

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
MARSHALL SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**MKT 525 – CONSUMER BEHAVIOR  
SUMMER 2012**

**TUESDAY: 6:00 – 10:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: JKP ROOM 202**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Consumer behavior* is a fascinating interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on the behavior that consumers display in *searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs and desires*. Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources including time, money and effort on consumption-related items. For marketers to be successful in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving marketplace, they need to know everything they can about consumers including the personal and group influences that affect consumer decisions and how these decisions are made. That involves what consumers buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluations on future purchases.

### **COURSE PREREQUISITE**

This course assumes that you have taken GSBA 528 or GSBA 509 – Marketing Management. If you have not taken a graduate level marketing class or do not have relevant experience, please discuss this with the professor.

### **COURSE GOALS**

This course is designed to accomplish *five key objectives*:

1. Appreciate the *importance of consumer analyses* to the design, implementation, and evaluation of successful marketing strategies and programs.
2. Learn the basic *analytic frameworks and concepts* that managers use to better understand their customers as well as broader marketplace behaviors and consumption trends.
3. Gain hands-on experience in working with key *consumer research tools*.
4. Understand the strengths and limitations of specific, often competing *theories for interpreting particular consumer issues*.
5. Improve your abilities to *discover original consumer insights* that go beyond the surface-level findings that survey research often yields.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. Given consumer behavior exercises as individual assignments, you will be able to apply specific consumer behavior models, frameworks and constructs in order to complete each exercise.
2. Given team Focus Group and Field Research projects, your team will have first-hand experience in utilizing consumer behavior tools and techniques.
3. Given a variety of case analyses representing various industries and cultures, you will be able to apply consumer behavior concepts and frameworks to the thorough analysis of each case. Additionally, you will be able to make focused, relevant and innovative recommendations based on your comprehensive analysis of each case.
4. Through a variety of discussions regarding consumer behavior concepts, articles and case analyses, you will be able to actively participate and positively contribute to the class.

### REQUIRED READINGS

- Solomon, Michael R. (2011). *Consumer Behavior – Buying, Having and Being* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Course Reader of selected assignments including exercises and cases.

### RECOMMENDED OR ADDITIONAL READINGS

- Schiffman, Leon G. and Kanuk, Leslie Lazar. (2010). *Consumer Behavior* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Peter, J. Paul and Olson, Jerry C. (2010). *Consumer and Behavior and Marketing Strategy* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Irwin McGraw-Hill.
- Hanna, Nessim and Wozniak, Richard (2001). *Consumer Behavior – An Applied Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- Selected *Harvard Business Review* articles. (Please see professor for areas of interest.)

### ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected. Your ability to benefit from the course and contribute to the class is largely dependent upon your attendance during class meetings.

If you are unable to attend class on any occasion, please notify the professor in advance when possible. Moreover, you will be responsible for everything covered or announced in class.

If you miss two or more class sessions during this summer elective course, the professor may deduct points from the final grade.

### NO LAPTOP AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CLASS SESSIONS

The use of laptops and electronic devices such as cell phones are not allowed during class sessions.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity that govern students registered at USC. The use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student, and similar behavior that defeats the intent of an examination or other class work is unacceptable to the University. It is often difficult to distinguish between a culpable act and inadvertent behavior resulting from the nervous tensions accompanying examinations. Where a clear violation has occurred, however, the professor may disqualify the student's work as unacceptable and assign a failing mark on the paper.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN AND EXPECTATIONS

The following 1,000 point grading system will be utilized for the course:

Topic	Percentage of Grade	Points	Due Date (See Course Schedule)
Class Participation	10%	100	5/29 – 8/7
Critical Thinking Assignment	15%	150	6/19 – 7/31
Consumer Loyalty Focus Group Team Assignment Write-up	12%	120	6/26
Mid-term Exam	30%	300	7/10
Team Field Research Project	<u>33%</u>	<u>330</u>	8/7
Total	100%	1,000	

A detailed course schedule is shown on page 6. The Department of Marketing follows the grading policy of the Marshall Graduate School of Business. For this elective course, the grading standard is an average of 3.5.

