Course Description

In this course, we will explore the role of marketing in the global market, approaches to building customer relationships, and tools to better understand customers and competitors. We will study how to make decisions regarding the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, and distribution).

Course Objectives

This course addresses the following Learning Goals of the School of Management:

1. Our students will be competent in their discipline. Emphases will be placed on improving your understanding of the real world environment and better preparing you for a career in business. You will be encouraged to apply your existing marketing knowledge to real world business situations and issues. You are exposed to situations where it is necessary to integrate the various components of marketing into a cohesive marketing strategy. Discipline competence will be measured in this course using exams, composition and presentation of an integrated marketing plan, in-class exercises, team case presentations, homework assignments and class participation.

2. Our students will be aware of the uses of technology in business. This course requires students to send and receive e-mail, access and navigate the Blackboard learning system, access and view streaming media, including web-based PowerPoint slides, conduct on-line research, and create Word, PowerPoint, and video project documents.

3. Our students will be effective communicators. This course requires all students to demonstrate their writing and speaking skills by composing and presenting a marketing plan using Word, PowerPoint, and videos. Students will also be graded on their oral case presentations and class participation.

4. Our students will have an interdisciplinary perspective. This course draws upon many other disciplines including economics, psychology, sociology, public policy and regulation, law, accounting, finance, information systems, management and statistics. Examinations will include other areas as appropriate.

5. Our students will be knowledgeable about global business and trade. The course content explores domestic and international marketing issues. The international portion is embedded in virtually every chapter and in many cases.

6. Our students will recognize the importance of ethical decisions. Ethical decision-making is examined in two dedicated class sessions (including one Harvard Business School case and one Darden Business School case), and with ethical issues and discussion throughout the course. The class project involves analysis and comparison of two real world companies’ socially responsible and ethical marketing practices.

7. Our students will be knowledgeable about the legal environment of business. The chapter “Understanding Markets, Market Demand, and the Marketing Environment” includes an overview presentation of the major regulatory and legislative initiatives that impact marketing practice. Lecture and case discussion questions will cover legal issues.

8. Our students will be knowledgeable about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams.
You will be part of a group working on a case presentation and the class project that require you to conduct research and make recommendations. The team work requires communication, cooperation, leadership, decision making and group consensus building. Peer evaluations will also be reviewed to adjust grades.

9. **Our students will understand the value of diversity and the importance of managing diversity in the context of business.**
   Part of the class project includes market and consumer analysis that underscores consumer differences based on age, geography, ethnicity, gender, income, and other demographic variables. You will likely interact in your team and class with a diverse range of students from various countries. Several lectures and case discussions / presentations will include contents about cultural diversity of consumers and managers.

10. **Our students will be critical thinkers.**
    You will develop a strategic approach to marketing that incorporates discovering opportunities and determining how the firm and its marketing respond to these opportunities. Examinations, case analysis, and the project require students to understand, apply and synthesize a variety of marketing issues, concepts, approaches and principles in a comprehensive, strategic approach. Key elements of the marketing plan project require an explanation and defense of recommended courses of action. You will also learn to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze financial numbers and facts in cases. Examinations will include business scenarios and analysis of cases.

**Assurance of Learning in MKTG471:**
Documenting the extent to which this course is responsible for adding to your competence in the discipline of marketing is a central issue for the School of Management. The overall measures used to determine the extent to which this course in accomplishing assurance of learning are two exams, composing and presenting an integrated marketing plan, in-class exercises, team case presentation, and class participation.

**Course Prerequisites**
C or higher in MKTG 301, MKTG 312, and MKTG 351; senior standing; degree status

**Required Course Materials**


Harvard Business School (HBS) Cases:
To purchase and access your HBS CoursePack, please visit [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu:443/cbmp/access/24390808](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu:443/cbmp/access/24390808) for instructions (you will need to register and then you can pay by credit card).

Course syllabus, readings and other class materials will be available through the class website. Go to [https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu](https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu), input your Mason email id and password in the login section, click on the Courses tab to get access to the website of this course.

