

**MAR 3503: Customer Behavior  
Fall 2001  
Group Term Project Instructions**

College of Business Administration  
University of Central Florida

### **Project Overview**

The purpose of the group project is to expose you to the real world business environment where skills such as dividing the workload, accepting responsibilities, coordinating individual efforts, communicating effectively, effective resolution of conflict, and written and oral presentations are immensely valuable. In addition, the group project will provide you with an opportunity to integrate and apply the material learned in this class in the development of real-world marketing strategy. Your task is to research a specific product category of your choice, choose a brand, reposition it to meet the needs of a new target segment, and develop a complete marketing plan for the repositioned brand.

As a team, you will choose both the industry or category as well as the specific product within which to focus. As part of your research on buyer behavior in this category, it is expected that you will collect and summarize some primary data (i.e., needs, wants, attitudes, intentions, behavior, knowledge structures, demographics, psychographics, etc.) from 40 – 50 people in your new target market using a questionnaire.

The assignment consists of preparing a written report and making a formal presentation in class. As you may be aware, leaving all the work to the last couple of weeks of the semester is tempting but ultimately counterproductive. Consequently, in addition to the final report and presentation, there is an intermediate requirement; interim report (due Oct. 10) Since the purpose of this requirement is to help you make steady progress on the term project, you will not be graded on them.

### **Timeline for Group Project**

#### ***GROUP FORMATION***

You will work on this project in groups of 4 to 6 people. Like group projects assigned by your future employers, group projects in school can sometimes be a frustrating experience. It is often difficult to pick convenient times for everyone to meet and group members sometimes feel that the division of labor is not equitable. As frustrating as this may be, it is important for each of you to learn how to manage group work.

All problems arising within the group related to relative contributions of the group members are to be handled internally by the group. This is an essential part of the group project experience. You will, however, have an opportunity to evaluate your group members at the end of the semester based on the quality and quantity of the contributions. Your grade can go down based on these evaluations. A group evaluation form is attached at the end.

#### ***INTERIM REPORT***

***DUE DATE: OCT. 10***

About three weeks after you have selected into groups you will turn in a one-page memo describing the industry you have chosen to focus on and the approach you have decided to take. Try to pick an industry that your group finds interesting since you are going to be working on it all semester. The report should be no longer than one single-spaced typewritten page with at least 10-point fonts and 1-inch margins.

**FINAL PROJECT REPORT****DUE DATE: NOV. 19**

The written report must be a professional and polished document, no longer than **fifteen** double-spaced, typed pages. Be sure to cite all references used throughout the paper. This reference section will not count against the page limit. Any charts and tables can be included as appendices and do not count against the page limit. List your sources of information, including articles, interviews, etc. Do not forget to cite them where appropriate in the body of the paper. All language and ideas not your own must be properly footnoted, either at the bottom of the page or at the end of the paper. Please provide the questionnaire as an appendix and summarize all of your findings in that appendix (even if you do not use them in the body of the paper.) Cite the relevant results of your data collection where appropriate in the paper.

Papers must include a cover page with the names of all group members. The first page of the report must be an executive summary that provides a brief overview of the report (i.e., product chosen and your market repositioning concept.) You are also expected to submit a peer-evaluation form on the last day of presentations (Nov. 26).

**FINAL PRESENTATION****NOV. 19, 21, & 26**

The final presentation must be professional, interesting, and must convey clearly both the strength of your repositioning concept and the soundness of your marketing plan. Plan on presenting no more than fifteen minutes of material, leaving roughly five minutes for classroom discussion. You are expected to attend and actively participate in all presentations.

The following outline has been provided as a sample structure for your group project. It is not meant to be all-inclusive and should be modified where necessary to fit the specific context within which your product is marketed. Your marketing plan should draw on as many topics covered in class as possible.