## COURSE STRUCTURE AND CLASS FORMAT

The course will consist of two team assignments and two individual assignments in addition to class participation. The two team assignments are conducting and writing up a focus group session and a group project explaining how and why consumers behave on a specific topic, like why people work out or play videogames. The individual assignments are comprised of a case write-up on the lives of three women and the brand-person relationships they have with various products and a critical thinking exercise. In each class except for the last one critical thinking exercises will be discussed. All students are expected to prepare for each exercise. A select number of students will be assigned to write-up one of these exercises, all of which are experiential. Being prepared for all classes will enhance the class participation grade.

Class sessions will be devoted to summarizing major consumer behavior concepts and then probing, extending and applying these concepts to exercises and cases in the Course Reader utilizing a great deal of interactive discussion. Experiential exercises, cases and projects will be utilized to maximize learning and provide a forum in which consumer behavior concepts and theory are applied to real world experiences. It is assumed that all students by being prepared for each class will actively contribute to each session to maximize the learning experience.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation is an extremely important part of the learning experience of this course because the richness of the learning experience is dependent upon the degree of preparation by *all* students prior to each class session. Additionally, a course that includes case analyses requires students to prepare cases and offer their analyses in the class. Thus, by definition, class participation is an important part of your grade. You will offer your opinions in a group setting many times in your business career and evaluating class participation is a tool for preparing you for this dimension of your career. To foster a class environment that has active participation, 10 percent of the course grade or 100 out of 1,000 points will be allocated to class participation. Lack of participation will negatively impact your final course grade.

Grading class participation will be based on the student's willingness to actively participate and the quality of the comments expressed, not necessarily quantity. When evaluating participation, your professor will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Does the participant attend class regularly and show up to class on time? Is the participant prepared?
- Do comments add to an understanding of the marketing concept, situation, analysis, or recommendations being discussed? Does the participant go beyond simple repetition of case facts to include analysis and conclusions?
- Is the participant a good listener? Are the points made relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others? Is there a willingness to interact with other class members?
- Is the participant an effective communicator? Are concepts presented in a concise and convincing fashion?

A class participation rating of 2, 1 or 0 will be given to each student based on his or her contributions during each class. A 2 rating will be awarded to those students who provide excellent contributions to class discussions. A 1 rating will be awarded to those students who provide proactive, positive contributions to class discussions. A 0 rating will be awarded to those students who are absent, do not participate in class discussions or provide negative contributions.

## INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

- **Consumer Behavior Individual Depth Interview (IDI) Exercise – To be discussed in class on June 5<sup>th</sup>**

You will be assigned to one part of a six-part consumer behavior IDI exercise (Exercises A – F) during the first class. Please be prepared to discuss your findings in class on Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. This assignment is not graded. (See page 6 and the Course Reader for description of the assignment.)

- **Critical Thinking in Consumer Behavior Assignment – Due on the date it is assigned from June 19<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>**

You will be asked to be prepared to discuss and complete all critical thinking exercises, two of which are exercises that we will complete in class as a team. More specifically, The Great Debates exercise during Class 3 on Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> and The Power of Persuasion Exercise in Creating Persuasive Advertising exercise which will be conducted during our Class 6 on Tuesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> are team exercises. All others are to be completed individually. Each exercise will focus on a particular consumer behavior principle that will be covered during a given class session. You will be assigned to write-up one of the exercises covered in Classes 4 – 5 and 7 – 10. For example, if you are asked to complete the assignment for Class 4, it will be on projective techniques. (See Course Reader for specifics)

## INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

Please completely answer the assigned questions. You will probably be asked to present a summary of your findings during the class session for which you completed this assignment.

The score for this assignment will be based on the accuracy, completeness and use of critical thinking skills in addressing the questions. This assignment is worth 15 percent of the grade or 150 out of 1,000 points.

- **Mid-Term Exam on Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>**

A mid-term exam will be given on Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. It will cover key components of marketing that were the topics of Sessions 1 - 6. More details on the content and format will be discussed in class. This exam represents 30 percent of the final grade or 300 out of 1,000 points.

## CASE ASSIGNMENTS

Cases have been assigned to apply consumer behavior concepts to real world business situations and enhance your analysis, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The learning from a case comes in two ways. The first involves pre-class preparation that encompasses the ability to diagnose case problems and issues, to select and apply appropriate forms of analysis (e.g., quantitative, logic, experience, conceptual) and to make decisions about case solutions. Each student should make a decision about what should be done *before* coming to class and be able to document those solutions on the basis of analysis.