**Method of Instruction and Class Participation**

The course objectives will be met through a combination of methods including lectures, readings, case analyses, hands-on marketing project, presentations, videos, and class discussions. Multifaceted problems are studied in cases about firms of various sizes. A case-oriented course requires a maximum of student participation. To make best of the class experience, it is necessary that each student be committed to the “4 Ps” of the student involvement in class:

1. **Preparation.** If the student does not thoroughly analyze the reading materials, the class discussion will mean little.
2. **Promptness.** Students who enter the classroom late disrupt the discussion and deprecate the decorum of the process. **Note** that being late frequently will negatively influence your participation and overall grade.
3. **Participation.** Each student’s learning is best facilitated by regular participation. You are strongly encouraged to share your industry knowledge and expertise during class discussions and group meetings. This will advance the class and group’s collective skills and knowledge.
4. **Professionalism.** Please turn off your cell phone and do not surf the net in class.
You will be evaluated continually on the quality and frequency of your class discussion contribution. Meaningful participation depends on the quality of your analysis of the case being studied, the soundness of your recommendations, and your ability to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively. Your points should be relevant to the discussion and should not be a mere attempt to get “air time”.

**Participation Evaluation Criteria:**

i). **Quality:** I will evaluate each student’s participation and give a grade after each class. The participation grades for each class could be:

- 2 points: insightful comments or speaking up multiple times during the class;
- 1 point: less discerning comments, or comments of clarification, or questions;
- 0 point: did not participate in class discussion.

ii). **Frequency also counts:** At the end of the semester, the total grade of participation will be determined by summing your participation grade of each class and ranking the sums by student. Final participation grades, ranging from 0 to 15, will then be assigned to students depending upon the array of summed scores for students.

**Note:**

- Participation credit is **NOT earned by attending class**, but by participating discussions in class.
- It is not possible to make up for lost participation credit by participating a lot at the end of the semester.
- If a student displays disruptive behavior in class, his/her participation grade will suffer.

**Case Learning**

I have prepared a note on case learning called *Learning Marketing by the Case Method*. This note includes topics on: how to analyze a case, how to avoid getting lost in the numbers, stages in the case learning process, benefits of case learning, packaging of case write-up, and evaluation criteria of case analysis. It is very important for you to **thoroughly study this note before we begin our case sessions**. This note is available on the Blackboard web site of this course (click on the tab “Course Content” to find the document).

**Exams**

For exams, you **are responsible for all materials in the text, lectures, cases, presentations and in-class discussions**. If there is a definition, concept or principle you do not understand, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification.

You will take two closed-book, closed notes exams in this course. Students must provide their own SCAN-TRON sheets that are used for testing.

Any use of electronic devices during testing times can be interpreted as a violation of the University Honor Code. These devices include cell phones, electronic translators, and similar devices. Any student using such devices during an exam or any form of cheating during exams will result in a grade of zero for the test and will be referred to the Honor Council.

Consistent with University policy, only **provable** (i.e., documented) absences due to personal illness or family emergency constitute acceptable bases for missing exams. Preplanned weddings, vacations and deep discount airfares are not acceptable absences. There are no make-up tests or adjustments to satisfy the convenience of students who are enrolled in this class. All students are graded with the same standard.

**Teams**

You are given the option of forming your own team or alternatively, assigned to one by me. You will get a team grade for each piece of the team work, which includes a case analysis oral presentation and a marketing project. Details of the team work are described in the following two sections. Note that at the end of the semester every student will submit a peer evaluation of his / her team members. I will use these evaluations to make adjustments (up to +/- 3 points) to each student’s final grade.
Team Case Analysis Presentations

Each team will be required to present their analysis of one assigned case. The suggested case analysis / discussion questions each team is responsible for are listed in the Topics and Assignment Schedule section of this syllabus. Note that while the discussion questions must be covered in your presentations, they are there only to help you think about the case and you should not assume that the discussion questions lay out the core problems, thus relieving you of the responsibility to define fundamental issues / problems and identify a list of areas of analysis. You are also encouraged to comment on other issues you feel that may contribute to our understanding.

