

THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT
MARK 3520
Competitive Positioning
Fall 2018-19
Course Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

How does the market perceive your offering? How are you different from your competitors? Are you able to deliver value to your target markets? As the market situation dramatically changes across time, one has to understand how such dynamics influence buyers' preferences and competitive response, and should be able to present an appropriate value proposition in order to remain competitive.

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- analyze evolving market issues arising from external environmental factors, market behavior, and competitor actions
- apply relevant analytical tools for a coherent analysis of the competitive market space
- construct a persuasive value proposition for a company's offering
- formulate proactive and reactive strategic options for effective marketing management that will help create a sustainable competitive advantage

This course is of a blended learning format. It utilizes a mix of online and face-to-face components to maximize students' learning.

- The Online Component provides students with the fundamental knowledge through an online self-study mode.
- The Face-to-Face Component utilizes the contact time to develop students higher order thinking.

TEXTBOOK AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

There is no prescribed textbook in this course. However, supplementary readings and cases will be assigned on occasion. The relevant materials will be available on a two-hour loan basis at the Department of Marketing.

Students will go through a direct-competitive marketing simulation (MARKSTRAT) and will thus need to read and consult the *Markstrat for Windows* Participant Manual (downloadable through the MARKSTRAT website).

CLASS SCHEDULE

The schedule for the face-to-face classroom session is as follows:

Wednesday 9:00- 10:20 a.m. @ LSK 1001

*(except on the weeks of 03 September and 29 October, when the face-to-face classroom sessions will take place on **Monday**)*

In addition to the Wednesday classroom session, students are required to watch the online video materials and perform the required online coursework / exercises/ quizzes.

Tutorial sessions have been scheduled for **Mondays 6:00- 6:50 p.m** at **LSK 1007**. We will generally NOT meet during tutorials, but we will use these times for consultation, team interaction for MARKSTRAT decision making (as respective teams would require), and for extra/make-up sessions that we might need. You will be duly advised of any session that would be scheduled for any of the tutorial times.

COURSEWORK AND ASSESSMENT

<i>Coursework</i>	<i>Weighting (%)</i>	<i>Individual/Team</i>
Term Test 1	20	Individual
Term Test 2	20	Individual
Learning Exercises -- include in-class and on-line exercises and quizzes	18	Individual/ Team
MARKSTRAT Performance (Scores benchmarked against the team's final standing in terms of Stock Price Index)	20	Team (subject to iPeer assessment)
Final Report on MARKSTRAT	20	Team (subject to iPeer assessment)
Research Experiment (part of the Department of Marketing Subject Pool)	2	Individual
TOTAL	100%	

All team activities will be peer-assessed to reflect individual contributions to the group effort.

MARKSTRAT for Windows

Students, working in teams, will participate in a simulation specifically designed for teaching strategic marketing management concepts. The simulation provides a good setting for planning, control, feedback, and adaptation of marketing activities, and incorporates important strategic marketing issues.

There will be two independent industries in each class. Four to five firms (teams) will compete against each other within an industry.

Decision Making

Each firm will submit a collective strategic marketing decision on designated dates. Decisions should be entered on the MARKSTRAT website (decision interface) not later than the specified time on the designated date. Check the timetable at the end of this syllabus for the detailed schedule.

Results for the period can be accessed through the MARKSTRAT website within two hours of the decision submission deadline, except in Period 8 where final results will be announced in-class on **28 November**. Students will have access only to their own company's reports, and they need to authenticate their access by entering their respective passwords.

It is important that decision submissions are made on a timely basis as the professor will generally process the decisions soon after the deadline expires. Thus, late submissions are not acceptable.

Assessment

Students will be assessed based on their team's simulation performance, and final report.

Market Performance

Teams will be awarded grades based on their performance ranking (SPI) in their respective industries.

Final Report

At the end of the simulation, each team will submit an 8-page (max) written report that discusses

- the team's short-term and long-term objectives and strategies
- the team's overall performance analysis up to Period 7
- the team's long-range strategic plans as it hands over the firm over to a new management team (Period 8 onwards).

The team's final written report has to be uploaded on CANVAS not later than 12:00 noon on **20 November** (Tuesday).

Each team will also present its performance review and future plans before the class on **21 and 28 November**. The team's Powerpoint presentation files should be uploaded on CANVAS not later than 12:00 noon on **20 November**.

Learning Exercises

This coursework component includes graded in-class exercises, online submissions of exercises (related to either MARKSTRAT or the theoretical discussions or both), and quizzes, both online and in-class.

In-class exercises will typically require students to work in groups and answer questions based on given scenarios in a case or in their respective MARKSTRAT situations.

