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|  | **MKT 402 – Research Skills for Marketing Insights (Spring, 2017)** |
| **Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday 12:00pm – 1:50pm**  **Class Room: JFF 241** |
| **Professor: Dinesh Puranam** |
| **Office: HOH 615**  **Office Phone: 213 821 9897**  **Office Hours: Wednesday 12:45pm – 2:45pm** |
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**Course Description:**

Marketers can observe and collect data on customers’ behavior online (web surfing, online purchases, ad exposures, social network postings) and offline (store visits, shopping behavior via loyalty programs and mobile technology). One might ask:

* What do these rich data (often exabytes in size) about customers reveal to Marketers?
* Can we tell if a Marketing campaign succeeded?
* How might the data be used to improve our marketing effectiveness?
* What are the pitfalls of some of these sources of data?

It is in search of answers to the above questions (and more) that firms globally spent $ 67.9 billion on market research services in 2015[[1]](#footnote-1). This course will introduce students to various marketing research techniques to collect, analyze and act upon customer information. This course consists of three parts:

Part 1: Customer Centric Marketing Overview

Part 2: Marketing Research Methods and Tools

* Types of data (primary/secondary, cross-sectional/panel, survey/observational)
* Marketing research methods (Focus group, Survey and Observation, Experiment)
* Data analysis tools (Factor analysis, Clustering analysis, Regression analysis)

Part 3: Deriving Marketing Insights

* To understand customer profitability and the basics of lifetime value calculations
* To predict customer responses in customer relationship management
* Online customer behavior

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Students will gain knowledge of strategic market measurement.
2. Students will understand the market research process and how it applies in practice.
3. Students will apply methods and frameworks learned to form market research questions, collect and analyze data, and form business recommendations based on the findings.
4. Students will gather, categorize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate relevant qualitative and quantitative information through case discussions, assignments and final project.
5. Students will critically question problems, competing priorities and points of view in situations characterized by ambiguity and/or uncertainty.
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to be creative and innovative in seeking solutions to market research dilemmas.
7. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate their ideas clearly and precisely through frequent in-class case discussions and group project presentation.

**Course Materials:**

* Please check the course postings on the Blackboard regularly for class lectures, announcements and instructions (http://blackboard.usc.edu). Please print out the lecture notes and bring them to class.
* Reading packet – required
* Aaker, Kumar, Leone, and Day (2016), *Marketing Research, (12th  Edition),* ISBN: 9781119238720 – optional
* Students will be asked to use Excel and SPSS software. SPSS is available to Marshall Community through Business Virtual Lab. Students may also use python and R with the instructor’s permission.
* Students will also need to use Qualtrics survey software available to Marshall community at <http://www.qualtrics.com/academic-solutions/usc/>. (Please register using your USC email account).

**Grading Components and Policy:**

* Individual Assignments (12% x 5)

You will be asked to complete five assignments independently. You are NOT allowed to work with other students, and the completed assignments should reflect your own work only. Collaboration with other students on individual assignments will be treated as cheating. Individual assignments will be posted online ahead of time.

Assignments must be turned in on the due date in class. Any assignment turned in late will receive a grade deduction.

* Group Project (30%)

Students will be asked to form groups of size of 4-5 people. We will focus on marketing challenges and opportunities facing Montecito Bank & Trust (MB&T), a community bank based in Santa Barbara. The main theme of the group project is to help MB&T obtain a richer understanding of their multi-generational audience in order to craft strategies and promotional campaigns that most effectively and efficiently drive customer acquisition and retention. Under this theme, each group can identify one or two specific topics, design research studies, collect data, analyze data, and make recommendations.

Groups may approach me with alternative project proposals that seek to address interesting Marketing questions as well. Details regarding the group project will be posted online.

* Class Participation (10%)

Students are required to attend every class, well prepared with assigned reading for that day. I will randomly check class attendance. Students are also expected to contribute meaningfully to class discussion, and show effort on in-class exercises.