When you are presenting a case, assume that you are a consulting group asked by the Board of Directors of the firm in the case to analyze their situation and give an overview of the manner in which you would solve their problems. Each team is responsible for presenting their case analysis and providing answers to assigned questions within 30 minutes. Questions from the “Board of Directors”, i.e., your classmates and me, may come up while you are presenting, so be prepared to clarify or defend your points within your presentation. I will take the remaining class time to make additional comments, to explore further on some specific issues as well as to summarize the discussion and generalize the lessons we learned from the case.

For details on how to analyze a case, please refer to the section of “Analyze a Case” in my note Learning Marketing by the Case Method (posted on Blackboard). The following are a few simple guidelines for analyzing a case. Note that by providing answers to assigned questions, you are performing in-depth analysis and offering recommendations.

1. Defining Problem(s): Very briefly describe the firm’s situation in the case. Identify the central problems / issues. Be sure to focus on the fundamental problems / issues – not symptoms, nor less important matters. Do not just reiterate case facts.

2. Collecting information and performing in-depth analysis: Provide a set of carefully considered arguments that support the recommendations you will later propose. Perform any type of analysis you like on facts provided in the case in developing your justifications. The bottom line is that you must be logical, convincing, and thorough.

Recommendations: What should the firm do? Based on your analysis, provide a detailed description of the firm’s actions necessary to deal with the identified problems and opportunities. Be specific enough that the firm in the case could pick up your recommendations and act on them.

Team Presentation Evaluation Criteria

1. Substance of presentation (50%)  
   (i) How well are questions analyzed and answered? The following are the major criteria used in evaluating the substance of each presentation.

   • How well and usefully does the group define the fundamental problem(s)? How well does the group demonstrate an understanding of the strategic issues? How well does the group understand the implications of the defined problems? Does the group identify the critical problem(s) or spend too much time on more minor issues?
   • Does the group use important facts to draw relevant conclusions? The group is not expected to simply summarize the case facts and they will NOT get any credit for it.
   • If quantitative analysis is performed, is it well constructed and computed? Does it seek to answer useful questions?
   • Do recommendations follow from conclusions to solve the fundamental problems you selected? Are recommendations well buttressed with supporting data, lines of reasoning and arguments that recognize the pros and cons of taking the recommended course of action?
   • Does the group outline an implementable plan of action after making recommendations?
   • Are the case presentation slides written clearly, concisely and persuasively? Are assumptions clearly explained?
   • The group is expected to offer relevant updates about the company in the case.
(ii) Team members should organize all slides in order and have one member submit the presenting materials to me via email. No materials other than the slides need to be submitted. (0.5 point)

(iii) Your finalized presentation slides are expected to be submitted on time. Please use Microsoft PPT, not Prezi.com, for creating slides. (0.5 point)

2. Persuasiveness: Good presenters do not simply read from the slides or from papers at hand. Imagine you are presenting to senior managers, or potential investors, customers, suppliers and etc. Eye contact is important. (10%)

3. Effective use of visual aid and structured organization of information: Are slides organized in a logical manner with headings and subheadings? Correct in grammar, spelling and punctuation? Are exhibits easy for the audience to determine your calculations and the source of the data? Are words on slides clear for the class to read? Are online videos (if you choose to show one or two) relevant to the case? (10%)

4. Application: Study the relevant chapter(s) and apply what you learn to the case analysis. Presenters should explain clearly what marketing knowledge learned in class they have applied to the case. (10%)

5. Ability to answer questions and think on feet (10%)

6. Interaction with the class: motivating and encouraging class participation: Try your best to engage your class in discussion by asking various questions or through other creative ways. Feedback is important to managers. You want your audience to be interested in your case and your recommendations. (10%)

Note:
- All members of a team should contribute equally and participate in the presentation.
- Within your presentation you may use any information which would have probably been available to consultants at about the time the events discussed in the case took place.
- I expect you to dress professionally on the days of your presentation.

Team Project

Project purpose: This project is designed to enhance your understanding of (i) the elements of the marketing mix, how they fit together, the marketing differences between companies within a single industry, and the performance impact of these differences; (ii) the marketing planning process.

Project description: Pick an industry (based on your interest and/or information availability). Within this industry, choose two companies such that: (i) a company which is doing well, and (ii) a company which is not doing as well as the first company.

