‘PREMIUM BRAND STRATEGY’ – B173X - Section 1
‘How Elevate Brands To Become Meaningful, Peerless and Priceless’
SPRING 2020 –Wednesdays/5:45-9:00pm/room URI 331

Instructor  
JP Kuehlwein, jk4405@columbia.edu

Teaching Assistant  
Christina Clark, ChClark20@gsb.columbia.edu

Communications from the instructor about the course will take place through Canvas. Students should make sure they regularly check for announcements and messaging notifications.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Rapid technological development seems to make the marketplace more ‘perfect’ and ‘flat.’ Never before have we had access to as many product choices combined with transparency on their relative - but increasingly similar - performance. What are brand owners to do if they want to escape a competition focused on the ‘4Ps’ and the ‘tyranny of the Amazon recommendation algorithm’? – How can a brand be sought out, desired beyond reason and even command a premium price?

In this course you will learn how to develop and apply strategies that elevate brands and make them peerless and priceless in the eyes of customers. We will cover a broad range of industries - from Luxury to Lifestyle and CPG to B2B - and the brand management areas of consumer understanding, brand strategy development and execution. We will also touch upon aspects of product- and service design, integrated marketing communications, experiential marketing, leadership and organization as well as financials and growth strategies as they relate to creating premium brands.

The lectures and related reading will introduce you to multiple tools to assess, build and execute a premium brand strategy. Together with guest talks by practitioners they will also provide ample illustration of their application and serve as stimulus to discuss a variety of practical brand challenges. You are expected to demonstrate you understanding through active class participation, short individual and group assignments and your contributions to the ‘Ueber-Brand Project,’ in which you will join a team to assume the role of brand strategy consultants. Together you will apply appropriate concepts taught throughout the course, develop a brand elevation strategy and pitch it to a brand client who will have briefed you at the beginning of the course. The balance between lecture/talks and interactive class work will be about 60/40.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
In this course you will learn how to assess and apply
- models and methods for the development of a successful brand strategy
- linkages between culture, society, psychology and building strong brand propositions
- principles behind successful product design, brand communications and manifestations
... all as they relate to building brands that are held in high esteem and can demand a price premium.

The course will be particularly useful for those who intend to consult with- or join Brand Management in the Luxury, Lifestyle, Foods, Fashion or Beauty industries and those who want to create their own ‘Ueber-Brand’.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS
Course Book: We will use the book Rethinking Prestige Branding – Secrets of the Ueber-Brands, co-authored by the instructor. It covers the brand building principles reviewed in the course and contains many case studies we will use for illustration and discussion.
**Other Reading:** You will be asked/can volunteer to reflect on a variety of perspectives- and other models relating to brand strategy. In that context some additional reading will be suggested in class or on the Canvas course site. You are expected to source those materials and/or any others you see fit yourself.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>-Assignments (Type) / Reading</th>
<th>AHEAD OF EACH SESSION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong>&lt;br&gt; Jan 29 – 5:45pm</td>
<td>a- Introduction to course and instructor. Syllabus Q&amp;A.&lt;br&gt;b- What is a brand and the evolution of branding.&lt;br&gt;c- Some Brand Strategy Models (USP, Aaker, etc. - incl. voluntary student presentation)&lt;br&gt;d- Review Ueber-Brands Project, team formation, brand choices</td>
<td>Project teams have to be formed and brand choices declared and decided in week 1. Teams will connect with clients by week 2.</td>
<td>- Return introduction questionnaire.&lt;br&gt;- Have questions on syllabus.&lt;br&gt;- Voluntary Participation Assignment (type C) Prepare a presentation on a strategy model - cf. Canvas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Strategy and Brand Elevation</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Voluntary Participation Assignments</strong>&lt;br&gt;(A and C) Bring examples or present concept - cf. Canvas.</td>
<td>• Syllabus&lt;br&gt;• Rethinking Prestige Branding – Part I cf below/Canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong>&lt;br&gt; Feb. 05</td>
<td>a- The power of brand purpose - Discussion&lt;br&gt;b- Consumer psychology, segmentation, targeting, relationship Some core concepts (Self’, Positioning, Strategic Target vs Design-Target, etc. - incl. optional student presentations)&lt;br&gt;c- Exclusivity and Inclusiveness - balancing longing and belonging</td>
<td>- Individual Written Assignment Option 1 (of 2) (C) on Brand elevation principles - cf. Canvas.&lt;br&gt;- Voluntary Participation Assignments (A and C) Bring examples or present concept - cf. Canvas.</td>
<td>- Individual Written Assignment Option 1 (of 2) (C) on Brand elevation principles - cf. Canvas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Mission, Targeting and Creating Desire</td>
<td></td>
<td>• RPB – Part II, Principles 1 and 2 cf below/Canvas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Communication: Myth Making and ‘Un-Selling’</td>
<td></td>
<td>• RPB – Part II, Principles 3 and 4 cf below/Canvas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Product and holistic Brand Manifestation</td>
<td></td>
<td>• RPB – Part II, Principles 5 and 6 cf below/Canvas</td>
<td>• RPB – Part II, Principles 5 and 6 cf below/Canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 5</strong>&lt;br&gt; Feb. 26</td>
<td>a- Expert Speakers: ‘Brand Elevation in a digital world’ – Supriya Jain/Ben Feldman, L2/ Gartner (Digital Mktg Consulting)&lt;br&gt;b- Managing Growth for Brand Elevation</td>
<td>- Individual assignment (C): Short online quiz on items covered to date.</td>
<td>- Individual assignment (C): Short online quiz on items covered to date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2
| Managing Organization and Growth | c- Expert Speaker: On the way to creating an Ueber-Brand speaker from Tiffany & Co. or John Hardy.  
|  | d- Organizing for brand elevation |
| Session 6 March 4 Ueber-Brand Presentations | a- Introduction client guests  
|  | b- Final Ueber-Brand Project Presentations - Teams present their Ueber-Brand strategy recommendation to clients as consultants and answer their/class questions |