* At the Marshall School, students are graded on the quality of their work. We very much appreciate hard work and it is usually necessary to work hard in order to produce high quality work. However, effort alone is not sufficient for a good grade. Recall that Marshall is the most selective program at USC and one of the top-rated undergraduate and graduate business programs in the country. You are here because you are exceptional students, but that also means the school expects a lot from you. I will be very responsive to students who need extra assistance, but the standards are high and should be. That is why Marshall students are so highly regarded and what makes your degree valuable. Final letter grades are assigned to reflect your overall performance (weighted total number of points overall all assignments) relative to other students. Your final letter grade will be determined based on: (i) Your weighted total number of points overall all assignments; (ii) The class average; and (iii) Your ranking among all students in the class

**USC and Marshall Guidelines:**

Add/Drop Process

In compliance with USC and Marshall’s policies classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the first week of class. All classes are closed (switched to D-clearance) at the end of the first week. This policy minimizes the complexity of the registration process for students by standardizing across classes.  I can drop you from my class if you do not attend the first two sessions. You can only add a class after the first week of classes if you receive approval from the instructor. These policies maintain professionalism and ensure a system that is fair to all students.

Technology Policy

Use of personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is not permitted during academic or professional sessions. ANY e-devices (cell phones, I-Phones, Blackberries, other texting devices, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Upon request, you must comply and put your device on the table in off mode and FACE DOWN. Videotaping or audiotaping faculty lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class.

Students with Disabilities

The Office of Disability Services and Programs ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability)) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.  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 me (or to your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: ability@usc.edu.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/> . Failure to adhere to the academic conduct standards set forth by these guidelines and our programs will not be tolerated by the USC Marshall community and can lead to dismissal.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university.  You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>.  This is important for the safety of the whole USC community.  Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report or can initiate the report on behalf of another person.  The Center for Women and Men <http://engemannshc.usc.edu/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <https://sarc.usc.edu/reporting-options/> describes reporting options and other resources.

## Support Systems

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.  The Office of Disability Services and Programs ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability)) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.  If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information (<http://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**Appendix 1: Tentative Schedule of Classes**

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| 1.10T | Course introduction | self/student intro and syllabus |  |  |
| 1.12TH | Customer centric marketing | mini case discussion |  |  |
| 1.17T | Research methods | exploratory research | "Communispace" | Assg. 1 due |
| 1.19TH | Research methods | exploratory research | "Dr Tim's Premium All Natural Pet Food" |  |
| 1.24 T | Research methods | descriptive research |  |  |
| 1.26TH | Research methods | descriptive research |  |  |
| 1.31 T | Research methods | descriptive research | Qualtrics, in-class survey design |  |
| 2.2TH | Research methods | descriptive research |  | Assg. 2 due |
| 2.7T | Research methods | causal research | "Smart Business Experiment" |  |
| 2.9TH | Research methods | causal research | "Star Digital" |  |
| 2.14T | Analytical tools | factor analysis, perceptual map, clustering |  |  |
| 2.16TH | Analytical tools | factor analysis, perceptual map, clustering |  |  |
| 2.21T | Analytical tools | factor analysis, perceptual map, clustering |  |  |
| 2.23TH | Group Project Consultation |  |  |  |
| 2.28T | Group Project Consultation |  |  |  |
| 3.2TH | Analytical tools | regression - linear |  | Assg. 3 due |
| 3.7T | Analytical tools | regression - conjoint |  |  |
| 3.9TH | Analytical tools | regression – conjoint /logistic |  |  |
| 3.14T | **Spring Recess** |  |  |  |
| 3.16TH | **Spring Recess** |  |  |  |
| 3.21T | Analytical tools | regression - logistic |  |  |
| 3.23TH | Customer value analysis | customer lifetime value | "Marketing Analysis Toolkit: CLV Analysis" |  |
| 3.28T | Customer value analysis | case discussion | "Retail Relay A and C" | Assg. 4 due |
| 3.30TH | Customer value analysis | case discussion |  |  |
| 4. 4T | Customer value analysis | case discussion | "Retail Relay A and C" |  |
| 4.6TH | Predicting customer response | online advertising |  |  |
| 4.11T | Course Review |  |  | Assg. 5 due |
| 4.13TH | Group Project Presentation |  |  |  |
| 4.18T | Group Project Presentation |  |  |  |
| 4.20TH | Group Project Presentation |  |  |  |
| 4.25T | Group Project Presentation |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2: Case Preparation Questions**

**Case 1: Communispace**

* As a brand manager, would you use Communispace’s service? When would you use it? When wouldn't you use it? What are the advantages/disadvantages of this market research tool compared to alternative methods?
* What is Communispace’s competitive advantage? How are they creating value?
* What do you think about Communispace’s business model? How is it different from traditional market research companies?
* If you were Diane Hessan, would you launch a WOM product? What impact would this launch have on the company brand?