Your selection of two companies needs to be approved by me, although you will be given considerable freedom to follow your own interests. Submit your choices of the two companies to me via email or in class by 2/19/2014. Explain why you choose them. Since the project will require a significant amount of time and effort, it is important that you select companies in which you are interested.

Your analysis should include (at a minimum):

1. Brief background information of the industry.
2. Brief history of each company.
3. How do their marketing differences lead to their performance difference? Completely analyze and compare these two companies with regard to their marketing strategy and practices. In particular, you should only focus on the analysis of marketing issues (e.g., company, customer, competitor, product, pricing, promotions, distribution, international marketing strategy) which you feel are important in explaining the performance difference between the two companies. Non-marketing reasons should be briefly mentioned.
4. If these two companies practice socially responsible & ethical marketing, analyze the link between these practices and company performance.
5. Perform a SWOT analysis for the weaker company.
6. Based on your analysis of items 3, 4 & 5, suggest actions and strategies which you feel would enable the weaker company to improve its market position. In formulating the marketing plan for the weaker firm, you need to determine long run (5 years) quantifiable (and realistic) marketing objectives such as sales, profit, or market share objectives based on your marketing forecasts. Feel free to include additional marketing objectives if you think they are appropriate for the firm. You don’t need to cover all the previously mentioned objectives if no data is available. Clearly outline your assumptions and thought process.

7. Extra credit: You get up to 2 bonus points for creating a 30-second commercial to advertise for the weaker company. The clip should include your team in action with the company and assure the class knows the actions your team recommends. Another 0.5 point will be awarded to the team whose clip is voted the best among all teams. I reserve the right not to show any video clip with inappropriate contents for a public classroom.

What to submit: You are expected to submit a clear, concise, and persuasive report. This assignment must be professionally done, typed double-spaced in 12-pt. font with 1 inch margins and should not exceed 12 pages of text, with up to 3 additional pages of supporting materials / appendices (e.g., financial / income statements, graphics). Include a cover page with every team member’s name and email address. Also include citations / websites in a reference section at the end of your report. The page limit does not include the cover page, table of contents, reference, and appendices.

When to submit: The project report should be submitted to me both electronically (via Blackboard) and in hard-copy paper by the beginning of class on 4/30/2014. No late submission is acceptable.

Team Project Written Report Evaluation Criteria:

- Marketing research and marketing plan formulation:
  - How well does the group collect and use important facts / data to justify their recommendations?
  - How well does the group report their marketing research findings?
  - Are research findings well buttressed with supporting data, lines of reasoning and arguments?
  - Are the recommended improvements logical, creative, and implementable?

- The write-up. Is the team project report:
  - Written clearly, concisely and persuasively?
  - Organized in a logical manner with headings and subheadings?
  - Correct in grammar, spelling and punctuation?
  - Are exhibits clearly organized and easy for the reader to determine your calculations and the source of the data? Also, are assumptions clearly explained?
  - Following the specified report format & page limit?

Team Project Presentations: At the end of the semester each team will have about 15 minutes (including Q&A) to present the outcomes of the project, including but not limited to: the marketing research you conducted and findings you obtained, the marketing plan you formulated and recommendations you made. You are encouraged to apply what you learned in this or other course(s) to this practical marketing project. Every member of your team needs to present. I will grade the project presentations by the same criteria used to evaluate team case presentations. The class will be encouraged to critique your recommendations. Submit your project presentation slides (and commercial if you choose to do the extra credit work) to me via Blackboard by 5 pm on 4/29/2014. No late submission is acceptable.

Course Requirements and Grading

Active participation in class discussions 15%
Team case analysis presentation 15%
Team marketing strategy project 30%
  (Written report 20%, oral presentation 10%)
Exam I 20%
Exam II 20%

Final Course Grading Policy

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
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For more information regarding grading policies and class attendance, see [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu)

**Missing Class**

You are expected to attend class regularly, with the understanding that occasionally an absence will be unavoidable. Please check the presentation dates of your team (listed in the Team Case Analysis Presentations section). If there is a time conflict, you should talk to other teams and find out if (i) your team could switch with one of them or (ii) you yourself could join one of them. Inform me well ahead of time if there is such a change. If neither change is possible, then your team will present without you and your grade will reflect that lack of performance.