The second part of learning from cases comes from realizing that other people do not always diagnose, analyze, and solve problems the way you do. Understanding others' positions, learning from them and countering them with your own are a critical part of the learning experience. To do so, you must listen to each other as well as talk in class. Only when you have tried to defend your position can you fully understand its strengths and weaknesses. There is rarely a *single* right answer for a case, just as there is rarely a *single* right marketing decision in actual practice.

Analysis is more than noting that certain facts pertain to one of the central points around which the case is being analyzed. The facts must be noted, but then reasoning must be applied to determine how and in what way these facts affect the points in the case.

Case analyses *should* focus on *consumer behavior issues and incorporate learning outcomes and assigned readings*. To most successfully complete a case analysis, use the case analysis format shown on page 8 to analyze the case and address the learning outcomes and case discussion questions. It is also highly encouraged to expand your analysis beyond these issues that you think should be addressed to more effectively analyze the case.

The following are general guidelines for preparing an effective case analysis:

- Conduct analyses using various exhibits, appendices and case facts to “drill down” on addressing key issues
- The supporting analysis should be thorough, carried out correctly and consistently, and should draw, whenever relevant, on material presented in class or assigned in readings.
- Specifically address and answer all of the case discussion questions in your analysis.
- Recommendations should be practical, cost-effective, and appropriate to the timing (short-term or long-term) of the problem at hand.
- Consumer behavior strategies should be specific and support the overall objectives and recommendations.

## TEAM PROJECTS

- **Consumer Loyalty Focus Groups on Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> with Write-up Due on June 26<sup>th</sup>**

You will be asked to write-up the results of a focus group that will be conducted on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup> in one of the ELC conference rooms. You will be assigned to a group after which time you should determine who in the group will take on the various roles of moderator, note takers and participants. The topic of the focus groups is consumer loyalty. (See page 9 for details.) A moderator's guide is provided on page 10 but your team can enhance or embellish the guide as you deem appropriate.

The focus group write-up of approximately 8 pages, excluding exhibits, should include objectives, methodology, results and recommendations and is due on Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. The assignment is worth 12 percent of the grade or 120 points.

## TEAM PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- **Field Research Project – Due on August 7<sup>th</sup>**

In lieu of a final exam, you will be asked to participate in a field research project with a group of four to five students. Please select a topic that is interesting to explore among your team members.

The write-up should be 14 – 15 pages, excluding exhibits. (See project description on page 11 for details.) Your team will be asked to present a 9 – 10-minute PowerPoint summary of the project during the last class session on Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>. This assignment is worth 33 percent of the course grade or 330 points.

**Please submit team members and your selected topic for the field research project by the third class on Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>.**

- **Peer Evaluations**

If any of the team members did not contribute equally to the completion of the assignment, please complete and hand in to me the peer evaluation form on page 12. If at least one evaluation form is received, all other team members will be asked to submit a form. Grades for this assignment may be adjusted depending upon each team member's contributions.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The telephone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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## RETURNING GRADED PAPERWORK

Returned paperwork, unclaimed by a student, will be discarded after four weeks and, hence, will not be available should a grade appeal be pursued by a student following receipt of his/her grade.

## PROFESSOR/STUDENT INTERACTION

If at any time during the course you have questions regarding the preparation of assignments or other course-related issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or in person to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

*My philosophy is to create a community of learners whereby I facilitate discussions in which we construct knowledge together. Additionally, I will give you as much feedback as you would like to help you acquire a better understanding of consumer behavior and how that behavior influences marketing strategies as well as to achieve your personal objectives for this course.*

**MKT 525 – CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**  
**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
**SUMMER 2012**

