

RSM2512
Branding
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TARGET AUDIENCE

The course is intended for second-year MBA students interested in branding issues, and should appeal to many students. Students interested in a career in marketing will find the material essential. Students interested in financial careers should feel at home with the idea that products become brands through marketing investments. Brands are financial assets that can be leveraged, bought, and sold, just like any other asset. Students interested in management consulting should appreciate that brand strategy is an important sub-practice at most strategy-oriented consulting firms. Students interested in legal careers will find the material on brand equity relevant to cases involving trademark infringement/deceptive advertising.

COURSE MISSION

- To develop an understanding of the strategic importance of brands in creating value for customers and firms.
- To appreciate the nature of the challenges in planning, executing, and controlling branding strategies.
- To develop a customer-based view of brand equity that explicitly addresses the role of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social, and cultural factors in creating brand equity.
- To explore the value of current theories and methods from psychology, sociology, and anthropology in understanding the impact of brands on customers.
- To gain familiarity with some of the tools and tactics that firms use to create, sustain, leverage, and defend brand equity.
- To refine analytical and decision making skills and the ability to express conclusions orally and in writing.

COURSE SCOPE

Brands are defined by a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. However, brands are *valuable* because those distinctive elements mean something to consumers. Sometimes they make a product more memorable; sometimes they carry rich and powerful associations; sometimes they evoke feelings and emotions; sometimes they perform important social functions; and, sometimes they carry significant cultural meaning. Consumers may even form relationships in which the brands help to define who they are and communicate this self-image to others. The varied meanings and functions of brands for consumers create enormous challenges and opportunities for marketers.

The value that brands can create for consumers also makes the valuable assets for organizations. Brands represent valuable assets that must be created, sustained, leveraged, and defended. Students will assume the role of senior marketing managers responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of branding strategies. This course will use case analysis, lectures, discussion, and a group project to reinforce successful decision making and communication skills for students who are interested in developing expertise in managing brands.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

There are two required course packages (one available from the bookstore and one to be purchased online).

COURSE FORMAT

12 regular sessions

EVALUATION AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Component	Due Date	Weight
Class Participation (individual)	Ongoing	15%
Brand Audit Proposal (group)	Week 5	10%
Written Case Analysis (individual)	Week 6	20%
Brand Audit Project Report (group)	Week 13	25%
Brand Audit Presentation (group)	Week 13	5%
Final Examination Case (individual)	TBA	25%