

23E57000 Fashion Marketing

Guidelines for course deliverables and assignments

1. HARVARD CASES (25p)

Case studies give you a practical arena or context to apply what you have learned into a real-life situation. We will follow the Harvard Business School case study method, which is described as follows:

[The] case method is a profound educational innovation that presents the greatest challenges confronting leading companies, nonprofits, and government organizations—complete with the constraints and incomplete information found in real business issues—and places the student in the role of the decision maker. There are no simple solutions; yet through the dynamic process of exchanging perspectives, countering and defending points, and building on each other's ideas, students become adept at analyzing issues, exercising judgment, and making difficult decisions—the hallmarks of skillful leadership. [...]

In class—under the questioning and guidance of the professor—students probe underlying issues, compare different alternatives, and finally, suggest courses of action in light of the organization's objectives. As you watch a case study unfold in class, you'll see students doing 85 percent of the talking, as the professor steers the conversation by making occasional observations and asking questions

Preparation is key for a good study experience. For you to get the most out of the case session, you need to read through and reflect on the case material. It is highly encouraged to share ideas and reflections with your group-mates before class. Within the classroom, you will be given an opportunity to argue your position and get feedback on your thinking by listening to other participants' ideas. To repeat: preparation is key for a good case experience, as the instructor's job is to merely facilitate the discussion.

Harvard cases are written in a very specific way. While a lot of information is given, it is incomplete by design, and the participant is expected to fill the gaps. So rather than thinking of “what is the right answer?” (in real life, there rarely is one), you should assume the mindset of “what is a good argument or plan of action based on these given facts?” In most case discussions, multiple plans of action will emerge, and participants will be quite split at the end as to which plan is the best. The key learning point is to develop your own analytical tools to look at similar situations in your own daily business.

We will cover each case for 90 minutes of class time, depending on how much class discussion it is able to stimulate. You are expected to submit a written report of the case study. In class, you will be discussing the case bit by bit, with the goal of ultimately forming some sort of consensus opinion on what the case was about and what potential courses of action might work best. The instructor will also participate in the case unpacking in a facilitating role.

The course contains three Harvard cases, 12.5p each (written case analysis 7.5p and class discussion 5p). The written part is done in groups (4-5 students), but in class you are graded individually. The written case analysis will be submitted via MyCourses prior to the session in which it is meant to be discussed and unpacked. Given that each case will be discussed right after it has been returned, there will absolutely be no late returns!

Detailed evaluation rubric for cases will be available in MyCourses. Below you will find a description of each case study and its questions. After that, you will find detailed instructions for how to prepare the case.

1.1. Cases, Case Questions, and Deadlines

Case: Better World Fashion: Circular Economy and Competitive Advantage

Deadline for turning in the written report: **January 23rd at 13:00.**

Your written case report should provide adequate responses to the following questions:

1. How can a company develop a business model based on the circular economy concept? What factors should such a company consider in order to succeed in a highly competitive market?
2. What are BWF's competitive advantages? How did BWF achieve these competitive advantages in its production and marketing?
3. How did BWF position its product and target its market segments?
4. How did BWF use branding, promotion, and customer relationship management (CRM) strategies to communicate its products' with the customers? What other strategies in these regards would you suggest for BWF in order to establish a strong brand equity in varied international markets?
5. How did BWF aim to grow and expand? How can BWF overcome the upcoming challenges and become the leading fashion brand?

Case: Armarium: Luxury Fashion Brands for Rent

Deadline for turning in the written report: **February 6th at 13:00.**

Your written case report should provide adequate responses to the following questions:

1. If you were managing a luxury fashion brand, would you partner with Armarium? Why or why not?
2. How compelling is the Armarium value proposition to consumers? How well positioned is the brand versus Rent the Runway and its other competitors?
3. How does renting vs. owning a luxury fashion brand change the dynamics of a consumer's relationship with the brand?
4. Who should Armarium target? Why?
5. Which types of luxury brands and which types of products from the brands should Rose and Gregory pursue? Which should they avoid? Should they a.) buy past season's inventory at a significant discount, 2.) acquire items four to six weeks into the current season at a slight discount, or 3.) rent rather than buy floor samples from brands, which would allow Armarium to return items at the end of a pre-specified rental period? Why?

1.2. Preparing a Case Analysis

There are four distinct steps for reading through and analyzing a case.

1. **Thoroughly read through the case.** Be sure to take notes, highlight relevant facts (especially numbers) and try and identify what you think are the key problems. Highly encouraged to share ideas and viewpoints with other students!
2. **Focus your analysis.** There are usually two to five key problems. What are they? How do they relate to each other? Why do these problems exist? What is their impact? Who is responsible for them and/or has the ability to solve them?

3. **Identify possible solutions.** There is never only one potential solution to a Harvard case, you need to identify multiple potential avenues! Link back to course topics, ideas, and discussions. Do outside research. Rely on your own experience.
4. **Find and argue for what you think is the best solution.** Review the tradeoffs between solutions (pros and cons). Consider the feasibility of different solutions. Make your pick.

1.3. Writing the Case Analysis

Once you have agreed on what you are going to argue, it is time to write it all up into a report. The report should be a uniform narrative—it is not recommended to write the case in “case question – case answer” manner! Subheadings may prove helpful but are not absolutely necessary. However, good writing is; be clear, consistent, and show care for concepts and grammar. From a structural standpoint, the report should include the following:

1. **An introductory section or paragraph.** Here you identify the key problems of the study, a brief statement relating to your solution, and a few sentences relating to your analysis. The introduction is an overview of the entire report.
2. **Background section.** Set the scene for the reader. Inform them about the relevant background information, facts, and the most important issues. Here your goal is to convince the reader that you have understood the problems of the study and have done enough research (within the case, and possible “outside” of it through external sources).
3. **Outline the alternatives.** What possible courses of action are there? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Do they exclude one-another and why? Explain why you favor one (or more!) alternative over the others. Why are some possibly lucrative solutions not feasible? What data supports each course of action? What are the constraints and possible caveats for each possible solution?
4. **Give your proposed solution.** Make your choice and outline your plan of action in a sufficiently detailed manner. Continue elaborating why this course of action was chosen and support your choice with evidence. Link back to class concepts and ideas to support your argument the best you can and draw from outside evidence or personal experience to bolster your argument.
5. **Conclusion and recommendations.** Brief summary of what you have proposed. Here you can also “hedge your bets” and explain what kind of changes or investments need to be made to make sure your solution is viable. Outline future courses of action and key responsibilities. Close the report.
6. It is emphasized that a good case answer does not answer each question separately, but rather presents a unified, essay-like argument. Overall, we encourage you to not waste space by using too many subheadings. Offer your recommendation in concise form.
7. **Important!** Be sure to identify the authors of the case report for example in the header or footer of the document! Use 1.5 line spacing, 12-point Times New Roman, and 1” margins. The length of the report must not exceed 6 pages!

1.4. Preparing for Class Discussion

It is encouraged to bring a printout of your case solution into class, possibly with highlighted items that you can discuss in class. Be ready to discuss and defend your viewpoints of the case. The class discussion is about active participation and engagement. **Laptops and other digital devices are strictly forbidden for the case sessions!**

1.5. How and where to find the cases?

The links for purchasing and downloading the Harvard cases are found on MyCourses.

Important! All participating students must purchase and download their own version of the case files! There will be no sharing of downloaded files. Harvard monitors the download numbers and compare them to what the professors reports as the class size being. If there is a discrepancy between the class size and the number of downloads, the educator handling the course can be banned from Harvard's system. Given how much I rely on Harvard materials, I do not want to risk this. Harvard also sends a list of all the students who downloaded the files. **If your name is not on this list, your case will not be graded.**

2. GROUP ASSIGNMENT (35p)

The assignment...

- provides hands-on experience with crafting fashion marketing strategy
- enhances critical thinking to solve a marketing dilemma

“The Client”

Students will conduct the group assignment as a special consulting case for Vaatepuu, a Finnish fashion library launched in 2013. Vaatepuu wants to make fashion consumption more sustainable by offering consumers high quality and timeless designs without the burdens of ownership and especially disposal.

Vaatepuu wants to grow their business, both by attracting new and relevant brands and becoming more relevant for consumers. What should they do?

Assignment background

The assignment allows you to apply your understanding of fashion marketing, circular economy, and alternative business models in fashion. Apply the theoretical understanding from the lectures and readings and turn them into practice and for Vaatepuu.

Assignment themes

Your report must cover the following areas:

1) Overall Strategy and Business Model:

- a) How well does Vaatepuu’s business model exemplify circular economy ideals?
- b) What changes or future directions should the company consider?
- c) How could Vaatepuu become an industry leader for sustainable change?

2) Supply Chain Management:

- a) What are the benefits for brands that Vaatepuu offers?
- b) How should Vaatepuu attract relevant fashion brands?
- c) How should Vaatepuu organize its supply chain and cooperation with brands to support circularity?

3) Customer Experience Management

- a) What are the key service benefits for customers?
- b) How could the interaction between customers and Vaatepuu be improved?
- c) Is Vaatepuu targeting the right customers?
- d) How could Vaatepuu improve their marketing communications?

Data collection & preparation

The assignment essay should show a) your understanding of the relevant literature and b) your ability to turn the learnings into practice.

Lecture:

Participate in the lecture (13.1), when the founder of Vaatepuu, Soile-Maria Linnemäki will tell more about the fashion library service.

