

# The University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business

MARK 70300: Brand Strategy Spring 2018 T&TH 8:00-9:50 AM MCOB 159

**Instructor:** Jon Hall, Product & Brand Marketing Director at Whirlpool Corporation

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- **Availability:** In person by appt before class or by phone in the evenings Monday - Friday (8:00 – 10:00 pm)
- **Teaching Assistant:** NA

## Required Books

- Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles that Drive Brand Success by David Aaker, 2014, paperback
- Different: Breaking Away from the Competitive Herd by Youngme Moon, 2010, paperback

## My Motivation For Teaching

I did not really know what Brand Management was until I was interviewing for a job at Kraft Foods. Now, with years of real world brand management experiences, I view this professional function as a General Manager with the addition of a highly sought after specialized skill - building brand strategies and activating them across products and services to deliver predictable and consumer inspired business results.

While I have learned how to successfully build brands and lead from a training perspective, business school perspective, and from actually doing it on iconic brands worth billions of dollars with multi-million dollar budgets, I have not experienced a book, class or single company training that fully prepared me for success in this super rewarding and professional field. I am pulling my experiences (school, training, and practice) together to prepare every single student to hit the ground running if they choose a career path in the inspiring field of Brand Management. This career field is a blast, and I want students to see that early in the career decision making process.

## Course Objectives

All types of entities have come to the realization that one of the most valuable assets they have is the brand associated with their offerings. However, business executives realize the creation and capture of value through branding is complex. This course will take a look at how brands are created, nurtured and extended. My premise is that brands are an essential, often overlooked component of any company's success. We will explore the why's, what's and how's of brand management.

This course was built on my experiences managing brands in the Consumer Product Goods and Durables Industry. I have found many more similarities than differences across these two industries. The brand strategy frameworks, concepts, and tools that I will teach are drawn from professional books, corporate skills training, and my own spin on what I have seen work and not work. The creation of a strong, sustainable brand requires strategic thought leadership, creativity, analytic skills, courage and most importantly, leadership. By the end of the class, you will:

- Gain an appreciation for the value of a strong brand and its role in achieving sustained business success
- Know how to activate fundamental brand strategy theories, tools and principles to real-life brand challenges
- Understand how to build brand purpose, brand ideas, and translate powerful insights into action
- Develop familiarity with the important issues in planning and evaluating brand strategies
- Hear from top practitioners in the field of brand management to gain an appreciation for how companies invest in their brands, and what they expect from them in return
- Have an opportunity to form a point of view on challenges facing brand managers today, including: brand measurement, making a case for brand investment, social media, brand purpose, brand portfolio management, brand innovation and sustaining brand relevance.

## Academic Code

I expect you to uphold and comply with the University's code of conduct and demonstrate the highest ethical standards.

## Learning Methods

Class sessions will be a mix of lecture, facilitated discussions, essays, an exam, student presentations, and guest lectures. Two class sessions are set aside for student presentations. Reading, lectures and individual assignments are focused on information that you will be expected to know in your first brand management interview and beyond. Consequently, student preparation through *careful* reading will be critical, and there will be an exam that includes assigned text material.

## Marketed Well or Not So Well

The first 15 minutes of classes 4, 6, 7, 10 we will discuss a pre-assigned brand's current strategy and determine as a class if the brand management team is doing a good job or a bad job. Please see below for the 4 brands in order:

### ***Audi / Disney / Dr Pepper / USAA***

I expect each of you to research the brands' industry, competitive set, history, purpose, current marketing mix and integrated marketing communications and come to a clear conclusion of whether or not the brand is marketed well and why or why not. I will randomly ask a student to open up the discussion around the topics below:

1. Introduce the industry, competitive set and the underlying challenges the brand is facing
2. Determine what the brand's purpose is and where it's focused on driving growth
3. Give examples of how the brand strategy is impacting in market product and expected product development
4. Give examples how the brand is activating its strategy to achieve its marketing goals
5. Explain if you expect the brand strategy to translate to positive results for the business

## Grade Components

There are six components to student grades. The final exam is a group presentation.

Assignment 1: Brand Audit – Brand Overview	10%
Assignment 2: Brand Audit – Brand Leadership	10%
Assignment 3: Brand Audit – Brand Activation	10%
Group Assignment: Brand Strategy – Struggling Brand	30% (6 total teams)
In Class Exam on Brand Strategy Concepts	20%
Attendance, Class Participation and Contribution (subjective)	20%

Assignments 1 – 3 are to conduct a brand audit for a brand in transition (e.g., struggling, emerging, merger, repositioning). Each student will work on a unique brand, with brands adopted on a "first come, first serve" basis. Once you have chosen your brand, send me an email with your brand, along with the transition it faces. I will confirm that the brand is acceptable and available. Brands can come from Durables, Consumer Packaged Goods, or Service industries.