**Academic Integrity**

GMU is an Honor Code university. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification. In this course you will be expected to adhere to the Honor Code Guidelines of George Mason University. More information pertaining to the Honor Code and Committee can be found at [http://oai.gmu.edu](http://oai.gmu.edu)

**GMU Email Accounts:** Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See [http://masonlive.gmu.edu](http://masonlive.gmu.edu) for more information.

**Office of Disability Services ([http://ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)):** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**George Mason University Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics (CDE):** The diversity of our student body can be an asset to classroom conversations and student learning. For CDE issues, please refer to [http://integrity.gmu.edu/](http://integrity.gmu.edu/)

**Other Useful Campus Resources:**

- Writing Center: [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- University Libraries “Ask a Librarian” [http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html](http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html)
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)

**University Policies**

The University Catalog, [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu), is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs. Other policies are available at [http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu). All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

**Note:** I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus content when necessary.

**Topics and Assignment Schedule**

1) **Jan. 22 W**  
   **Course Introduction and Case Method**  
   **Read:**  
   i) Course syllabus  
   ii) *Learning Marketing by the Case Method* (available at the Blackboard course site)
2) Jan. 27 M  Basic Marketing Arithmetic  
**Read:** Note on Low-tech Marketing Math (This Harvard Business School Note is in your CoursePack at [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu:443/cbmp/access/24390808](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu:443/cbmp/access/24390808)).

3) Jan. 29 W  Overview of Marketing, Strategic Planning (1)  
**Read:** Chapter 1, Chapter 2

Team Formation

4) Feb. 3 M  Overview of Marketing, Strategic Planning (2)  
**Read:** i) Chapter 3  

**Discussion questions:**
1. Should WAI pay its sales force on a commission basis?  
2. In what way are sales commissions incompatible with RAE?  
3. So what if a commission-based system is not in keeping with RAE? Should WAI managers be all that concerned about RAE?  
4. How much does RAE have to do with WAI’s success? Could WAI have done even better without it? Are other factors more important? Could WAI have succeeded by following industry norms?  
5. What aspects of RAE are important? How do these translate into superior performance?  
6. Take yourself back to WAI’s beginnings. Would you have predicted the company’s success?  
7. WAI managers say their approach to business is quite different from conventional thinking. Do you agree? Where do you see the differences?  
8. In the case, the Wetherill approach is called a “formula for success” (page 6). Do you agree? Which of these two belief sets is most pragmatic – RAE or conventional thinking?  
9. How is WAI able to keep RAE alive in face of strongly opposed cultural forces? How is RAE institutionalized and embedded in the organization: in structure, strategy, systems, and staffing? What aspects of the WAI environment make it hospitable to RAE?  
10. How easy will it be to maintain RAE into the future? What challenges lie ahead?  
11. How would you advise WAI managers to meet these challenges?  
12. Is WAI’s approach to management transferable to other companies and industries? Why do WAI employees who have worked in large, publicly held corporations find those environments so inhospitable to “right action”?  
13. What’s your final view on compensation changes at WAI? How many of you would favor the commission proposal?  

5) Feb. 5 W  **Read:** Case 2: Marketing and Ethics

6) Feb. 10 M  Consumers and Customer Relationship Management  
**Read:** Chapter 4, Chapter 5

7) Feb. 12 W  **Read:** Case 3: Starbucks

**Discussion questions:**
1. What factors accounted for the extraordinary success of Starbucks in the early 1990s? What was so compelling about the Starbucks value proposition? What brand image did Starbucks develop during this period?  
2. Why have Starbucks’ customer satisfaction scores declined? Has the company’s service declined, or is it simply measuring satisfaction the wrong way?  
3. How does the Starbucks of 2002 differ from the Starbucks of 1992?  
4. Describe the ideal Starbucks customer from a profitability standpoint. What would it take to ensure that this customer is highly satisfied? How valuable is a highly satisfied customer to Starbucks?  
5. Should Starbucks make the $40 million investment in labor in the stores? What’s the goal
of this investment? Is it possible for a mega-brand to deliver customer intimacy?

