetwork.com/)**, Medical Communications Sector, including 22 b-to-b media properties**(project description below)
* [**Oaklins DeSilva + Phillips**](https://dp.oaklins.com/)**– media investment bank**(project description below)
* [**Fandom**](https://www.fandom.com/)**-- a Conde Nast owned digital property**(project description below)

**Before the class begins**

* Pre class reading: Introduction and Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of The Curse of the Mogul: What’s Wrong with the World’s Leading Media Companies (Knee, Greenwald, Seave; Penguin 2009.)
* Submit your resume on Canvas where requested
* Submit the survey for your project preferences
* Read and confirm agreement for the class NDA

**Additional Reading assigned after start of term – there may be more.**

* *French News Start-up L'Opinion:  Swimming Upstream in Uncertain Times (Parts A and B)*
* Spotlight on Cumulative Advantage, pages 1-13 (HBR)
  + Customer Loyalty is Overrated by A.J. Lafley et al
  + Counterpoint: Old Habits Die Hard but they do die by McGrath
* The Dangers of Categorical Thinking (HBR)
* The Most Underrated Skills in Management (MIT Sloan Review)
* The Dangers of Categorical Thinking (HBR)

**Classroom expectations**

* **Attendance at the first two classes is mandatory, with companies visiting the classroom on Class 2**
* **Attendance to all classes is strongly encouraged, and is expected**
* Except for the first two classes, each class will consist of presentation to the professor (and one other team) of the week’s assignment, team work time and lecture/discussion of the next week’s assignment.

**Class Project Assignments**

* Students will be assigned projects by the professor based as much as possible on student preferences.
* Project assignment mechanics:
  + Before class begins, I will send a detailed description of the class projects, students can prioritize your preferences, and I will try to honor them as much as possible.
  + Once assigned to a team, if a student would like to try to switch to another team, he/she has 24 hours to convince someone on the desired team to switch. However, no one is required to switch.
  + Only contact me after the switch is made to let me know. Do not involve me in any kind of discussion or negotiation.
* The presentation to the company will consist of a presentation deck plus any back up analysis and research that is appropriate

**Grades and how you get them**

Grades will be based on

* The quality of the work for the client,
* Class participation during the full class and in breakout sessions,
* Weekly completion of assignments that will be presented to the prof in breakout sessions,
* Revision of these assignments if requested
* And the final presentation (group, type A) to your company’s executives in the seventh/exam week.
* The deliverable for the presentation will consist of a presentation deck plus any back up analysis and research that is appropriate.
* You will also be given a short quiz at the end of the semester (multiple choice) to test your retention of major principles discussed.

**Class Dates**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class dates | | |
| **Class #** | **Day** | **Date** |
| Class 1 MANDATORY | **Tuesday** | **March 22** |
| Class 2 MANDATORY | **Thursday** | **March 24** |
| Class 3 | **Tuesday** | **March 29** |
| Class 4 | **Thursday** | **March 31** |
| Class 5 | **Tuesday** | **April 5** |
| Class 6 | **Thursday** | **April 7** |
| Class 7 | **Tuesday** | **April 12** |
| Class 8 | **Thursday** | **April 14** |
| Class 9 | **Tuesday** | **April 19** |
| Class 10 | **Thursday** | **April 21** |
| Class 11 | **Tuesday** | **April 26** |
| Class 12 | **Thursday** | **April 28** |
| *Presentation for the companies should be scheduled May 2 to May 13* | | |

**DailyFX and tastytrade, divisions of IG Group**

[https://www.iggroup.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.iggroup.com/)

[https://www.dailyfx.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.dailyfx.com/)

[https://www.tastytrade.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.tastytrade.com/)

**As the IG Group formulates its content strategy within and across its three consumer platforms for the company’s FY 2023 (starting in June 2022) what are key insights from consumer research and competitor analysis should the company use to find more customers from the demographic segment of** Women aged 25-34 **To Be Confirmed**

About IG Group

(From the [website](https://www.iggroup.com/about-us/what-we-do) and [annual report](https://annualreport.iggroup.com/))

“Ambitious, entrepreneurial people, who love a challenge and are restless in their pursuit of opportunity, are at the centre of everything we do.”

