EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM

<u>**Capstone Business Game**</u>

Spring 2009

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

Strategic marketing planning has received a lot of attention in corporate America because of the dynamic changes in the business environment. Economic discontinuities, the increasing threat of foreign competition, and key changes in life styles and the demographics of American consumers have created opportunities and threats that must be evaluated in long term marketing plans

The five lecture components are designed to supplement the MARKSTRAT simulation exercise by discussing in some greater detail the key concepts of marketing strategy along with the notion of competitive dynamics. MARKSTRAT provides a very comprehensive perspective on running a business successfully by applying skills that may have been learned during various courses at UTD. Some important concepts that assist managers in strategic decision-making are positioning or perceptual maps, conjoint analysis, segmentation of markets, and understanding the competition. The recommended book and the accompanying software will train managers to effectively use these tools and interpret the outputs without going into too much detail about the underlying mathematics that drive the simulation models. Emphasis is on the correct application of the tools for strategic analysis.

Strategic planning is evaluated at both the corporate level (e.g. American Express) and the strategic business unit level (e.g. the company's travel-related services business unit). The interaction between the company and its business units in arriving at a marketing plan is described. Students will also learn tools for the evaluation of the company's mix of businesses.

The lecture presentations have been developed to address the strategic challenges posed by the new economy. These lectures will help managers of existing companies to clarify their own thinking about how to develop their business strategy. It will also shed light on challenges facing newer startup companies and entrepreneurs.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Book

1. "Markstrat Online - The Strategic Marketing Simulation" (Student handbook)

Articles and Cases

1. The Right Game, Harvard Business Review
2. CASE 1: ThoughtWorks (A) KEL113
3. CASE 2: The Fashion Channel HBS 2075
4. CASE 3: Rosewood Hotels & Resorts: Branding to increase Customer Profitability and Lifetime value HBS 2087

EVALUATION CRITERIA

MARKSTRAT results	30%
MARKSTRAT final Presentation	10%
Class participation	10%
Case Analysis	20%
1 Quiz	30%

1. MARKSTRAT results and final presentation

1. Performance and results of the firm in the simulation game: All firms start the game in an identical situation. Performance will be assessed in terms of the increase in profitability, the increase in market share, the success of new product launches, company stock price, etc.

2. Markstrat Final presentation (15 mins per group). Each group discusses its overall strategy in retrospect – the main 'take-aways' will be clearly presented.

2. Class participation

Participation in discussions of readings and lectures is essential. Much of the class time is devoted to these discussions, making it critical that readings be prepared in advance of class. Also very critical to the effective learning in this course is the participation of all group members in the MARKSTRAT Game, both in analysis and decision making.

As a result, class participation will be based on:

- a demonstration of an understanding of the readings
- level of 'constructive' participation in the MARKSTRAT group process.

3. Quiz

The Quiz is meant to test the understanding of the MARKSTRAT simulation game as well as all the significant concepts learnt in class. You will be required to make decisions and justify them as you would have done in MARKSTRAT.

Schedule of Sessions

Class	Date	TOPICS	DECISION ROUND
1	Jan 31 AM	General Overview of course Introduction to MARKSTRAT	Practice Decisions 1 & 2
		Pre-Read: MARKSTRAT manual thoroughly **-This is absolutely essential.**	
	Feb 7		**Practice decision 3**
2	Feb 14 AM	MARKSTRAT – Advanced Decision Making Lecture on Portfolio Analysis Lecture on Segmentation	**Game reset** **Decision 1**
		Pre-Read: MARKSTRAT manual thoroughly **CASE** 1: The Fashion Channel	
	Feb 28	**Decision 2 submission due**	**Decision 2**
3	Mar 13 PM	Positioning in MARKSTRAT Lecture on Conjoint analysis	**Decision 3**
		CASE 2: ThoughtWorks (A)	
	Mar 28		**Decision 4**
4	Apr 17 AM	Lecture on 'Coopetition' Discussion on the article "The Right Game"	**Decision 5**
		Pre-Read: "The Right Game" **CASE** 3: Rosewood Hotels & Resorts	
5	Apr 18 AM	MARKSTRAT Industry Results Overview MARKSTRAT Final group presentations	**Quiz**