### READING SCHEDULE – Please do all the required reading AHEAD of the respective session

#### Session 1 – by Jan. 29
- Brief course instructions and questionnaire to be submitted (incl. instructions for voluntary participation assignment for session 1! (to be found on Canvas – (C))
- Course syllabus – please read carefully and have questions ready (C)
- Kuehlwein/Schaeffer: ‘Rethinking Prestige Branding’ (RPB) – Part I

**Reading Reflection:** What considerations have found their way into how marketers manage brand identity? Why? What might consumers be missing in mass-brands today? Think of current examples not in RPB.

#### Session 2 – by Feb. 5
- RPB Part II, Principles 1 and 2 (excl. the case studies at the end). How can Mission and ‘Balancing Longing vs Belonging’ relate to each other? How might they clash? Why might brands specifically decide not to follow a ‘higher mission’ and/or follow principle 2 and how might they still be successful in sustaining a premium-priced business? Think of current examples not in RPB.

**Suggested:**
- Case studies of Principle 1 and 2 and videos referenced (RPB) (C)
- Watch Simon Sinek TEDx talk ‘Why’ on YouTube (C)
- Mark Ritson: ‘Stop Propping Up Purpose…’ (C)
- Watch ‘Rapaille on Culture Codes’ on YouTube (C)

#### Session 3 – by Feb. 12
- RPB, Part II, Principles 3 and 4 (excl. case studies) What are the arguments for ‘myth-making’ versus ‘de-mystifying a brand’? For which kind of brands/when might one be the better strategy over the other? How do Brand Myth and Un-Selling relate? Think of current examples not in RPB.

**Suggested:**
- Case studies of Principle 3 and 4 and videos referenced (RPB)
- Watch ‘Campbell’s Hero’s Journey’ on Ueber-Brands YouTube (C)

#### Session 4 – by Feb. 19
- RPB, Part II, Principles 5 and 6, (excl. case studies). Is ‘Product’ the most important thing a brand has to offer? How might a brand owner assess if they have the right product to achieve their brand elevation goals? How does Principle 6 relate to Product? Think of current examples not in RPB.

**Suggested:**
- Case studies of Principle 5 and 6 and videos referenced (RPB)
- Watch short videos on the Ueber-Brands Youtube Channel: Devialet, Trader Joe’s Cucinelli, Joe & The Juice (C)
Session 5 – by Feb. 26

- RPB Principle 7 and Summary Questions (excl. case studies). *Are Growth and Brand Elevation at odds past a certain point? Why? When? How Can it be resolved? Think of examples of premium brands that are scaled and keep growing. How do they do it?*

Suggested:
- Case studies of Principle 7 and videos referenced (RPB)
- JP Kuehlwein: ‘How Niche Brands Survive Acquisitions...’ (C)
- Listen on the Ueber-Brands Podcast to interviews with M.Fantachiotti on ‘Johnny Walker...’ and/or J. Geikie on ‘Burts Bees...’ (C)

Session 6

None

EVALUATION CRITERIA
You will be evaluated based on your understanding and application of the concepts taught as well as your ability to combine insight, strategic thinking and creativity in discussions and in making recommendations that are judged impactful. The structure, expression and references used in your written work and presentations as well as the on-time submission will also be taken into account.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Class participation (incl. voluntary presentations/examples submitted) 30%
Written Assignment (1 of 2 options) and Quiz (15% each) 30%
Group Project (Part I 10%, Part II 30%) 40%

CONDUCT POLICIES
You are expected to attend all sessions, actively participate, complete assignments, and follow the honor code. **Students are expected to be:**

**Present:**
- On time and present for every session.
- Attendance tracked. – More than one no-show lead to elimination.

**Prepared:**
- Complete reading and pre-work for every class and expect cold calling based on it.
- Bring nameplates and any documents/equipment you might need (eg. assignments/presentations).

