Aston Business School
Birmingham

BMM642 STRATEGIC BRAND MANAGEMENT

Academic Year 2011/12

Number of Aston Credits:	15
Number of ECTS Credits:	7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Professor Leslie de Chernatony
Marketing Group, Aston Business School
Room 249, Extension 3434,
Email: l.dechernatony@aston.ac.uk
Availability: TBA
Or please contact the Marketing Group Administrator
Samantha Doidge, ABS, Room 236, Extension 3147

Pre-requisites for the Module:

Students taking the Strategic Brand Management elective must have a very good command of English. As brands are intangible assets, there is considerable emphasis upon precise use of English amongst managers and academics to ensure no confusion about the exact nature of the brand. This not being pedantic, rather it is to ensure, at the most basic, that fiduciary responsibility is diligently enacted around a well communicated platform. Without precise terminology the anthropomorphosis of the brand may be catastrophic.

The subtle use of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives is critical. Furthermore without embellishing potential brand concepts through suitable metaphors, hedonistic benefits may not be realised. For example, projecting a brand based on the metaphor of chivalrous knight would demand different resourcing than subservient vassal.

As a cluster of values which engender particular forms of behaviour, brands provoke considerable debate within organisations as managers seek to identify the most suitable values. While there may be notable concurrence about the interpretations of a brand's values, the team would be painfully aware of the disparate interpretations of, for example:

- determined as either obstinate, or resolute, or passionate, or fixated, or zealous, or results orientated

and

- optimistic as either sanguine, or hyped-up, or eager, or ardent, or inspiring or positive or ambitious

The subtle interpretations of these two examples of values would lead to quantum changes in the expected forms of behaviour of staff.

Likewise without a precise understanding of the terms used to describe a brand's positioning, disastrously different personality strategies could unceremoniously emerge through inappropriate logical linguistic linkages. For example, if a carbonated citric drink were to be positioned against an ubiquitously dominant brand as notably sharp, alternatively divergent personalities could emerge if sharp is interpreted as: street cred or wily or incisive or cutting or cunning. It is critical that students are able to appreciate the associative linguistic linkages radiating from positioning terminology (in this example notably sharp) and the interconnected implications (eg street cred or wily or incisive, etc).

Again due to the intangibility of brand it is important that onomatopoeic names are tested against brand benefits to find the most evocative name. Thus a skating boot brand named swish provokes a more desirable connotation than a possible alternative name of speed.

Logical interplay of terms and associative implications are crucial in brand management, demanding excellent linguistic competencies. Think of an NGO which has a brand vision of curtailing the degradation of natural resources and encouraging symbolic harmony between mankind and environments. Recognise the gender implications in this vision which could restrict the acceptance of this in certain cultures. Be sensitised to the severity of action implied by the term "curtail" (all encompassing or context determined?). Anticipate the intensity of stakeholder response implicit through the use of "degradation". Question the credibility of such a vision using the term "symbolic harmony". Consider whether "encouraging" is a defeatist term in this vision. Question whether the framing implied from these terms posit a short, medium or long term perspective.

This note has been produced to alert you to the criticality of linguistic excellence needed in strategic brand management. Without a very good command of the English language this elective is likely to be notably difficult.

Introduction:

The topic of brand marketing is of considerable interest to practitioners, consultants and academics. There are a variety of reasons for this, for example the inherent worth of this intangible asset, its value as a strategic device, as a basis for aligning staff and for engendering long term repeat buying behaviour. Brand managers used to place considerable emphasis on differentiating a unique offering through a welcomed promise that met the opportunities presented by market gaps. However, some managers now recognise the importance that brand promises are delivered by staff and as such firms are adopting a more balanced perspective, directing branding activity both inside and outside an organisation. This elective will adopt both an internal and external perspective on strategically building brands.

One of the challenges managing this intangible asset is that there are diverse views about the nature of brands and one theme of this course is enabling students to appreciate these interpretations along with their implications. The importance of added value will be addressed. Brand building involves long term investment, adopting a pan-company outlook, understanding core competencies, identifying and prioritising opportunities, engaging staff commitment and leveraging advantages from a unique organisational culture. As such this elective will adopt a strategic approach to building and sustaining brands, drawing on several disciplines.