8) Feb. 17 M  Business Buyers and Strategic Alliances  
**Read:** Chapter 6

9) Feb. 19 W  **Company choices for class project due**  
**Read:** Case 4: Shanghai General Motors: The rise of a late-comer  
**Discussion questions:**
1. Why was GM so determined to enter into partnership with SAIC in 1997, a time when the automobile industry was experiencing overcapacity, plummeting demand and dropping car sales?  
2. Examine the joint venture relationship between GM and SAIC. What is the agenda of GM and SAIC respectively?  
3. The partnership between GM and SAIC can be considered a learning alliance. Discuss the balance of power between the two parties.  
4. Discuss the potential conflicts that can arise in the GM-SAIC joint venture. Do you think the GM-SAIC partnership will sustain? What are the factors for sustainable joint ventures?  
5. Perform a SWOT analysis of GM in 2004, a year that it has achieved strong growth in market share and profitability. What are the success factors that contribute to GM’s rapid growth? What are the threats and opportunities faced by SGM in the competitive automobile market?

10) Feb. 24 M  **Target Marketing and Branding**  
**Read:** Chapter 7, Chapter 8

11) Feb. 26 W  **Read:** Case 5: Lenovo: Building a Global Brand  
**Discussion Questions:**
1. Why did IBM want to sell its PC business? Why did IBM sell to Lenovo?  
2. What explains Lenovo’s success prior to the acquisition?  
3. What challenges did Lenovo face after the acquisition?  
4. How should Lenovo handle the brand management challenges associated with the acquisition?  
5. In trying to become a global brand, does Lenovo have a problem coming from China?

12) Mar. 3 M  **Positioning and Competition**  
**Read:** Chapter 9

13) Mar. 5 W  **Exam I (Chapter 1 to Chapter 8)**

Mar. 10-16  **Spring Break**

14) Mar. 17 M  **Read:** Case 6: BMWFilms  
**Discussion Questions:**
1. Was the BMWFilms idea a good one? How successful has the campaign been?  
2. What was the motivation behind the idea? Who was the target market for the BMWFilms campaign?  
3. Describe the typical North American BMW customer. How does BMW’s U.S. customer base compare to that of its competitors?  
4. How healthy is the BMW brand in North America, relative to previous years? What (if any) are the current weaknesses in the BMW brand? What do you make of BMW’s growth strategy?  
5. What should McDowell do? Which option should he pick?
15) Mar. 19 W
Product
Read: Chapter 10

16) Mar. 24 M
Read: Case 7: Apple’s iPhone

Discussion Questions:
1. Describe the mobile telecommunications industry in 2008. What are the main drivers of revenue for the different players?
2. What is your opinion about Apple entering this industry?
3. Do you think it is a good idea for the carriers to share part of their revenue with a handset manufacturer? Why or why not?
4. How do you think the iPhone will work in Europe? Do you think contracts like the one between Apple and O2, described in the case, will be made by other companies such as Nokia and Sony-Ericsson with other mobile carriers?
5. What do you think about Apple’s new product strategy? Why have they been successful in their new product introductions in the recent years?

17) Mar. 26 W
Service
Read: Chapter 11

18) Mar. 31 M
Read Case 8: Four Seasons

Discussion questions:
1. What distinguished the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts chain in the marketplace? What is the service concept (value as perceived by the target customer)?
2. How does Four Seasons deliver service consistently at 50 properties in 22 different countries?
3. How do Four Seasons’ managers think about what should be centralized and what should be decentralized?
4. How does Four Seasons use technology? If Four Seasons had a “technology strategy,” what would it be? Do you agree with it?
5. What role do you see for the Four Seasons’ Internet site? Should it be used to lower costs or enhance revenues? How important is it to Four Seasons’ financial objectives?

19) Apr. 2 W
Price
Read: Chapter 12

20) Apr. 7 M
Read: Case 9: Heinz Ketchup: Pricing the Product Line

Discussion questions:
1. How profitable are the current items in the product line for both Heinz and for retailers? Consider the profitability of both regular and promotional prices on a dollar and percentage basis.
2. Why do manufacturers offer periodic trade deals to retailers, money that is sometimes not passed through to the end consumer?
3. What are the consumption-adjusted margins, both for Heinz and for retailers, of the items currently offered? Consider both regular and promotional prices. (Consumption-adjusted margins are dollar margins that reflect the fact that different package sizes of the same product may influence the rate at which customers consume the product. A natural question that arises from this phenomenon is how product managers should adjust their understanding of product profitability to reflect this possibility. Here is one simple way: Suppose a manufacturer makes $0.20 on a 10-oz. can of soup and $0.40 on a 20-oz. can of soup. In either case, the manufacturer makes $0.02 per ounce. But in this case, the larger seize causes consumers to increase their consumption of soup by 30%, so the consumption-adjusted margins per ounce of the 20-oz. size can be calculated as ($0.40x1.3) ÷ 20 = $0.026, where the term in parentheses adjusts the dollar margin up to
reflect the consumption expansion, and then that adjusted margin is divided by the number of ounces in the package size. This per-ounce margin is now directly comparable to the per-ounce margin of the 10-oz. size: $0.02. In this case, Heinz is making more money on the larger package size.)

4. How did the consideration of this consumption expansion inform your pricing and promotional plan? (A natural thing to do is to consider what we would need to do in terms of trade allowance to make customer purchases of larger sizes make sense for retailers and make sense for Heinz. Let’s consider the 46-oz. size. What level of trade allowance would be best given an analysis of the margins and consumption-adjusted margins for Heinz as well as for retailers?)

5. Are there other sizes we should consider promoting?
6. Are there items we should consider adding or removing from the current ketchup product line?
7. Beyond price promotions, how would you promote these new larger sizes to retailers and to consumers?

21) Apr. 9 W
Place / Distribution
Read: Chapter 13, Chapter 14

22) Apr. 14 M
Read: Case 10: Zara: Fast Fashion
Discussion questions:
1. With which of the international competitors listed in the case is it most interesting to compare Inditex’s financial results? Why? What do comparisons indicate about Inditex’s relative operating economics? Its relative capital efficiency?
2. How specifically do the distinctive features of Zara’s business model affect its operating advantage? Specifically, compare Zara with an average retailer with similar posted prices. In order to express all advantages / disadvantages on a common basis, you may find it convenient to assume that on average, retail selling prices are about twice as high as manufacturers’ selling prices.
3. Lay out the linkages among Zara’s choices about how to compete, particularly ones connected to its quick-response capability, and the ways in which they create competitive advantage. What does the exercise suggest about such capabilities as bases for competitive advantage?
4. Why might Zara “fail”? How sustainable would you calibrate its competitive advantage as being relative to the kinds of advantages typically pursued by other apparel retailers?
5. How well does Zara’s advantage travel globally?
6. What do you think of Zara’s past international strategy? Evaluate, in particular, its past strategy for (product) market selection, its mode of entry, and its standardization of its marketing approach.
7. What is the best way to grow the Zara chain? How, specifically, do you see prospects in the Italian market? And more broadly, what do you think about the strategy of focusing on Europe versus making a major commitment to a second region?
8. What other strategic recommendations would you make to Inditex CEO Jose Maria Castellano?

23) Apr. 16 W
Promotion
Read: Chapter 15, Chapter 16

24) Apr. 21 M
Read Case 11: Google Advertising
Discussion questions:
1. Did it make sense for Google to begin experimenting with new advertising formats – such as video advertisements, banner advertisements, and so on – given the success of its current text-only model?
2. Did it make sense for Google to begin moving into new advertising channels, such as print, radio, and television?
3. Was it possible to reconcile these new advertising formats and channels with Google’s business philosophy? If so, how?
4. What other steps, if any, should Google be taking to protect and grow its core, online, text-based advertising business, anchored by its existing AdWords and AdSense programs?

25) Apr. 23 W Team project review, wrap up
26) Apr. 28 M Exam II (Chapter 9 to Chapter 16)
27) Apr. 30 W Presentation slides (and commercial if you choose to do the extra credit work) due via Blackboard by 5pm on 4/29/2014 for all teams
Team project report due in paper and via Blackboard by the beginning of class on 4/30/2014 for all teams
Team project presentations (Teams 1 – 4)
28) May 5 M Team project presentations (Teams 5 – 7)
Peer evaluation of team work due (submit on paper to me. Please do NOT submit via email.)