For each assignment, please observe the word limit and include it at the end of the text. Provide a coherent, well organized analysis that is not simply a set of notes pieced together. Redraft and proofread your report. Be concise. Spend time on insights that you have made from your analysis. Please note you may include as many Exhibits / Appendices as necessary to support your assertions, and these are not included in the word count. Submit written assignments by hard copy only the day the assignment is due. I will not accept digital submissions.

We are using two texts. The strategic content from the text should be used in your analysis. I will be able to tell who is who is reading and comprehending the text based on the critical thinking and depth of your analysis. *The only authorized fonts are Calibri or Arial size 12. Please use single spacing to fit within the page limits.*

**Assignment 1: Brand Overview** (1500 word limit; no more than 3 pages)

Provide a snapshot of the current industry and company conditions in which your brand operates. It should include but not be limited to:

Industry:

- o Industry size and overall sales trends (ideally 3 years)
- o Market share trends for major competitors (even if only directional)
- o Major trends affecting the category (economic, cultural, technological, regulatory, competitive)
- o Identify the consumer journey for which consumers purchase products or services

Company:

- o The type of transition faced by the brand
- o Brand Value Assessment
- o SWOT Analysis (your brand and competition)
- o Current brand position – be sure to explain how brand elements are being used to fortify this positioning
- o Clearly identify the brand strategy opportunity you see for this brand to drive key stakeholder value, as well as, the marketing objective your new strategy will attempt to accomplish

**Assignment 2: Brand Leadership** (1500 word limit; no more than 3 pages)

Provide a snapshot of the direction that you recommend taking the brand into the future to deliver on the objectives. It should include but not be limited to:

Distinct Brand Identity:

- o Identify the Strategic Value Consumer & consumer insight that you want to build the future of the brand on
- o Identify cultural tensions that you see as an opportunity to breakthrough
- o Identify how you plan to shift the frame of reference or disrupt the category
- o Identify why this makes sense for this brand based on its SWOT and history

Brand Idea and Purpose:

- o Identify the conviction that you want to pull through the brand
- o What is the idea that you want to brief into your creative agency
- o How does the idea link to the long term story or brand purpose

Product Leadership:

- o Explain a product development concept that you think ties to the brand idea and purpose
- o Develop positioning statements based on product differentiation

**Assignment 3: Brand Activation** (1500 word limit; no more than 3 pages)

Provide a snapshot of an ideal Integrated Marketing Communication activation plan that will build awareness and drive brand preference and purchase intent for your objectives. It should include but not be limited to:

IMC Activation:

- o Consider messaging insights on the consumer decision journey
- o Consider contextual media placements – traditional, social, digital, non-traditional
- o Are you building the brand equity or the new product
- o Will you influence pricing or distribution differently

Measurement and Close:

- o How will you measure the success of your investment in product development and IMC activation
- o When and who will you share your progress or lack of progress with
- o When will you determine if your brand strategy was successful

**Group Assignment: Brand Strategy Development for a Struggling Brand** (20 minute presentation)

At the end of class 4, I will brief in the struggling brand that is in need of a new brand strategy to drive business growth. Please do everything you can to attend this class so you can hear me present the challenge in person.

Hands on practice applying strategic frameworks aimed at delivering winning brand strategies, as well as translating critical insights to product development and activation plans is crucial to understanding brand strategy concepts and challenges. Additionally, presenting an inspiring brand strategy recommendation to senior leadership and securing approval to move the brand towards a winning direction that drives key stakeholder value is a skill that requires ability to manage vision and purpose, strategic agility, strong presentation skills, leadership, courage, and teamwork. This presentation will prepare you for what's it's like to present to senior leaders no matter size organization you work in.

Each team member will receive the same grade on the project and is expected to contribute equally. In the rare case that a team member does not contribute equally, their individual grade for the project may be adjusted accordingly. In addition to the content of your project, a peer evaluation will be completed. Peer evaluations will be conducted during the last class.

**All presentations must be emailed to me by MIDNIGHT Monday April 30. This is so that all students have the same amount of time to work on the final project.**

**In Class Exam: Brand Strategy Concepts** (Multiple Choice Exam)

One in-class multiple choice exam will be used to assess comprehension of assigned reading and lecture concepts. The books are short. My suggestion for reading effectively is to consume each book in one sitting to get a good overview, then re-read the relevant chapters before each class. Remember to use the text to help your analysis on assignments 1-3 as well as your final group presentation.

**Attendance, Class Participation and Contribution**

I will take attendance and include it in evaluating participation. Please sign in to each class. You may miss 1 class session (for any reason) with no impact on your grade. Missing two (for any reason) will result in an automatic 5 pt decrease.