PEER ASSESSMENT

To ensure equal participation in and contribution to team-based activities, a peer assessment system will be in place. Each student is required to evaluate his/ her team members' performance/contribution to the team via the *iPeer* system. The student will also conduct self-evaluation, although the self-evaluation score will not contribute towards the calculation of the student's average evaluation score.

In addition to the numerically-scaled assessment, the student should input his/ her qualitative evaluation/ comments, especially in cases where his/ her assessment of a teammate's contribution is low.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Attendance during team meetings/ activities
- Contribution of useful ideas
- Quality of work done
- Quantity/ volume of work done
- Overall contribution

Each student is required to participate in this exercise for two events:

- MARKSTRAT decision-making
- MARKSTRAT Final Report preparation

The iPeer events will open at 9:00 a.m. on **15 November** and will close at 5:00 p.m. on **20 November**. A student who fails to submit his/her peer assessment on time will automatically earn a score of zero ("0") in that particular coursework component.

Individual peer assessment scores will be released on CANVAS by 5:00 p.m. on **23 November**. Students have until 5:00 p.m. on **28 November** to consult with the professor in case there are questions about his/ her peer assessment score. No queries or challenges will be entertained after 5:00 p.m., 28 November.

TERM TESTS

Two term tests will be administered within the semester. The tests will be held during regular class hours on

10 October
14 November

The test format will be a combination of Multiple Choice and short-answer/ discussion questions or problems related to MARKSTRAT and/ or a given mini-case.

RESEARCH EXPERIMENT

Students enrolled in this class are expected to earn 2 research credits (worth 2% of the grade). This can be done through participation in 2 *marketing experiments* (of 1 hour each) OR by completing 2 *research assignments*.

Marketing *experiments* will be scheduled throughout the semester and students can sign up for these experiments. Instructions on how to sign up will be given to you once the add/drop period is over. You will receive an email giving you the instruction. Instructions will also be posted on your course website. (It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the procedures so you are notified of experiments when they are posted). Note that all research experiments begin on time and if you are late, you will miss your chance. If you sign up and then fail to show up (and this occurs several times), you might be blocked from further participation.

If you choose to do research *assignments*, you can pick them up from the Marketing Department Office (pick-up schedule to be announced). These assignments can be turned in on the last day of class to the MARKETING MAIN OFFICE. Please do not give it to me (your instructor) since they are evaluated by the department.

Note that the department requires that students earn 2 research credits for each marketing elective that they are enrolled in. Given that a few of you are enrolled in multiple marketing electives, the department has placed a cap on the number of research credits (experiments/assignments) you have to do. The maximum that each student does is 4 experiments/assignments. Thus, if you are enrolled in three marketing classes, you do NOT have to do 6 experiments or 6 assignments.

CLASS TIMETABLE (TENTATIVE)

Week	Date	IC or OL	Topic	In-class Exercises, HW	MARKSTRAT	Others
Week 01	03 Sept	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to the course • Motivation for Competitive Positioning 			
	05 Sept	Online	1.1 Sources of Positional Benefits 1.2 Going for the Win: Marketing Performance Metrics 1.3 Developing a Sustainable Competitive Advantage 1.4 Value Analysis: The Fundamental Value Equation 1.5 Types of Positional Advantage			
Week 02	10 Sept	Online	2.1 The Marketing Environment: 5Cs Analysis 2.2 Porter's Five Forces Framework 2.3 SWOT Analysis as a Prioritization Tool 2.4 Market Measurement and Forecasting 2.5 The Value of Information in Competitive Positioning	Online Submission (case): In a Bind: Peak Sealing Technologies' Product Line Extension Dilemma <i>Due 10 Sept</i>		
	12 Sept	In-class	Introduction to MARKSTRAT			
Week 03	17 Sept	Online	3.1 Why We should Understand Customer Behavior 3.2 The Customer Decision-making Process 3.3 Needs Analysis 3.4 Consumer Judgment and Decision Making 3.5 Managing the Customer Experience 3.6 MARKSTRAT Briefing for Decision 1			
	19 Sept	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP) • MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 1 Decision-making 		Decision 1 due 22 Sept (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 04	24 Sept	Online	4.1 The Value and Goals of Competitor Analysis 4.2 Defining the Competitive Arena 4.3 Identifying Competitors 4.4 Analyzing Competition 4.5 Components of Competitor Analysis 4.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 2 Decision – Perceptual Mapping	Online Submission: MACP Target Marketing exercise for each firm <i>Due on 24 Sept</i>		
	26 Sept	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 1 Results • MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 2 		Decision 2 due 29 Sept (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	