**Participating:**
- Active and constructive participation expected and part of grade
- No electronic devices unless used exclusively for note taking or as instructed.

ASSIGNMENT TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Preparation of submission</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>group/group</td>
<td>Permitted with designated group</td>
<td>By group</td>
<td>Same grade for each member of the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>group/individual</td>
<td>Permitted with designated group</td>
<td>Individually (No sharing of any portion of the submission.)</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>individual/individual</td>
<td>None of any kind</td>
<td>Individually</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

**Ueber-Brand Project (Type-A, 40% of grade):** Teams of 4-6 students diagnose the current state of a brand’s identity and image and then develop a holistic strategy on how to (further) elevate the equity of the brand. You simulate being brand strategy consultants and work directly with the client at briefing, check-in and final presentation stage. Most clients will be NY-local, some connecting remotely. (The project might also be done without client contact, with instructor agreement). The work will be graded in two steps:

1. Presentation of DIAGNOSIS (10% of grade) - The team will analyze the competitive landscape, current brand positioning, identity, image and strength and derive areas for improvement, possibly proposing a preliminary mission statement or potential ‘Ueber-Target(s)’.
2. Presentation of RECOMMENDATION (30%) - The team will develop a brand strategy and illustrate it with some ‘lighthouse’ executions with the potential to elevate the brand to ‘Ueber-Brand’ status.

Students pick or are assigned to teams after session 1 and pick a # 1 to 3 preference from choices presented to them or propose their own. They will provide a short rationale for the choice. The final brands will be assigned to all teams by/in session 2.

Assignments are to be submitted on Canvas/via an FTP site before the in-class presentation. Assignment submissions include the presentation and an executive summary (Part 1, max 400 words + any data tables, graphs, illustrations, etc. Part 2, max 800 words). The written summary of Part 2 is to be submitted by Monday 6pm before the presentation to allow clients to pre-read it! The presentations will be done in the format of a ‘executive summary by a consulting firm’ and last a maximum 5 and 10 minutes respectively for Part 1 and Part 2 plus ~5-10 minutes of Q&A by the class, expert invitees and the instructor. The number of slides or other materials used is up to the teams. Minimum content and format expectations for these materials will be discussed in-class. But, never hesitate to ask, if you have questions.

**Witten Assignment (Type B, 15%)** There are two options to choose from for this individual assignment. They are both discussions of aspects of brand elevation we will study and are before session 2 and session 4, respectively. You can choose which assignment you want to submit (400 words, either). The assignments are to be submitted on Canvas and, also, a printed copy is to be provided at the beginning the session the assignment is due by.

**Quiz (Type C, 15%)** This will be a short (~8 question) online quiz probing on the concepts and themes reviewed up session 5 and including the pre-reading for session 5.

**Class Participation (30%)** Students will be assessed based on attendance, preparedness and the quality of questions asked/answers given and other contributions in class. Expect cold calling and heated discussions. Students can also boost their participation score by picking one/several of multiple, voluntary participation assignments on offer. They consist of contributing relevant illustrations of real-world examples and/or of presenting a model/concept in class individually or with a partner (see schedule above and Canvas for details).
APPENDIX - READING

COURSE BOOK

SUGGESTED BOOKS
Among others, the following books can provide more detail/a richer context for the themes we will cover. – Ask me about these books, if interested.
- Batey, Mark, (2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 2016) *Brand Meaning.* Routledge
- Keller, Kevin Lane, (4\textsuperscript{th} edition, 2013 or earlier) *Strategic Brand Management.* Pearson
APPENDIX – INSTRUCTOR BIO

JP Kuehlwein is principal at Ueber-Brands Consulting, advising large CPG groups and start-ups, alike, on brand strategy and execution. – Brand Elevation, in particular. He previously was Executive VP at Frédéric Fekkai, a prestige hair care business and held Brand Director and Director of Strategy positions at Procter & Gamble. His broad marketing and management experience include developing a strategy for the world’s leading detergent, creating a new-to-the-world food storage solution, introducing the disposable diapers category in India, designing a premium skin care brand in China and turning around a Prestige business in the US. He was also on the board of Smith & Norbu, a luxury eyewear start-up in Hong Kong.

JP holds bachelor degrees in Business from the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce, Reims (France) and University of Reutlingen (Germany) and a postgraduate diploma in Business Analysis from Lancaster University (UK). JP teaches Brand Strategy at NYU Stern School of Business and is on the advisory board of the Cosmetics and Fragrances Marketing and Management Master’s Program at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). He is also a Senior Fellow and Leader of the Marketing and Communications Institutes at The Conference Board. His work has won numerous internal and external Marketing and Advertising awards and he was named “International Marketer of the Year 2016” by The Internationalist and Association of National Advertisers.


Select articles by the instructor: