

An Overview of CMGT 544: Creating Differentiation for Organizations (aka Communicating Branding)

Course Description

Brands are more important than ever. In an environment of hyper-competition, fragmented consumer attention, and increased uncertainty, strong brands deliver better performance and higher valuations.

Not surprisingly, branding has evolved from little more than designing a logo into its own complex discipline - a discipline increasingly informed by Behavioral Science.

This course examines how strong brands can be built in today's connected world. You will learn:

- 1) How branding works by creating positive associations in our memories, and the challenges of doing that in today's environment.
- 2) How to create a distinct and meaningful brand positioning, by combining values, culture, products, and experience with goals people want to achieve.
- 3) How to engage people in the brand, to create shared meaning and growth.

You will become familiar with a set of vocabulary, concepts, and frameworks, and with relying on them to assess brands and develop strategies. You will gain perspective on how the discipline of branding is changing in today's digitally connected world. And since branding is a collaborative process, you will frequently work in teams, learning to share insights and expertise to achieve better outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Assess and analyze the strength and positioning of brands in the competitive space.
- Develop brand strategies to build brands that matter to people in today's connected world.
- Develop marketing strategies to engage people and create shared meaning.
- Apply key branding concepts to real branding situations.
- Evaluate materials from popular, professional, and academic sources related to branding, and tell the underlying stories that together they reveal.

Course Notes

This course is based on the Flipped classroom model, with a weekly class centered around discussion and group exercise rather than lectures. Students will need to complete the pre-learning each week detailed on Blackboard (under the Weekly Class link) and be prepared to participate in class.

The core assignment for the course is working in teams to create a potential brand for a market of your choice, which includes developing a brand strategy, a marketing strategy, and a presentation.