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
1	5/29	INTRODUCTION TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND PERCEPTION	Chapters 1 – 2, <i>Consumer Behavior</i> , Solomon Critical Thinking Exercise #1 – Struggling to Make the Best Buy Louis Vuitton in Japan Case
2	6/5	LEARNING AND MEMORY	Chapter 3 Consumer Behavior In-Depth Interview Exercises A – F Critical Thinking Exercise #2 – Memorable Taglines Bank of America: Mobile Banking Case
3	6/12	MOTIVATION AND VALUES	Chapter 4 Critical Thinking Exercise #3 – The Great Debate American Legacy: Beyond the Truth Case <b>Field Research Project Teams and Topics Due</b>
4	6/19	THE SELF	Chapter 5 Critical Thinking Exercise #4 – Projective Techniques Individual Exploring Brand-Person Relationships: Three Life Histories (Condensed) Case Consumer Loyalty Focus Groups <b>First of Critical Thinking Assignments Due</b>
5	6/26	PERSONALITY AND LIFESTYLES	Chapter 6 Critical Thinking Exercise #5 – Lifestyle Representations The Fashion Channel Case <b>Consumer Loyalty Team Focus Group Write-ups Due</b>
6	7/3	ATTITUDES AND PERSUASION	Chapter 7 Critical Thinking Exercise #6 – The Power of Persuasion Exercise in Creating Persuasive Advertising Super Shampoo Products and the Indian Mass Market Case
7	7/10	DECISION MAKING AND BUYING AND DISPOSING	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b> Chapters 8 – 9 Critical Thinking Exercise #7 – Information Display Board Exercise Redefining the AXA Brand Case
8	7/17	GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONAL AND HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING	Chapters 10 – 11 Critical Thinking Exercise #8 – Group/Family Decision Making Exercise Lowe’s Companies, Inc.: Optimizing the Marketing Communications Mix Case
9	7/24	INCOME AND SOCIAL CLASS AND AGE SUBCULTURES	Chapters 12 and 14 Critical Thinking Exercise #9 – Diffusion of Innovation Exercise Porsche: The Cayenne Launch Case
10	7/31	ETHNIC, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBCULTURES AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR	Chapters 13 and 15 Critical Thinking Exercise #10 – Culture and Consumer Behavior Exercise Yum! China Case <b>Last of Critical Thinking Assignments Due</b>
11	8/7	GLOBAL CONSUMER CULTURE AND COURSE SUMMARY	Chapter 16 <b>Field Research Project Presentations and Projects Due</b>

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR INDIVIDUAL DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) EXERCISE (A) – (F)**

**TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS ON TUESDAY, JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>**

### ***Learning Outcomes***

The learning outcomes of the exercise are to:

- Cultivate empathy for and appreciation of the personal experience and behavior of the consumer.
- Obtain a better understanding of the complexity of consumer behavior phenomena and perhaps discredit an in-going bias toward the rational consumer behavior model.
- Provide exposure to the issues and problems involved in the conduct and analysis of qualitative interviewing dedicated to the purpose of understanding the customer.

### ***Assignment***

- You will be assigned to one of six consumer behavior exercises (A – F). Please read the instructions in the Course Reader and conduct a depth interview of about 30 – 60 minutes with a respondent of your choice.
- Use the questions for the exercise as a guide for the interview and then summarize the results based on the answers to the questions.
- Also include in this assignment marketing recommendations and implications based on what you learned from the individual depth interview.
- Please be prepared to discuss your results in class.



## CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CASE ANALYSIS OUTLINE

1. **Statement of the Issues** – A concise summary of the underlying issues in the case.
2. **Situation Analysis** – An analysis of the industry, competition, customer, and company and resulting expanded SWOT.
  - **Industry/Market Analysis**
    - Industry/Market size
    - Trends
    - Technological changes
    - Legal/Regulatory issues
  - **Competitive Analysis**
    - Major players in the marketplace
    - Competitive strategies
    - Market shares (if available)
  - **Value Chain**
    - Partners in the value chain (i.e., suppliers, distributors, retailers, etc.) – show diagram
    - Groups that have some influence on the customer experience (media, government, activist organizations, etc.)
  - **Customer Analysis**
    - Customer needs, perceptions, motivations, personalities, attitudes, lifestyles, self-concept and emotions
    - Decision-making
    - Cultural influences
    - Market segments
    - Trends
  - **Company Analysis**
    - Core competencies
    - Revenue and profit of firm
    - Positioning
    - Marketing mix
    - Value assessments including how the firm gains an understanding of the value it provides to customers and how this value varies across target markets
  - **Expanded SWOT Analysis**
    - Strengths
    - Weaknesses
    - Opportunities
    - Threats
    - Strategies to maximize strengths and opportunities
    - Strategies to mitigate weaknesses and threats
3. **Alternatives and Analysis** – Alternative ways of solving identified issues and analysis of each alternative (pros and cons) including supporting evidence to provide a compelling rationale for resolving the issues. Integrate germane concepts from the course readings, particularly how better understanding, creating or delivering value could help the firm resolve its issues.
4. **Recommendations** – Recommended courses of action that should be taken in addressing the identified issues for the year after the last year of data shown in the case. Identify primary and secondary target markets, key financial, marketing and consumer behavior objectives where applicable. Strategies that support your recommendations and that rule out alternative courses of action should be provided. A projected P&L statement should be included as well as implementation plans. Additionally, a means or method for feedback should accompany these with back-up plans if objectives are far exceeded or not met.
  - **Target Markets**
  - **Objectives**
  - **Strategies**
  - **Projected Profit-and-Loss Statement**
  - **Implementation Plan**
  - **Contingency Plans**
5. **Appendices** – Supporting information relevant to issues, situation analysis, alternatives or recommendations.
6. **Lessons Learned** – Key lessons learned from the case.