Use your nameplate if you want me to know your name and receive credit for participation. I expect you to be respectful of your peers and guest speakers. Use of laptops, tablets and phones during class is not permitted, unless you are taking notes on the class discussion or lecture.

The first 15 minutes of some classes we will review conduct a mini brand case study, which is a great opportunity to provide valuable insights to class discussion. It's important that you are conducting research on the pre-assigned brand, as well connecting the real world example with what you are learning in class and the readings.

You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions, not just the quantity. Though I don't like to, I will cold call if I have not heard from you in a while.

**Schedule of Class Topics, Assignments & Readings:**

					Assigned Reading	
Class	Day	Date	Lecture	Notes	Aker	Moon
<b>Brand Leadership</b>						
1	T	March 20	Overview – Brand Strategy		Part 1	
X	TH	March 22	No Class			
2	T	March 27	Brand Leadership in Action: The Power of Finding your Brand's Why		Part 2	
3	TH	March 29	Winning Brand Position			Part 1
4	T	April 3	Distinct Brand Identity <i>Brief In Struggling Brand Case Study: Jenn-Air</i>	<b>Assignment 1 Due</b>		
<b>Brand Inspired Product Leadership</b>						

5	TH	April 5	Brand Portfolio Strategy & Line Extensions			Part 2
6	T	April 10	Superior Product & Value		Part 3	
<b>Brand Activation</b>						
7	TH	April 12	Integrated Marketing Communications Part 1	<b>Assignment 2 Due</b>		Part 3
8	T	April 17	The Power of Brands Bill Beck Whirlpool Corp General Manager		Part 4	
9	TH	April 19	Integrated Marketing Communications Part 2 Mike Frease Executive Creative DigitasLBi		Part 5	
10	T	April 24	Brand Leadership Management Systems	<b>Assignment 3 Due</b>		
X	TH	April 26	No Class			
11	T	May 1	Jenn-Air Group Presentations (20 min each)	Groups 1- 3		
12	TH	May 3	Jenn-Air Group Presentations (20 min each)	Groups 4-6		
13	T	May 8	Teacher Jenn-Air Capstone Presentation Overview & Closing	<b>In Class Exam Peer Reviews</b>		

## TIPS...

### ***How can I best prepare for class?***

Note the schedule carefully and be sure to be current on all reading prior to each class. Expect to spend 2-3 hours reading the material and preparing *for each class* where reading is assigned. Familiarity and integration of course concepts with current events in marketing also encouraged. Many sites offer daily updates on current events in marketing via social feeds (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) or daily email. Here are my favorites:

- Adweek: [www.adweek.com](http://www.adweek.com)
- Adage: [www.adage.com](http://www.adage.com)

### ***What will the in class exam be like?***

It's necessary to ensure students are accountable for reading *critically* and owning course material. The in class exam will be in multiple choice format and cover all course readings and materials through that date. Your best strategy for studying for the exams is to keep up with the readings, and take good notes in class. The readings have been selected because they are easier to read than many branding texts. Many terms sound alike, yet there are precise meanings and you will be responsible for using the terms correctly. Challenge yourself as you read to think of examples in your own experience or in the news. This will help you to 'own' the material.

### ***Where can I find the texts?***

You may purchase the texts from the bookstore or online from Amazon.

### ***Why a team project?***

Brand strategy principles are not difficult to understand, but they can be difficult to apply. Hands on practice applying the frameworks is crucial to understanding their power and ability to organize what can seem like a chaotic mess of information into a coherent strategy. Working as a team will build your collaboration skills and also result in far better strategic thinking than you could accomplish on your own. I have never attempted a brand strategy alone. It takes debate and challenge to think through the options and arrive at a defensible conclusion.

### ***What if I have trouble working with my team?***

No team is perfect, and yours will encounter issues of leadership, accountability, coordination and unequal contribution. It will be up to you to solve these issues. You will not be graded on process, only results. My suggestion is to establish some ground rules early on and agree on consequences for not following the ground rules. If you ask me to intervene, I will do so. I am aware that ND MBA teams often have an aversion to appointing team leaders, but I strongly suggest that you do so.

***How do I reach you?***

I am only on campus for class. I am happy to meet in person on campus before class with an appointment. Just shoot me a note ahead of time so I can plan to arrive earlier than normal. I am also accessible by appointment to talk over the telephone, and I can be easily reached via email. The best times for me to talk over the phone are Monday – Friday 8:00 to 10:00 pm.

***How can I be successful in this class, I have no marketing background!***

Slow down and “see, hear, experience” the marketing that is happening all around you EVERY DAY. Read with a critical thought towards how to apply this to the real world. Be enthusiastic and have fun. Brand building is not easy, but it is super rewarding. Ask questions. Speak up. Don’t assume everyone else has the answer. Marketing is serious business, but it’s exciting to grow businesses by connecting with consumers?