Week 05	01 Oct	Online HOLIDAY	<p>5.1 Value Proposition and its Role in Competitive Positioning</p> <p>5.2 The Major Components of a Value Proposition</p> <p>5.3 Developing Value Proposition and Positioning Statements</p> <p>5.4 Strategic Implications of Value Proposition and Positioning Statement</p> <p>5.5 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 3 Decision- Marketing- RD Interface</p>			
	03 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 2 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 3 	In-class exercise on Perceptual Mapping	Decision 3 due 6 Oct (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 06	08 Oct	Online	<p>6.1 Product Life Cycle (PLC)</p> <p>6.2 Marketing Mix Strategies Across the PLC</p> <p>6.3 Product Portfolio Management</p> <p>6.4 BCG Growth-share Matrix</p> <p>6.5 Brand Development</p> <p>6.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 4 Decision- Utilizing Approved R&D Projects (New Brands or Brand Modification?)</p>			
	10 Oct	In-class	Term Test 1		Decision 4 due 13 Oct (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 07	15 Oct	Online	<p>7.1 Price as A Positioning Tool</p> <p>7.2 Break-even Analysis</p> <p>7.3 Industry Pricing and Price Elasticity of Demand</p> <p>7.4 Value Pricing for Differentiation</p> <p>7.5 Price Adjustment Strategies and Transactional Pricing</p> <p>7.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 5 Decision</p>	<p>Online Submission: Portfolio Analysis of Each Team</p> <p><i>Due on 15 Oct</i></p>		
	17 Oct	HOLIDAY			Decision 5 due 20 Oct (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 08	22 Oct	Online	<p>8.1 Differentiation Through Distribution</p> <p>8.2 The Concept of Service Outputs</p> <p>8.3 Managing Service Output Demand and Service Output Supply</p> <p>8.4 Developing the Channel Structure</p> <p>8.5 Channel Coordination and Conflict</p> <p>8.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 6 Decision</p>			
	24 Oct	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 5 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 6 Decision-making Price Elasticity Analysis for Effective Positioning 	In-class exercise on Price Elasticity	Decision 6 due 27 Oct (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	

Week 09	29 Oct	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 6 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 7 Decision-making Managing Channel Gaps 			<i>Please note the switch between in-class and online sessions for this week</i>
	31 Oct	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9.1 Integrated Marketing Communication's (IMC) Role in Positioning 9.2 Objectives of IMC 9.3 Promotional Tools for Positioning 9.4 Steps in Developing an IMC Program 9.5 Formulating the Advertising Strategy 9.6 Measuring Performance of Promotional Strategies 9.7 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 7 Decision 		Decision 7 due 03 Nov (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 10	05 Nov	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10.1 Porter's Generic Strategy: Differentiation 10.2 Porter's Generic Strategy: Cost Leadership 10.3 Market Niche Strategy 10.4 Miles and Snow Strategic Typology: Pioneers and Followers 10.5 Identifying Core Competency: Value Disciplines for Market Leaders 10.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 8 Decision 	Online Submission: MARKSTRAT Promotion Across PLC <i>Due on 05 Nov</i>		
	07 Nov	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 7 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 8 Decision-making Attack and Counter-attack Strategies 		Decision 8 due 10 Nov (Saturday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 11	12 Nov	Online	Best practice examples of Positioning Strategies 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11.1 Break-away Positioning- Marketing Success Through Understanding Consumer Behavior 11.2 Pioneering Strategy- Using Product as a Source of Positional Advantage 11.3 Follower Strategy 11.4 Late Entrants 11.5 Hardball: Killer Strategies for Defeating Competition 			
	14 Nov	In-class	Term Test 2			iPeer starts on 15 Nov (9:00 AM)

Week 12	19 Nov	Online	Positioning Mistakes 12.1 Underestimating Competitors 12.2 New Product Failures 12.3 Price Wars 12.4 Recovering from Channel Misfit 12.5 Stuck in the Middle			20 November (12:00 n) • MARKSTRAT Final Written Report uploaded on CANVAS • MARKSTRAT ppt files uploaded on CANVAS 20 November (5:00 p.m.)- Closing date of two events on iPeer
	21 Nov	In-class	Report Presentation			23 November (5:00 p.m.)- Individual peer assessment scores released on CANVAS.
Week 13	26 Nov	Online	13.1 When Pioneering Is Not an Advantage 13.2 Curveball: Strategies to Fool Competition 13.3 Defensive Marketing 13.4 Is There Life After Death? Rejuvenation Strategies 13.5 Most Common Marketing Mistakes			
	28 Nov	In-class	Report Presentation Course Summary and Conclusion (Course Learning Points and Take-away)			28 November 2018 (5:00 p.m.)- cut-off for any queries regarding iPeer scores