

We live in a branded world. From the water we drink, to the politicians we vote for, everything is branded. In an over-communicated, hyper-connected, storified, gamified world, brands have expanded their footprint far beyond the niches of FMCG goods, consumer durables or sports gear. Branding is as important for culture and politics as it once was for market commodities. But what is it that makes brands and branding powerful? What explains the global diffusion of branding techniques? Or at an even more fundamental level, what is a brand? How do we go about building a brand? How do we go about managing a brand that already exists? What are the challenges that managers, marketing firms and consumers face when interacting with brands? How do different stakeholders created and maintain brands in dynamic environments? These are some of the questions that this course will attempt to answer.

In this course, we will examine multiple theoretical perspectives on 'brand' and will understand how each theoretical approach involves a different brand management toolkit. We will approach branding from multiple perspectives - from rational branding to emotional branding to cultural branding. To complement the theoretical foundations, we will discuss real life strategic challenges that brand and their managers face and learn from the success and failure of particular brand strategies. We will also understand how brands and brand management have evolved in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and what are the key ethical, environmental and socio-cultural implications of brand management's evolutionary trajectory. We will explore concepts such as unique selling proposition (USP), mindspace positioning, cultural brand strategy and performance metrics such as brand equity, brand love, share of voice.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- Apply appropriate branding theories and toolkits to solve practical case studies
- Critically evaluate different approaches to measure brand performance
- Align epistemological assumptions with appropriate approach
- Exhibit fluency with the building blocks of branding strategies

- Identify appropriate segmentation strategies on appropriate bases, define targets and relevant brand positioning techniques
- Understand the evolutionary trajectory of consumer brand management
- Analyse and critique branding strategies and come up with alternatives

We will attempt to simulate the life of a brand manager in a typical multinational organization, who is working with incomplete data, technological vanishing points, multi-method research reports, changing marketplace dynamics, intensifying competition and increased customer power.

### ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

I will assess student performance on the following measures:

- I. Attendance & Class Participation (15%)
- II. Group Presentations (Class Readings) (20%)
- III. Group-based Discussion on Presentations (15%)
- IV. Group presentation (Brand Strategy) (25%)
- V. Final Individual Paper (25%)

### STUDENT WORKLOAD

| ACTIVITY                                | Breakdown<br>(Hours) | Total<br>(Hours) |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| Classroom Hours + Time for Reflection   | 17,5 + 17,5          | 35               |
| Group Presentation (Class Readings)     |                      | 30               |
| 1. Personal Reading & Reflection        | 20                   |                  |
| 2. Group Discussion and Presentation    | 10                   |                  |
| Group Based Discussion on Presentations |                      | 25               |
| 1. Personal Reading and Reflection      | 20                   |                  |
| 2. Group Discussion and Presentation    | 5                    |                  |

|                                      |    |     |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----|
| Group Presentation (Brand Strategy)  |    | 35  |
| 1. Developing Personal Approach      | 20 |     |
| 2. Group Discussion and Presentation | 15 |     |
| Final Individual Paper               | 35 | 35  |
| TOTAL                                |    | 160 |

**PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE (Subject to change based on company schedules)**

| Session | Date                | Topic   | Visitors   |
|---------|---------------------|---|--|
| 1       | Monday, April 15    | Course Guidelines & Introduction  |  |
| 2       | Wednesday, April 17 | Lecture: Perspectives on Brand Management   |  |
| 3       | Wednesday, April 24 | Lecture + Student Presentations: Brand Equity & Brand Identity                                  |  |
| 4       | Monday, April 29    | Q&A + Interactions: Cultural perspective on Brand Creation and Management                       | Sakari Tamminen, Partner, Gemic Oy ( <a href="https://www.gemic.com/">https://www.gemic.com/</a> ) |
| 5       | Monday, May 6       | Lecture + Student Presentations: Creating and Managing Service Brands                           |  |
| 6       | Wednesday, May 8    | Case Discussion + Student Presentations: Brand Management in a Glocal World                     |  |
| 7       | Monday, May 13      | Case Discussion + Student Presentation: New Media & New Opportunities for Brand Management      |  |
| 8       | Wednesday, May 15   | Concluding Lecture: Pressures and Challenges of Managing Brands in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century |  |
| 9       | Monday, May 20      | Group Presentations (Brand Strategy)  |  |
| 10      | Wednesday, May 22   | Group Presentations (Brand Strategy)  |  |

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

I will post PDF files of assigned readings on mycourses at least a week in advance so students will have ample time to familiarize themselves with the literature.

## **GUIDELINES FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS (CLASS READINGS)**

Each group will be assigned two articles to present (PowerPoint) in class. Every group will get 15 minutes to present an article followed by 5 mins of Q&A. One person from each group will upload the presentation slides to Mycourses before coming to class. We will finalize the order of presentations during the introductory lecture. To keep it fair for all the groups, we will use a lottery system to schedule the presentations. The one pre-condition will be that no group has to present twice in the same week.

## **GUIDELINES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION (CLASS READINGS)**

Each group will be assigned two articles where they will be the main discussants on another group's presentation. The group will get 5 minutes to discuss the article and its presentation (NOTE: No slides needed). We will finalize the discussion schedule during the first class.

## **GUIDELINES FOR GROUP PRESENTATIONS (BRAND STRATEGY)**

This part of the course would involve coming up with a brand strategy for a real-world brand using the approaches discussed in the articles and course lectures. I am in advanced talks with two consumer-facing companies (a big Finnish multinational and an international financial products company) to open up their brand challenges for us in the course. Depending on the kind of brand challenge the companies share with us, we will come together as a class to agree on a particular presentation template for the final presentations.