Readings and inspiration for the assignment:

- Adam, M., Strähle, J., & Freise, M. (2018). Dynamic capabilities of early-stage firms: Exploring the business of renting fashion. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 28(2), 49-67.
- Armstrong, C. M., Niinimäki, K., Kujala, S., Karell, E., & Lang, C. (2015). Sustainable product-service systems for clothing: exploring consumer perceptions of consumption alternatives in Finland. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 97, 30-39.
- Lewandowski, M. (2016). Designing the business models for circular economy—Towards the conceptual framework. *Sustainability*, 8(1), 43.
- Peronard, J. P., & Ballantyne, A. G. (2019). Broadening the understanding of the role of consumer services in the circular economy: Toward a conceptualization of value creation processes. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 239, 118010.
- Stål, H. I., & Jansson, J. (2017). Sustainable consumption and value propositions: Exploring product-service system practices among Swedish fashion firms. *Sustainable Development*, 25(6), 546-558.
- Zamani, B., Sandin, G., & Peters, G. M. (2017). Life cycle assessment of clothing libraries: can collaborative consumption reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion?. *Journal of cleaner production*, 162, 1368-1375.
- “The End of Ownership”, *McKinsey & Company Industry Report: The State of Fashion 2019*, (p. 39-44)

Research:

- 1) Be prepared to ask questions from the CEO and founder of Vaatepuu during the lecture on the 13th of January. Concentrate on learning what is Vaatepuu’s current strategy and business model, its supply chain, and its current customer experience (see above).
- 2) Use relevant secondary materials, such as Vaatepuu’s website and marketing communications to further decipher what the company is currently doing or planning to do
- 3) Visit one of the Vaatepuu locations to familiarize yourself with the service
- 4) Conduct primary research by, for example, interviewing, ethnography, netnography, or surveys to further understand consumer needs and wants—focus on both current and prospective customers!
- 5) Use findings from secondary literature either provided by the instructors or that you find on your own

Instructions

- **The assignment will be completed in groups of 4-5 students.**
 - The groups are in charge of allocating their workload in a balanced manner. If there are any problems, contact Linda.
- First submission is **the research plan: Monday 20th January by 1pm.**
 - Research plan should indicate that you have familiarized yourself with Vaatepuu service and their current challenges.
 - Submit also the ‘team contract’
- Second submission deadline is **the presentation: 11th February by 1pm.** The presenting groups and opponent groups will be informed in the evening of the same day. The presentation day is on 13.2.2020. Company representative will be present.
- **The final submission of the written work is 20th February by 1pm through MyCourses in pdf-format.**
- **Maximum length is 4000 words excluding appendices and references.**
 - Recommended to have visual examples in the text (as in a magazine), also possible to use appendices if many.
- **Evaluation: max score of the group assignment is 35 points, which represents 35% of the final grade.** (5p research plan; 5p presentation slides, 5p presentation/opponent tasks; 20p final report)

Evaluation

Maximum scores of the assignment: 35p

Breakdown:

Research plan 5 p
Presentation slides 5 p
Presentation / opponent tasks 5 p

Final report

Theory & Practice 10 p

Theme 1 (3 p)

Theme 2 (3 p)

Theme 3 (4 p)

Data collection and analysis 3 p

Evaluation together with company 5 p

e.g. innovativeness

relevance & fit for the company

possibility to execute

**Conclusions and coherence, structure of the essay,
usage of references** 2 p

(Detailed evaluation rubric will be available in MyCourses)

3. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT (25 p)

Choose a fashion brand and write **an academic essay that analytically explores the marketing strategy of fashion brand of your choice in the light of topics we have covered in the course** (lectures and readings). Tie your evaluation also to **current retail and market trends** that you believe have the biggest influence on the fashion company of your choice, explain how and why.

Note: The essay needs to reflect your learnings, and show you are able to critically apply the topics in practice. You must apply the theories and relevant course literature to structure your analysis and exploration. Use academic references and enrich and justify your analysis with visual material (if many, put them in the appendix).

Instructions

- To be completed **individually**.
- Maximum length of **4500 words** (+ possible appendix); Times New Roman 12pt, 1,5 spaced.
- The submission deadline for the final assignment is **1st March by midnight**.
- Please, submit the final assignment through MyCourses in pdf-format.
- Evaluation: max score of the individual essay is 25 points, which represents 25% of the final grade.

Evaluation

Total score of individual assignment: 25p

Breakdown:

Fashion brand analysis 15p
(e.g. business model, branding, marketing comms, retail..)

Retail & market trends exploration 5p

Conclusions and academic coherence, structure of the essay, usage of relevant academic references 5 p

(Detailed evaluation rubric will be available in MyCourses)

4. CLASS ACTIVITY (15 points)

Active participation throughout the course will bring you activity points. These deliverables may bring you activity points, but they are not compulsory.

The maximum of activity points is 15p. Sources of points:

- 1) Active participation during the lectures 7.5 points (NOTE: Harvard case lectures graded separately!)
- 2) Read the assigned papers, provide questions and comments through Perusall 7.5 points
- 3) *Extra*: Course feedback given after the course through the official form: 2p

Instructions for Perusall:

- a) Create an account on Perusall.com
- b) Join the course by inserting the course code: WEIJO-27KN7
- c) Complete the assignments before each class (check the deadlines!)

Your Perusall score depends on:

- Contributing thoughtful questions and comments to the class discussion, spread throughout the entire reading ([see some examples](#))
- Starting the reading early
- Breaking the reading into chunks (instead of trying to do it all at once)
- Reading all the way to the end of the assigned reading
- Posing thoughtful questions and comments that elicit responses from classmates
- Answering questions from others
- Upvoting thoughtful questions and helpful answers