

THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT
MARK 3520
Competitive Positioning
Fall 2017-18
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:

Thursday 9:00- 10:20 a.m.
Rm 4582 (Lift 27-28)

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

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%	
Passing Score	50%	

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 **23 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 **15 November** (Wednesday).

Each team will also present its performance review and future plans before the class on **16 and 23 November**. The team's Powerpoint presentation files should be uploaded on CANVAS not later than 12:00 noon on **15 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.

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 **13 November** and will close at 5:00 p.m. on **15 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 **01 December** 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., 01 December.

TERM TESTS

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

19 October
30 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

Week	Date	IC or OL	Topic	In-class Exercises, HW	MARKSTRAT	Others
Week 01	07 Sept	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro to the course Motivation for Competitive Positioning 			
		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	Online Submission: Short Case Exercise <i>Due 11 Sept</i>		
Week 02	12 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			
	14 Sept	In-class	Introduction to MARKSTRAT	Online (Group) Assignment: MARKSTRAT Initial Competitive Positioning Plan <i>Due on 19 Sept</i>		
Week 03	19 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	Online (Group) Submission: Segment Analysis on MARKSTRAT <i>Due on 24 Sept</i>		
	21 Sept	In-class	Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP)	In-class group exercise on Market Attractiveness Competitive Position (MACP) framework of identifying target market(s)	Decision 1 due 24 Sept (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 04	26 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: Competitor Analysis of each team <i>Due on 1 Oct</i>		
	28 Sept	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 1 Results Growth Opportunities for Superior Marketing Performance 	In-class exercise on Perceptual Mapping	Decision 2 due 01 Oct (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	

Week 05	03 Oct	Online	<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>			
	05 Oct	HOLIDAY	<p>Students must go to StratX website to access MARKSTRAT Period 2 Results</p> <p><i>Professor will upload Period 2 Summary Slides on CANVAS</i></p>		Decision 3 due 08 Oct (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 06	10 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>	Online Submission: Portfolio Analysis of Each Team <i>Due on 15 Oct (11:59pm)</i>		
	12 Oct	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 3 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Periods 4 and 5 Decision-making Price Elasticity Analysis for Effective Positioning 	In-class Exercise: Value Proposition and Positioning Statement in MARKSTRAT	Decision 4 due 15 Oct (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 07	17 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>			
	19 Oct	In-class	<p>Term Test 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debrief for Period 4 (Online) 		Decision 5 due 22 Oct (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 08	24 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>			
	26 Oct	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 5 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 6 Decision-making Distribution Innovations 	In-class exercise on Price Elasticity	Decision 6 due 29 Oct (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	

Week 09	31 Oct	Online	<p>9.1 Integrated Marketing Communication's (IMC) Role in Positioning</p> <p>9.2 Objectives of IMC</p> <p>9.3 Promotional Tools for Positioning</p> <p>9.4 Steps in Developing an IMC Program</p> <p>9.5 Formulating the Advertising Strategy</p> <p>9.6 Measuring Performance of Promotional Strategies</p> <p>9.7 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 7 Decision</p>			
	02 Nov	In-class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Debriefing for Period 6 Results MARKSTRAT Instructions for Period 7 Decision-making Promotion Across Product Life Cycle 	In-class exercise: MARKSTRAT Promotion Across PLC	Decision 7 due 05 Nov (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	
Week 10	07 Nov	Online	<p>10.1 Porter's Generic Strategy: Differentiation</p> <p>10.2 Porter's Generic Strategy: Cost Leadership</p> <p>10.3 Market Niching Strategy</p> <p>10.4 Miles and Snow Strategic Typologies: Pioneers and Followers</p> <p>10.5 Identifying Core Competency: Value Disciplines for Market Leaders</p> <p>10.6 MARKSTRAT Instructions/ Hints for Period 8 Decision</p>	Online Submission: Interim MARKSTRAT Performance Evaluation of Each Team Due on 10 Nov		
	09 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 12 Nov (Sunday) 11:59 p.m.	iPeer starts on 13 Nov (9:00 AM)
Week 11	14 Nov	Online	<p>Best practice examples of Positioning Strategies 1</p> <p>11.1 Break-away Positioning- Marketing Success Through Understanding Consumer Behavior</p> <p>11.2 Pioneering Strategy- Using Product as a Source of Positional Advantage</p> <p>11.3 Follower Strategy</p> <p>11.4 Late Entrants</p> <p>11.5 Hardball: Killer Strategies for Defeating Competition</p>			<p>15 November (12:00 n)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MARKSTRAT Final Written Report submitted through CANVAS MARKSTRAT ppt presentation files uploaded on CANVAS <p>15 November (5:00 p.m.)- Closing date of two events on iPeer</p>
	16 Nov	7:00-9:00 p.m.*	Report Presentation			Venue: LSK-G003 Room is available from 6:30 p.m. for group preparation.

* Class will not meet during regular class schedule in the morning. Instead, we will have an extended session in the evening (7:00 – 9:00 p.m.) to accommodate 7 team-presenters. The remaining 3 teams will present on 23 November, during regular class hours.

Week 12	21 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			
	23 Nov	In-class	Report Presentation Course Summary and Conclusion (Course Learning Points and Take-away)			23 November (5:00 p.m.)- Individual peer assessment scores released on CANVAS.
Week 13	28 Nov	Online	13.1 When is Pioneering 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			
	30 Nov	In-class	Term Test 2			