**Outline of Group Project****SECTION I: PROFILE OF THE MARKET**

- ✍ Describe the product category you are analyzing.
- ✍ Describe the market for your type of product in terms of size, historical trends, growth forecasts, etc.
- ✍ What customer segments exist in the market?
- ✍ Evaluate the bases(s) on which the market has been divided.
- ✍ Describe competitive positions within major market segments. Who are the leaders? Why? What are their positions?
- ✍ What recent market trends have affected the nature of competition in the market? Demographically? Psychographically?
- ✍✍ What marketing opportunities do such market shifts suggest?

**SECTION II: DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF YOUR TARGET SEGMENT**

- ✍ Based on your understanding of the market, what consumer segment do you feel will be especially attractive in the future? Describe that segment.
- ✍ Justify why you have selected that segment.

**SECTION III: ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

In this section you may want to structure your analysis using the problem solving model of decision making. More specifically, you may want to consider the following issues specific to your chosen target segment:

- ✍
  - ✍ How does the problem recognition occur for your product?
  - ✍ Describe the internal/external search process. What sources of information are used? When? For what purpose? How do these inputs affect consumers?
  - ✍ Describe the kind of knowledge and involvement consumers have about your product. What types of means-ends chains do they have? Is symbolic meaning important for your product?
  - ✍ Describe the interpretation processes consumers use in learning about your product. Is exposure accidental or intentional? Is comprehension shallow or deep? What type of inferences, if any, are common?
  - ✍ What is the consideration set for your product? Which brands are included?
  - ✍ What beliefs exist regarding important brands and product attributes? Why do these beliefs exist? What are the salient attributes?
  - ✍ Describe typical decision strategies used by consumers to make a choice in this product category. What model best predicts choice?
  - ✍ What are consumers' attitudes towards the brands in the category? Do strong subjective norms exist? What kind of brand loyalty, if any, exists for your good or service category? Why does it exist?
  - ✍ Is there role specification in the buying process? Are there other important reference group or cultural influences?
  - ✍ Where and when do consumers buy the product? How does the setting and timing affect consumer behavior?
  - ✍ Describe the salesperson/customer interaction process. Are sales promotion activities important? What role does the salesperson play?
  - ✍ What role does advertising and promotion play in the consumer's decision to buy the product?

**SECTION IV: PRODUCT POSITIONING STATEMENT**

- ✍ Develop a product positioning statement including the specific brand image to be used.
- ✍ Justify your positioning statement based on your analyses in section III.

**SECTION V: MARKETING MIX RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ✍ Select a product strategy for your brand. Discuss packaging, brand features, services, etc. Justify your strategy with what you have learned about consumer behavior in section III.
- ✍ Select a pricing strategy for your brand. Justify your decision based on your understanding of price sensitivity, cost, competition, and psychological pricing considerations.
- ✍ Outline and justify a general promotional program.
  - ✍ What is the relative importance of various promotional mix tools?
  - ✍ What are your advertising objectives?
  - ✍ Will you use a personal selling program? If so, why and how?
- ✍ Design and justify the appropriate channels of distribution.

**Points to Consider in The Project Write-up and Presentation**

The heart of the project is your creative analysis of the basic consumer behavior issues involved in the marketing problem you are addressing. Here is your opportunity to apply many of the concepts, models, and theories we will discuss during the semester (i.e., consumer knowledge and involvement, attention and comprehension processes, consumer decision making, social and cultural influences, etc.) What are your suggestions for using these concepts to help study, understand, and interpret the basic issues underlying the consumption of your product? Be sure to present your ideas in explicit and concrete terms; examples help here.

You should also offer creative suggestions for developing marketing mix strategies to accompany the segmentation and repositioning scheme that you have identified. These strategies involve aspects of product strategy, advertising, sales promotion, pricing, and distribution. Be as specific as you can. Be sure to justify your recommendations on the basis of all the information you have regarding how consumers behave towards your product (section III).

I will evaluate your choice of the key consumer behavior issues involved in the marketing problem, the creative way in which you analyze the consumer issues, how you select and use concepts from the class to help solve the segmentation and repositioning problem, the originality and soundness of the strategies that you recommend, and how well these follow from your consumer behavior analysis.