**Case 2: Dr. Tim’s Premium All Natural Pet Food**

* What are the top queries related to the keyword “pet food” on Google Keyword Planner? Are there any themes that can be emphasized on Dr. Tim’s website to attract additional consumers for existing products?
* Using the same analysis approach as above, can you generate some major insights that could be important if the company decides to follow a ***product*** development strategy and introduce “dog treats” and/or “cat treats?”
* Based on your analysis on Google Trend ([http://www.google.com/trends](http://www.google.com/trends/)), are there any patterns that could be important if Dr. Tim’s decides to explore a ***market*** development strategy? Which city has the most Google searches for dog food? For cat food? (Hint 1: you can zoom in on the map under “Regional Interest.” You can also choose to rank the regions by either “Region” or “City” by clicking the respective tabs. Hint 2: You can click “+Add term” to add a second search term such as “cat food,” which will give you a comparison of the interest in these terms over time and also a comparison of the distribution of the interest across different regions. Hint 3: For the section of “related researches,” you can see not only the most related queries by quantity, but also those that are on the biggest rise.)
* Which country and which city has the most Google searches for “dog/cat treats?” Based on this data, which new market would you recommend Hunt consider if he were to follow a diversification strategy for a new Dr. Tim’s Dog/Cat Treats product?
* Do you see limitations when using the analytics data to inform decisions? What further research do you think is needed to address these limitations?

**Case 3: A Step-By-Step Guide to Smart Business Experiments**

* To understand the value of business experiments
* Key principles for running experiments

**Case 4: Star Digital**

* Is online advertising effective for Star Digital?
* Is there a frequency effect of advertising on purchase? In particular, the question is whether increasing the frequency of advertising increases the probability of purchase?
* Which sites should Star Digital advertise on? In particular, should it put its advertising dollars in Site 6 or in Sites 1 through 5?

**Case 5: Retail Relay (A) and (C)**

* What is the expected customer lifetime value of a newly acquired customer? Use an annual discount rate of 10%.
* Do you think this value is likely to increase or decrease as Retail Relay grows into a larger company?
* Is the Valpak promotion worth pursuing at a larger scale? What about door-hanger coupons?
* Would you recommend any adjustments to the company’s social media marketing campaign?
* Should Retail Relay move forward with the Richmond expansion?

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| **Appendix 3: USC Marshall School of Business Learning Goals** |