## CONSUMER LOYALTY FOCUS GROUP PROJECT

FOCUS GROUPS TO BE CONDUCTED ON JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND WRITE-UP DUE ON JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup>

### *Project Overview*

Many companies today place a strategic priority on attracting and retaining consumers. In some cases this simply derives from the nature of their brands and products such as Ralph Lauren or Starbucks or an interesting product such as a SUV or gourmet restaurant. In other situations companies believe that “capturing” consumers will not only generate short-term sales but will increase the likelihood of consumers upgrading over time to a company’s higher-priced brands (e.g., from Chaps to Ralph Lauren Purple Label or from Toyota to Lexus).

It is often recognized by marketers that consumers who are loyal purchase more from a product or service provider (greater share of wallet), spread the good word about the company and provide higher levels of customer lifetime value yet many companies do not have in place strategies to capitalize on these opportunities. They also frequently do not have objectives and strategies in place to save potential lost customers.

This project is designed to use focus groups to explore the basic issue of what makes a customer loyal, initially across a broad spectrum of product and service brands. The second half of the focus group will narrow in on various issues that specifically relate to the grocery industry. This project will provide hands-on experience with the most popular and pervasive qualitative consumer research tool – the focus group.

### *Project Structure & Focus Group Administration*

Two teams that were formed for the purpose of the Field Research Project will be combined to form a focus group team. Each focus group team will need to determine who will perform the following roles: focus group participants, moderator, and observers or note takers. On **Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>** the focus groups will be conducted in ELC conference rooms. A discussion guide is shown on the next page. You are welcome to add questions that you deem appropriate.

### *Report Preparation*

Each of the project teams within the focus group team will be asked to write up their results from two different perspectives: one from the retailer’s or grocery food chain’s perspective and one from the food manufacturer’s perspective. For example, one team is to write up their results on how a retailer, such as Trader Joe’s, can increase their customer loyalty and how increased private label products might increase or decrease loyalty. The other team is to write up their report on how a consumer packaged goods (CPG) manufacturer, such as Procter & Gamble, might work with grocery chains to improve loyalty with their customers through advertising and promotions and also increase their own ACV and loyalty with the grocery food chain.

Please determine among your two teams which team will be writing up each perspective. The **written report** should include the objectives, methodology, summary of results and recommendations. The report should be approximately 8 pages, excluding exhibits and is due on Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

### *Project Evaluation Criteria*

The focus group report will be evaluated using these criteria:

1. Comprehensiveness of analysis and insights
2. Use of verbatim data to illustrate key findings
3. Quality of report organization
4. Accuracy and persuasiveness of research conclusions and
5. Plausibility, specificity, and support for sound recommendations

## CONSUMER LOYALTY FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

### 1. *Total Loyalty*

- a. Are there any products or services that you are totally loyal to in which you do not buy any competing products from a competitor?
- b. If so, which ones and why?
- c. If not, why not?

### 2. *Partial Loyalty*

- a. What products or services are you mostly loyal to?
- b. What percent of the products or services in that category (share of wallet) do you purchase from that provider?
- c. What are the primary reasons you buy competitive products?

### 3. *No Loyalty*

- a. What products or services do you have no loyalty toward?
- b. What are the main reasons for total lack of loyalty?