“When IG was founded in 1974, we were the world’s first spread betting firm. Now we’re a global leader in our industry, having won multiple trading and technology awards.

“We provide trading and investment opportunities to people worldwide, and have operations in 20 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and North America. Our head office is located in London…. Our clients can access over 19,000 global financial markets including shares, forex, indices, commodities and other instruments via our market-leading platforms and apps that provide lightning-fast and secure execution….

“[W}e have three brands specialising in exchange-traded derivatives: tastyworks and Nadex in the US and Spectrum Markets in Europe.

In being dedicated to “Client education” content production (news, analysis and commentary via text, video and charts) is a key audience driver for new customers and an engagement vehicle for returning customers.

“Client Education

* Encourage clients to engage with IG, and to learn about our products and how to trade effectively and responsibly
* Ensure that clients are well-informed about IG’s services and the economics of trading
* Promote responsible trading through engaging introduction programme, targeted at client needs
* Provide extensive range of trading aids, such as charting packages, news, commentary and analysis

Financial overview

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IG Financials | | | |
|  | ***FY 2021*** | ***FY 2020*** | ***% Change*** |
| ***Revenue*** | **£853.4m** | **£649.2m** | **+31%** |
| ***Earnings before Taxes*** | **£450.3m** | **£295.9m** | **+52%** |
| ***%*** | **52%** | **45%** |  |

The Project:

The project has two research parts:

1. An analysis of IG properties vs. their top competitors in terms of types of information in subject matter and deliver as well as the features and benefits of the companies, so the students understand the category deeply and how media and information is used in the category.
2. As series of “in depth interviews (IDIs)” with trading customers or potential customers (through their own networks in order to develop rich hypotheses as to the “why” of their usage behavior with trading-oriented content

To start the project, students will review and reconsider any quantitative audience data that DailyFx and tastytrade collect, including their audience segments, demographics, professional backgrounds, longevity of use and any other metrics that show the relationship between reading and viewing of content and trading.  Because the concentration is on women aged 25-34 TBC, understanding how this segment differs in behavior currently from other segments is an area of deep interest. Any previous qualitative research (e.g., focus group write ups) will be shared with the students as well.   The company will supply any industry-wide studies, trade articles or other data that is appropriate. To supplement these sources of information, the student will conduct their own literature search through Statista, eMarketer and other CBS resources available.  They will work with the CEO of FX Publications and others on her staff and her colleagues during this project and collect the current theories and assumptions about why content drives trading customers and how this might be made more effective.

Comp analysis: Students should also do desk research by comparing and contrasting 5 to 7 competitors which will be chosen by the IG Group management for the project. This will ground the students in the vertical. They will track among other things,  their sign-up processes, promotions,  varying products/enewsletters or apps, social presence, etc. to understand how their approaches compare, and looking at any demographics they may be able to find about their customers.

IDIs: fielding and evaluating IDIs with people who are active traders on any platform and who may be interest in becoming traders in the near future.

First the students will devise a screener survey to help select who they will qualitatively interview.  The screener can be filled in by the students or by the potential interviewees. It will be a short 6 closed-end question survey which will establish age, gender, geography, and if they are currently trading and how. This will help select an array of interviewees.

The students will design an interview guide for the IDIs to understand the how and why people who do trading interact with content, how often, their emotional response to the content, and their “ideal” content that may lead to a trade.  The interviews will be conducted by phone or by Zoom. Some areas they may be probing will be how these individuals find out about specific content (search, social, colleagues, email, advertising, etc.)  and why they responded when they did, if they ever “churned out” from sites and media properties that provide content and why.

The deliverables at the end of the project will include

* Summaries of each interview with top take-aways from each interview
* Final written report and presentation that will include
  + A summary of the overall “themes” of the interviews
  + Compare and contrast summary of IG properties vs. their competitors
  + Conclusions/recommendations from the student team to characterize which content and information might engage women aged 25-34 TBC more effectively than is currently happening, with suggested refinements or volume and several new ideas for the company to test

**Haymarket Media**

[https://www.haymarketmedicalnetwork.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.haymarketmedicalnetwork.com/)

**How can Haymarket Media make their medical titles more attractive to younger subscribers and users, specifically those who are at the beginning of their careers and/or are under 35 years old ?**

About Haymarket

(From the [website (Links to an external site.)](https://www.haymarketmedicalnetwork.com/) and from reporting on [2020 results (Links to an external site.)](https://www.campaignasia.com/article/haymarket-records-annual-profits-of-%C2%A38-3m-despite-effects-of-covid-19/466067).)