***Some hints on effective report writing:***

- ? ? Make the report look nice and readable.
- ? ? Number the pages.

- ? ? Divide the report into sections with appropriate headings.
- ? ? Have a table of contents with page numbers.
- ? ? Do not give too much statistical information in the main body of the report. Have a separate appendix with tables of numbers that the reader can refer to.
- ? ? Do not include the SPSS or any statistical software output in the paper. You are supposed to create your own tables and charts by using the numbers from the output.
- ? ? Avoid using technical language unless needed. This is particularly important when writing the executive summary.
- ? ? Remember that your audience is relative novice in terms of research -- they are most interested in the findings and the implications those findings hold for their business.

***Some hints on effective oral presentation:***

- ? ? Aim for a 15-minute presentation.
- ? ? Use PowerPoint or transparencies (overheads) or handouts to summarize what you plan to say throughout the talk. A recommended strategy is to have "bullets" ("points") on the transparency, and to explain each point in more detail as you go along.
- ? ? Be prepared for questions from the audience.

***Suggested Outline of Presentation:***

- ? ? Background (on the industry/company/product -- as appropriate)
- ? ? Research purpose and information needs
- ? ? Survey methodology: sampling procedure, sample size, response rate, sample representativeness
- ? ? Results (main findings)
- ? ? Managerial recommendations

Plan on spending most of your time on the last two topics.

***Remember!***

You should plan for your presentation to take 15 minutes, with an additional 5 minutes for questions. Practice to make sure that you can complete the presentation in this time period. You will be allowed no more than 20 minutes total for your presentation.

Remember that this is a marketing class and that effective communication requires competent and interesting presentation techniques. Style counts in and of itself, but it also counts in how it helps you

communicate your ideas. Make your presentation style work for you. Be professional. In the past, the biggest problems I have seen in presentations such as these include:

- ? ? Ineffective use of visuals -- throughout the presentation, you should use some kind of visual to help the audience follow your logic/ideas. These visuals should not have too much writing on them and should be in a font size that people can see.
- ? ? Inadequate explanation of survey findings. You need to walk the audience through each result -- tell them what questions were used to obtain the data in the table, how the data were tabulated (is this a count or a mean? how were the percentages calculated?), and what the implication of the result is. Organize your discussion of the findings around the key research issues.
- ? ? Too much time spent discussing detailed information that could be better obtained by reading the report. For example, you do not have to describe each and every question in the questionnaire, nor do you have to describe the results of pretesting in great detail. You do not have to provide the  $t/z$  values for statistical tests, though you might mention whether or not a difference is significant. You do not have to describe the intricacies of SAS, SPSS, or of any other statistical package that you are planning on using.
- ? ? People reading their section of the presentation, rather than speaking naturally. You should develop an outline to follow -- don't read from the paper or from note cards!

### **Note**

Your primary job in this project is to demonstrate your understanding and ability to apply the concepts and frameworks of consumer behavior. Do not get so carried away with presenting facts about the industry, the firm, or the product that you fail to explicitly relate them to consumer behavior concepts.

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**Peer Evaluation Form**

PRODUCT: \_\_\_\_\_

You have 10 points for every member of your group. This means that if there are 4 people in your group you have 40 points.

Allocate the total number of points that you have among the group members according to their effort and contribution to the entire project. Remember, this covers the whole project and it can affect others' grades so take your time and think through everyone's involvement carefully. Grades can only get adjusted downward depending upon the degree of contribution of each member.

Print each person's name on one of the blank lines below. Be sure to include yourself on the first line. Then, allocate points for each member of the group.

Make any specific comments you wish to either to justify the points allocated to a group member or if you think it is relevant to their evaluation.

Number of people in the group: \_\_\_\_ X 10 = \_\_\_\_ Total points to allocate

Name	Points	Comments
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Total	_____	