### 4. *Actions to Improve Loyalty*

- a. What actions could be taken by product or service providers to improve the purchase of those items in which you are partially or not loyal to at all?
- b. What items could be taken for you to become totally loyal?
  - i. Frequent purchase program?
  - ii. Buy 9 get 1 free type of program?
  - iii. Special privileges like separate line with less waiting for premier customers
  - iv. Additional free services? Like what?
  - v. Other ideas?

### 5. *Communication When Using Competitive Products*

- a. When you have purchased a competitive product, did the primary product or service provider know about this? If so, how might they know about this?
- b. If a product or service provider has not seen that you have purchased from them recently, what communication have you received regarding your lack of purchase?
- c. If you have received no communication, what could and should trigger communication?
- d. What types of messages should be sent in what media, frequency and format?

### 6. *Grocery Industry*

- a. How many grocery stores do you shop at on a regular basis? Which ones?
- b. If you shop at multiple grocery stores, why?
- c. What share of wallet do you spend at each store?
- d. Many grocery stores collect data on your purchases on a regular basis with their Albertson, Ralphs and Vons cards. What do you think they are doing with this data?
- e. What actions could the largest share of wallet provider take to gain more or all of your business?
- f. If you are unwilling to give them all of your business, why?

## FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT

DUE ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup>

### ***Project Overview***

This project is designed to provide experience in working with both mainstream (interviewing), and cutting-edge (projectives, observation) consumer research tools. Your team will design a mix of these methods to investigate a consumer issue or puzzle of your selection in teams comprised of 4 to 5 members. Topics should be relatively broad in scope (e.g., why people smoke) and focus on basic issues of why, how, where, and when rather than how many. Projects can focus on product categories, brands, media behavior, consumer segments and trends or any interesting consumer marketing issue. The scope and sample size of the project make it similar to typical *exploratory* consumer research projects that marketing departments regularly commission and field. Such projects typically cost between \$35,000 – \$60,000 (or more) so your abilities to design and conduct rather than outsource such projects constitutes significant added value to employers.

### ***Project Research***

There are two required project research components:

#### ***1. Interviewing Consumers***

Your team can opt to interview consumers either individually, using an IDI protocol, or in focus groups. If individual interviewing is selected, each team member should conduct five in-depth interviews. Students who decide to use focus groups should plan on conducting two focus groups of conventional size and length. Both focus groups and individual interviews should incorporate a battery of projective techniques. Specifically, interview guides should include at least four techniques, two from Menu A (below), and two from Menu B.

- A. Menu A – draw a picture, tell a story to a picture, imagine a dream, brand personification, consumer collage, psychodrama
- B. Menu B – cartoon test, word association, sentence completion, person or symbol matching, product or brand lists as consumer cues

#### ***2. Observing Consumers***

This project component involves observing consumers in their natural habitats. Various approaches to observing consumers include pure observation, interactive observation, “house-calls” to people’s homes, photographic/video recording and covert identity role-playing. Each group member should spend a minimum of four hours in the field.

### ***Written Report***

The written report should include the following elements:

1. A statement of your focal consumer topic and an explanation of your specific research purposes. (1-2 pages)
2. A summary of your research sample and of your interviewing and observation procedures (1 p.)
3. An organized presentation of your main findings, illustrated with verbatim comments and observational data. (7-10 pages)
4. A discussion of the key managerial implications of your findings. (2 pages)
5. Appendices and exhibits, including a clean copy of your IDI or focus group interview guide.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

The field project will be evaluated using these criteria:

1. Research design
2. Data quality (depth and extensiveness)
3. Analytic soundness (logic and support for findings and interpretations)
4. Quality of the conclusions
5. Recommendations and marketing implications

### CONSUMER BEHAVIOR PROJECT PEER EVALUATION

Please complete the following Consumer Behavior Project peer evaluation form **only if you feel as though there was unequal participation in any of the team projects, the Marketing Marshall MBA Programs Focus Group or Field Research Project**. Divide 100 points among your team members in accordance with their contribution to the consumer behavior project. *Include yourself in the distribution of points*. For example, if your team had five team members and each member contributed equally to the project, the team members would each earn 20 points ( $20 \times 5 = 100$ ). If your team members did not contribute equally, then give each person the number of points that you feel fairly represents each member's contribution.

Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Consumer Behavior Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Team Members	Points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Comments: Please feel free to comment on the contributions of individual team members to the team project.