



'Strategic Brand Management' Course Details

Professor's Name	:	<i>Satheesh Krishnamurthy</i>
Course Prerequisites	:	A clear and comprehensive understanding of basic marketing management and concepts
Class Hours	:	Saturdays & Sundays

Course Background

Organizations of all types, hues and sizes have come to realize the value of the brand names associated with their products or services. Despite this recognition, not much attention has been paid to the subject in management education, especially in MBA programmes. The same manifests itself in the blunders committed in the marketplace by many marketing professionals, resulting in declining and dying brands littering the shop shelves. *Larry Light* hits the nails on the head when he says, "*The MBA should stand for Murderer of Brand Assets*". Coming as it does from the Chief Marketing Officer of *McDonald's*, one could understand the severity of the problem we face today.

The *Strategic Brand Management* course has been designed to address this oversight and help prepare future marketing practitioners to this ever-important function. At the outset, the course examines the broad topic of brand equity and brand management. The focus will be on exploring and understanding the importance of brands, what brands mean to consumers, and how they should be managed by studying the major facets of a brand.

Course Objectives

1. Facilitate understanding of key issues in planning/evaluating brand strategies
2. Offer appropriate theories, models and tools to make better branding decisions.
3. Provide a forum for students to apply these principles.

Particular emphasis is placed on understanding psychological principles at the customer level to improve managerial decision-making with respect to brands. The course also attempts to make these concepts relevant for any type of organization - public or private, large or small, goods or services, national or regional.



Course Organization and Administration

This course is designed to improve student's marketing skills and understanding of specific marketing topics, and how various aspects of marketing fit together -- all from a brand equity perspective. Accordingly, the course is organized around brand management decisions that must be made to design, develop, and drive brands. Each of the sessions examines specific marketing topics from the perspective of managing brands. These sessions combine lectures, live examples and case discussions. Background reading for this course is listed separately in another section of this note.

An essential ingredient of the course is the 'Brand Plan Project' that would serve as a practical indicator of the student's learning during the entire course. To work on the project, students will form brand management teams. The idea is to have students conduct an in-depth examination of a major brand of their choice within an identified industry. The goal of the project is to assess its sources of brand equity and suggest ways to improve and leverage that brand equity.

My Teaching Philosophy

My basic teaching philosophy for this course is to blend theory and practice of brand management in a supportive and stimulating classroom environment that promotes active learning.

I firmly believe in the importance of blending theory and practice in marketing management education. There is no reason for MBA marketing classes to just describe how marketing works in the real world. Rather, the purpose should be to provide you greater added value by giving you a deeper understanding of how to make marketing decisions. Thus, I feel my goal is to suggest why marketing programmes work in a certain way so that you can make better decisions. *In other words, how you should make marketing decisions!*

I have designed the course to provide you the opportunity to learn a great deal about strategic brand management. It is your choice as to what extent you wish to capitalize on that. It should be fairly obvious that what you get out of a course is largely determined by what you put into it. This is especially true in a project-based course such as *Strategic Brand Management*. This course represents a fair amount of work. If you put forth your best effort, I think it will be a rewarding experience. I certainly will do everything possible during the term to facilitate your learning and understanding of how to build and manage brands. If you reciprocate, I don't see how we can miss.

I think we can also have a lot of fun in the process!



Course Requirements and Evaluation

Adequate preparation, full participation and involvement are some basic requirements that I expect of you. Apart from the usual final exam, another key component of the course would be the 'Brand Plan Project'. Students will form brand management teams and analyze a high decibel industry segment viz., automobiles. Every team must pick a brand of their choice within this industry and study the category and their selected brand in-depth. The final presentation and report should profile the sources of brand equity and provides recommendations concerning how to build and manage equity for the brand chosen. After summarizing current and desired brand knowledge structures, you should outline creative and relevant directions for management of your chosen brand, providing justification where appropriate with course concepts. Your presentation should be a top-line summary of the key points. Emphasis in your presentation should be on thoughtful analysis as opposed to how things look, i.e., form should not come at the expense of content.

Grades are assigned according to how well I feel you have satisfied the course requirements. Final grades are based on my perceptions of your performance for the two key requirements, apart from the attendance as insisted by your institute, according to the following weights:

Attendance (to be administered by the institute)	-	10%
Final Exam	-	40%
Brand Plan Project	-	50%

Required and Supplementary Readings

Two books will help you immensely with the fundamentals of this course:

- *Building Strong Brands*, by David A. Aaker
- *Positioning: The Battle for your Mind*, by Al Ries and Jack Trout

All the main business magazines (*Business World*, *Business India*, *Business Today*, foreign business magazines like *Fortune*, *Business Week*, *Advertising Age*), as well as business dailies (*Economic Times*, *Business Line*, *Business Standard*, *Financial Express*) have articles dealing with branding issues.

Those interested in discussing Marketing ideas, issues and viewpoints are invited to visit my blog <http://marketingmaayaajalam.blogspot.com/>.



Class Schedule and Structure

Focus	Topics Covered / Recommended Reading
<i>Course Intro</i>	The course - requirements, team formation, grading systems etc.,
<i>About Brands / Brand Equity</i>	What are strong brands? Why is it hard to build strong brands? What is Brand Equity? Issues in managing Brand Equity <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Building Strong Brands</i> by David A. Aaker, Chapter 1
<i>Strategic Brand Analysis</i>	Strategic perspectives to view brand strategy Different phases of strategic brand analysis Dimensional elements of a strategic search <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Building Strong Brands</i> by David A. Aaker Chapter 6
<i>Brand Positioning</i>	What is Brand Positioning? Essentials of Brand Positioning <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Positioning: The Battle for your Mind</i> , by Al Ries and Jack Trout, Chapters 1,2,3,4, & 25
<i>Brand Identity System</i>	What is Brand Identity? Component of Brand Identity System What is a Value Proposition? <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Building Strong Brands</i> by David A. Aaker, Chapter 3
<i>Brand Personality / Values</i>	Why have a personality? How to create brand personality? Brand Identity as a sustainable advantage <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Building Strong Brands</i> by David A. Aaker Chapter 5
<i>Brand Communications</i>	Role for Communication; Essentials of Communication Principles of Great Advertising Review of TV commercials / Key Learnings
<i>Managing Brand Over Time</i>	Managing aging brands; Revitalizing the brand <u>Recommended Reading</u> <i>Managing Brand Equity</i> by David A. Aaker, Chapter 10
<i>Requirements for a Brand Manager</i>	Requirements for a successful brand manager The P&G diktats
<i>Project Presentation & Submission / Final Exam</i>	