“Haymarket is a global, specialist media and information business…Our primary purpose is to inspire the millions of professionals and consumers across the world that trust our brands and use them to inform their decision-making.” The company owns more than 70 brands worldwide.

“Since we launched in 1957, Haymarket has focused on building powerful communities of interest around specialist audiences.”

Haymarket Media has 70 brands across geographies, divisions and sectors.  For this project, the students will work with those brands and properties 22 brands aimed at “healthcare practitioners through a multichannel environment that includes more than a dozen unique brands offered across multiple formats (web, app, print, live event). The network benefits from its inter-connectivity, allowing users to move from brand to brand to discover the relevant content they need to make practice-related decisions.

“Included in the network is MPR, a renowned drug database used by healthcare practitioners of all professions and specialties to view concise drug information and stay up-to-date on the latest news in pharmacology…

“The network also features an expanding portfolio of websites and apps that deliver news and feature content for all healthcare practitioners targeting a specific therapeutic area (cardiology, endocrinology, infectious diseases, oncology, neurology, pain, and psychiatry) and primary care content delivered to a particular audience (physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and nurses).

Haymarket Media Group reported annual earnings of more than £8million (6% of total revenue) in 2020 “as a strong performance from its US medical business offset the worst of the coronavirus downturn.” The previous year, their earnings were also about 6% of total revenue of £162million, “a decline that the company said was caused solely by the Covid-19 slump.”

The Project:

Haymarket would like the student team to delve into the audience data that they have (from their advertising and circulation research) of leading 5 medical brands (to be determined before the project begins by the client) so the students can understand the demographics and career and work details of the users and readers and how they differ across the brands and product platforms. If there is any previous qualitative research (e.g., Net Promoter scores, focus group write ups) they will share with the students.

The company wants to conduct “in depth interviews (IDIs)” with customers and potential customers in this cohort to get to the “why” of their usage behavior with Haymarket brands or their competitors.

To start the project, students will review and reconsider any industry-wide studies, trade articles or other data that Haymarket can supply. They will also conduct their own literature search through Statista, eMarketer and other CBS resources available.  They will meet with the Vice President, Marketing & Digital Operations at Haymarket Media and others on his staff and may interview other executives at the company. They will gather any current theories and any other guidance from the company about the under 35 subscription/reader/user behaviors.

Students should also do desk research by comparing and contrasting 10 medical brands -- 5 Haymarket brands with 5 competitors chosen for this project—tracking among other things,  their sign-up processes, promotions, pricing if applicable, varying products/enews letters or apps, social presence, etc. to understand how their approaches compare.

The heart of the research, however, is fielding and evaluating IDIs with people who pay for a subscription or other similar identified competitors vs. those who do not.

First the students will devise a screener survey to help select who they will qualitatively interview.  The screener will be a short 8 closed-end question survey which will establish age, gender, geography, medical field, career stage and if they subscribe to a Haymarket publication or a competitor. This will help select appropriate people as well as an array of interviewees.    The students will find interviewees from their own social networks and fellow students as well as get volunteers through Haymarket’s email newsletters  (the exact method is to be determined.)

The students will design an interview guide for the IDIs to understand the “journey” of subscribing or not subscribing. The students will complete from 20 to 25 IDIs. The interviews will be conducted by phone or by Zoom. Some areas they may be probing will be how individuals:

* Find these properties (search, social, colleagues, email, advertising, etc.)
* What types of information are usually used or attracted (i.e. peer reviewed, expert reviewed, etc:
* Which formats they usually read or seek out (infographics, video, audio, email newsletters, etc.)
* If they “churn out” from information, why do they?
* *Why* they would move through the customer journey --  say from visiting the website, registering for the website, subscribing/signing up for emails etc. For example it might be because of  events, white papers, colleagues, etc.

 The deliverables at the end of the project will include

* Summaries of each interview with top take-aways from each interview
* Final written report and presentation that will include
  + A summary of the overall “themes” of the interviews
  + Compare and contrast of Haymarket readers/subscribers vs. the non-readers/non-subscribers
  + Conclusions/recommendations for the Haymarket team to find and retain younger/early career readers/users.

**Oaklins DeSilva + Phillips**

[https://dp.oaklins.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://dp.oaklins.com/)

**ODP is developing an expertise in “I.D.E.A.” companies. This stands for Insights, Design [Thinking], Experiences [CX] and Activation.  We see companies developing new and advanced capabilities in all of these discrete areas but we also see a handful looking to provide products and services across this continuum.   One such public company is Zeta Global (Nasdaq: ZETA)**[**weblink** (Links to an external site.)](https://zetaglobal.com/about/)**.  How can you help ODP to understand Zeta Global and its ambitions in its product space? What would you advise ODP to pitch to the company to purchase and why?**

**About Oaklins DeSilva+Phillips**

From the website:

“MIDDLE MARKET INVESTMENT BANKERS FOR THE MEDIA, MARKETING AND TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES

“Oaklins DeSilva+Phillips leads the TMT practice for Oaklins, the world’s largest and most successful M&A advisory organization in the mid-market.

“ODP specializes in sell-side and buy-side transactions, corporate finance services, valuations and restructurings for companies at the intersection of content, technology and services worldwide.

“We were founded in 1996 by two seasoned media and banking professionals, Roland A. DeSilva and Reed Phillips. For 20+ years, our core focus has been serving the companies and investors that operate at the intersection of Content, Technology and Services, and today, we have deep TMT market expertise in six key sectors:

* Media
* Marketing
* Technology, Data & Information
* Education
* Healthcare
* Private Equity

“In today’s digital economy, geographic borders no longer impede M&A transactions, but it is essential to have an advisor that understands the nuances of cross-border M&A. Virtually every transaction that Oaklins DeSilva+Phillips advises on today involves an international component. For any business owner contemplating a transaction, it is imperative to explore the international buyer and investor universe. Likewise, as an acquirer or investor, the most attractive opportunities often lie abroad, and global deal sourcing is critical.

“Oaklins DeSilva+Phillips has built upon its strong track-record of international M&A through our successful integration with Oaklins, the world’s largest and most successful M&A advisory organization in the mid-market. As the Co-Head of the global TMT practice, we work daily with our colleagues around the world to deliver global reach with a local touch to all of our clients. The Oaklins TMT practice encompasses 90+ bankers and has completed 840+ transactions in the last five years.

“Our Oaklins organization provides invaluable insight into local business practices and customs, and have personal contacts with the most active buyers and investors in their countries.”

**About the project**

There are two parts to this project which centers on Zeta Global (Nasdaq: ZETA)

1. **What are Zeta’s specialties in the I.D.E.A product world and how do you think these services they offer will (or should) evolve in the future?**

* To understand the variety of services the company offers, here is the company’s description from the S-1. “Zeta is a leading omnichannel data-driven cloud platform that provides enterprises with consumer intelligence and marketing automation software. We empower our customers to target, connect and engage consumers through software that delivers personalized marketing across all addressable channels, including email, social media, web, chat, connected TV (“CTV”) and video, among others. We believe our actionable insights derived from consumer intent enable our customers to acquire, grow and retain consumer relationships more efficiently and effectively than the alternative solutions available in the market.”

* Students will compare Zeta to 3-4 companies that are offering multiple I.D.E.A services and describe the business, technical and regulatory environments that these companies are competing in now and how the dynamics may change in the future. There are different sorts of competitors among the students will chose from.  In discussion with the client when the project starts, the team whill choose among: SalesForce, MediaMath, BounceX, Seismic, S4, and You & Mr. Jones and/or competitors that Zeta is trying to disrupt including the marketing agencies  WPP, Omnicom, IPG, Publicis, Accenture, Deloitte, Dentsu and Stagwell.

* Detail the strengths and weaknesses of each company and their positioning vis-a-vis each other

* Be sure to include the geographic differences, the industry specialties, the business models, the tech, M&A for the companies.

1. **M&A targets**

ODP expects the pace and size of M&A activity to accelerate over the next several years for I.D.E.A because of the acceleration of digital transformation in marketing along with the contractor trends of the effectiveness of personalization but a demand for privacy protection.  Zeta Global was founded in 2007; with its newly public status (filed its S-1 in April 2021 and went public in June 2021) it is likely to grow through acquisition.

We are particularly interested in understanding how we can aid Zeta Global in making the best acquisitions for their business that will enable it to compete as a next-gen I.D.E.A. company.  Students should describe an acquisition strategy for Zeta Global and then make recommendations for 3 acquisitions that will fit into the strategy you have defined.

**Fandom**

[https://www.fandom.com/ (Links to an external site.)](https://www.fandom.com/)

**Fandom is interested in exploring the opportunities to go deeper in Animé since this area has been our fastest-growing vertical and has a particularly engaged audience base.  How can we better understand the space? What are our growth opportunities there?**

**About Fandom**

From the website:

“Founded in 2004 by Jimmy Wales (yes, the Wikipedia guy) and Angela Beesley Starling (a British web entrepreneur) ….

“Fandom is the world’s largest entertainment & gaming fan platform. We help … people worldwide go deeper on their favorite games, entertainment and culture with unique tools, memorable experiences, original content and commerce. We reach more fans, across more fandoms, than anyone. And we do it all for the love of fans.

“Our communities are a one-stop-shop for both existing and new fans to explore their fandoms, diving deep on stories, characters and lore.

* 315 million people worldwide per month
* 250,000 fan communities
* 40 million pages of content
* 125 million gaming users globally
* 2 billion gaming questions answered per month

From Crunchbase:

“Fandom has raised a total of $145.4M in funding over 8 rounds. Their latest funding was raised on Jun 1, 2018 from a Series E round.

“Fandom is funded by 19 investors. TPG Growth and Delta-v Capital are the most recent investors….

“Fandom has acquired 5 organizations. Their most recent acquisition was Fanatical on Feb 24, 2021.

**About the project**

To start the project, students will review and reconsider any quantitative audience data that Fandom collects, including their data from the “State of Fandom” reporting, audience segments, demographics, longevity of use and any other metrics that show the Animé audience against all other segments – similarities and differences.  Any previous qualitative research (e.g., focus group write ups) they will share with the students as well.

The company will supply any industry-wide studies, trade articles or other data that is appropriate. They will also identify their top 3 or 4 competitors in the space so the students can compare and contrast. To supplement these sources of information, the students will conduct their own literature search through Statista, eMarketer, Factiva, IBISWorld and other CBS resources.

The students will work with the VP, Research & Analytics Strategy and others on her staff and her colleagues during this project. They will conduct 4 or 5 industry expert interviews (with suggestions from Fandom staff) as well as 3 to 4 executives at Fandom about their own theories and assumptions about the attraction/growth of Animé. These interviews will help the students develop a rich set of hypotheses to explore.

Questions that Fandom would like the student team to answer about Animé:

1. What are the major sources (companies, platforms, creators/studios) of Animé products that are popular in the US?

* How does Animé compare to Manga and Comics verticals in content and in audience?
* What do experts say about the size of the addressable market (TAM) English for Animé and for these other related verticals?
* Who are the 2-3 key players for Animé / Manga /Comics and is there an overlap? Of these companies, what are their basic corporate structures, audiences, etc?

1. What are the details of the value chain of Animé creation to Fandom content? Are there differences depending on the source of the IP – e.g., Japanese vs. Korean vs. US, or Book vs. video? (These value chain threads will be determined  depending on the research.)

1. How do audiences differ among these sources? Do these audience differences seem to resonate with Fandom’s differences among Animé segments?

1. What are the dynamics of the ecosystem now and what are the challenges in the near future via a classic Structure/Conduct/Performance analysis? How might this play out in the next 5 years?

1. Starting with Fandom’s product features and audience experiences, what are the potential Animé-specific growth opportunities around products, merchandise and experiences?

The deliverable at the end of the project will be a final written report and presentation that will include summaries and back up data (including lit and data reference links and summaries and/or verbatims from expert and exec interviews)

* Answering the five questions
* The student team’s recommendations of the key growth opportunities in this space; should they acquire another company and why; what should Fandom test and further explore that will grow and engage