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| **How MKT 402 Contributes to Student Achievement of USC Marshall’s Six Graduate Programs Learning Goals** | | |
| **Marshall Graduate Programs Learning Goals** | **Degree of Emphasis**  **(1=Low, 2=Moderate, 3=High)** | **MKT 402 Objectives that support this goal** |
| **Learning goal #1: Our graduates will develop a strategic level of understanding of the key functions of business and be able to comprehend the relationships between the core business disciplines in order to *make holistic judgments and decisions in analyzing business situations.*** |  |  |
| 1.1 Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of core business disciplines, including their interrelationships. | 3 | #1 |
| 1.2 Students will analyze business scenarios, such as cases, with a firm grounding of how each of the core fields play into decisions made. | 3 | #4 |
| 1.3 Students will apply theories, models, and frameworks to analyze relevant markets (e.g. product, capital, commodity, factor and labor markets). | 3 | #5 |
| 1.4 Students will show the ability to utilize technologies (e.g., spreadsheets, databases, software) relevant to contemporary business practices in a variety of disciplines and industries. | 3 | #3 |
| 1.5 Students will demonstrate the ability to utilize interdisciplinary business skills in case analyses, exams, presentations and projects, including capstone projects. | 3 | #7 |
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| **Learning goal # 2: Our graduates will develop a global mindset and a competitive edge in this interdependent, fast-changing, diverse and volatile world through structured educational opportunities. They will acquire knowledge, both theoretical and practical as well as experiential, about America and the rest of the world, and the economic/financial interdependencies that signify current geopolitical, economic and financial relationships that impact business decisions *so as to make a difference in the world.*** |  |  |
| 2.1 Students will understand how local, regional and global markets interact and are impacted by economic, social and cultural factors. | 2 | #4 |
| 2.2 Students will understand that stakeholders, stakeholder interests, business environments (legal, regulatory, competitor) and business practices vary across regions of the world. | 1 | #4 |
| 2.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate global business challenges and opportunities through experiential learning, immersion international trips, case studies, international business consulting projects and exams. | 1 | #4 |
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| **Learning goal 3: Our graduates will demonstrate critical thinking skills by making the intellectual connection between quantitative and qualitative tools, theories and context to provide the basis *for proper and effective problem solving and decision making as well as the development of new and innovative business opportunities to strategically navigate the complex demands of the current and dynamic national and international business environments.*** |  |  |
| 3.1 Students will understand the concepts of critical thinking, entrepreneurial thinking and creative thinking as drivers of innovative ideas. | 3 | #6 |
| 3.2 Students will critically analyze concepts, theories and processes by stating them in their own words, understanding key components, identifying assumptions, indicating how they are similar to and different from others and translating them to the real world. | 3 | #5 |
| 3.3 Students will be effective at gathering, storing, and using qualitative and quantitative data and at using analytical tools and frameworks to understand and solve business problems. | 3 | #4 |
| 3.4 Students will demonstrate the ability to anticipate, identify and solve business problems. They will be able to identify and assess central problems, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and translate a chosen solution to an implementation plan that considers future contingencies. | 3 | #5 |
| 3.5 Students will demonstrate the ability to be accurate, clear, expansive (thorough, detailed) and fair-minded in their thinking. | 3 | #4 |
| 3.6 Students will demonstrate their ability to apply critical thinking tools and the USC-CT Framework in designated exercises, cases, projects and exams. | 3 | #4 |
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| **Learning Goal 4: Our graduates will develop people and leadership skills by demonstrating self-awareness, emotional intelligence, curiosity, visionary and strategic thinking, teamwork, refection and knowledge transfer skills to promote their effectiveness as *business managers and leaders.*** |  |  |
| 4.1 Students will recognize, understand, and analyze the motivations and behaviors of stakeholders inside and outside organizations (e.g., teams, departments, consumers, investors, auditors). | 3 | #7 |
| 4.2 Students will be able to demonstrate various emotional intelligences and leadership skills such as self-awareness, self-management, teamwork and collaboration to better understand the potential complexities in organizations in papers, exercises, cases, exams and projects. | 3 | #7 |
| 4.2 Students will recognize, understand and analyze the roles, responsibilities and behaviors of effective managers and leaders in diverse business contexts (e.g., marketing, finance, accounting, etc.) | 3 | #7 |
| 4.3 Students will be able to demonstrate the understanding of visions and values of world-class companies and the impact it has had on financial results. | 2 | #1 |
| 4.4 Students will understand factors that contribute to effective teamwork. | 3 | #7 |
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| **Learning goal 5: Our graduates will demonstrate ethical reasoning skills, understand social, civic, and professional responsibilities *and aspire to add value to society*** |  |  |
| 5.1 Students will understand professional codes of conduct. | 2 | #7 |
| 5.2 Students will recognize ethical challenges in business situations and assess appropriate courses of action. | 2 | #6 |
| 5.3 Students will be able to apply ethical principles and professional standards in analyzing situations and making informed decisions. | 2 | #6 |
| 5.4 Students will demonstrate an understanding of and consistently apply the ethical principles and professional standards related to the business world and show the ability to express and follow results of independence and the highest sense of professional ethics. | 2 | #6 |
| 5.5 Students will demonstrate the ability to research, critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information, including professional standards for decision making, in the local, regional and global business environment. | 3 | #4 |
| 5.6 Students will enhance their appreciation of values of social responsibility, legal and ethical principles and corporate governance through the analysis and discussion of pertinent articles and real business cases, seminars and summits. | 2 | #4 |
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| **Learning Goal #6: Our graduates will be effective communicators *to facilitate information flow in organizational, social, and intercultural contexts*** |  |  |
| 6.1 Students will identify and assess diverse personal and organizational communication goals and audience information needs. | 3 | #7 |
| 6.2 Students will understand individual and group communications patterns and dynamics in organizations and other professional contexts. | 3 | #7 |
| 6.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to gather and disseminate information and communicate it clearly, logically, and persuasively in professional contexts. 3 | 3 | #7 |
| 6.4 Students will be able to clearly communicate in oral and written formats the solutions to business issues and problems accurately and effectively. | 3 | #7 |

1. See ESOMAR’s report titled “Global Market Research 2016”, <https://www.esomar.org> . Note this estimate excludes “in house” market research conducted by firms. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)