The course will draw on my research, my activities with organisations and the publications of respected researchers and practitioners. It will use examples and publications, some of which are UK based and others which are international.

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

To enhance students' understanding of the nature of brands and the key principles required to strategically grow and sustain brands. By adopting an internal and external perspective students should have sufficient branding competencies to apply a methodical approach to developing brand strategies

Module Content:

Session	Lecture content	Readings *
1 9 Jan AM/ PM	The Role and Nature of Brands	LdCMW Chapter 1 LdC Chapters 1, 3
2 16 Jan AM	Characteristics of Powerful Brands Brand Differentiation	LdCMW Chapter 2
3 16 Jan AM/PM	Diverse Interpretations of Brands Added Value	LdCMW Chapters 9, 10, 11 LdC Chapter 2
4 16 Jan PM 23 Jan AM	Brand Planning Process Brand Vision and Importance of Values Values and Staff Commitment	LdCMW Chapter 4 LdC Chapters 3, 4 *Case: innocent drinks: values and value (708-041-1)*

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5 23 Jan AM/PM	Brand Visioning Organisational Culture Setting Objectives	*Case Study: FNB Metro: Waking up to change (404-047-1)* LdC Chapters 5, 6
6 30 Jan AM	Auditing the Brandsphere Brand Essence Atomic model	LdC Chapters 7, 8, 9
7 30 Jan PM	Brand Equity	LdC Chapter 10 LdCMW Chapter 12
8 30 Jan PM	Services Branding	LdCMW Chapter 6
9 5 Mar AM	Revision Issues Exam Preparation	
10	EXAM WEEK	

Corporate Connections:

The module will include various examples of organisations to which Professor de Chernatony has acted in a consultancy capacity.

International Dimensions:

Since the course features Professor de Chernatony's research, activities with organisations and the publications of respected researchers and practitioners, it will include international examples and refer to international publications.

Contribution of Research:

The module reflects Professor de Chernatony's own research, as well as that of respected researchers and practitioners.

Method of Teaching:

The elective will be taught in 9 blocks each of 3 hours. Over these 3 hour blocks there will be 9 sessions, some of which span both the morning and afternoon periods with the schedule:
Session 1: 9 Jan AM and PM
Session 2: 16 Jan AM
Session 3: 16 Jan AM and PM
Session 4: 16 Jan PM and 23 Jan AM
Session 5: 23 Jan AM and PM
Session 6: 30 Jan AM
Session 7: 30 Jan PM
Session 8: 30 Jan PM
Session 9: 5 Mar AM

Frameworks will be presented then students will work in syndicate groups on cases and exercises followed by plenary sessions.

In order to fully benefit from the course, reading the appropriate chapters and preparing cases prior to classes is essential.

Over the ten weeks of this module, students are expected to spend 150 hours in classes, tutorial sessions, reading, class preparation and preparation of case studies. The breakdown of hours presented are indicative of actual timings, and may be adjusted in-line with module learning outcome

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

The module will be assessed via an examination worth 100% of the final grade. The exam is designed to fulfil the pedagogical objectives outlined, and ascertain whether the student learning objectives have been achieved. As a result, a two-hour examination will comprise of a set of questions concerning various aspects of strategic brand management as covered in the lectures, text and readings, tutorials, and case analyses.

Learning Hours:

Activity	*Learning hours*
Lectures:	27
Directed reading	28
Self-directed reading	10
Case and exercise analysis; class preparation	40
Examination preparation:	45
Total:	**150**

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The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources.

Essential Reading:

The core texts for this module are:

L. de Chernatony (2010) From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation 3rd edition (Oxford : Butterworth-Heinemann).

L. de Chernatony, M. McDonald and E Wallace (2011) Creating Powerful Brands 4th edition (Oxford : Butterworth-Heinemann).

Other Useful Publications:

L. de Chernatony (2010) From Brand Vision to Brand Evaluation 3rd edition (Oxford : Butterworth-Heinemann).

L. de Chernatony, M. McDonald and E Wallace (2011) Creating Powerful Brands 4th edition (Oxford : Butterworth-Heinemann).