



Understanding the Customer: Theories, Trends, and Values for an Effective Communication Strategy

Prof. Mariarosaria Savarese / Prof. Mishell Orta

Area of study: Marketing and Communication

Area Code: CM/MK330su

Credit 6 ECTS

Dates 8 – 19 July (2 weeks)

Course description

The course aims at introducing the student to the main theories and the latest trends related to the field of consumer behavior: target market, needs, values. After a short introduction on psychological and sociological perspectives, the students will have to face and apply the consumer behavior theories in the fields of marketing and corporate communication. Contents are designed to encourage students to reflect on consumer response to marketing actions: exposure, attention, perception and decision making. Throughout practical projects the students will conduct customer researches for a specified product category. The aim of the research will be to deliver detailed customer profiles of the resulting segments and to draw conclusions about appropriate marketing communications strategies. Focuses on the principal methodological and technical options of qualitative research, the principal theories and tools of qualitative research, consumer-based marketing research techniques such as surveys and focus groups, on different stakeholders and on e-marketing will be part of the course.

Evaluation

A) ASSIGNMENT WEEK ONE (30% of the evaluation)

In groups, based on a briefing, design an innovative marketing strategy to launch a new hospitality service by extra luxury Italian hotel company, Baglioni Hotels, using the different frameworks explored. Present the work to the class and an expert panel.

B) ASSIGNMENT WEEK TWO (30% of the evaluation)

In groups, based on a briefing, design a communication campaign highlighting the main points of Consumer Psychology by using and comment at least one theory for each point. Present the work to the class.

C) FINAL EXAM (40% of the evaluation):



Individual written exam, closed questions, assessing the basic knowledge and theories from both weeks.

Suggested bibliography

WEEK ONE

- Lindstrom, M. (n.d.). *Small Data: The Tiny Clues That Uncover Huge Trends*. St. Martin's Press.
- Portigal, S. (2023). *Interviewing users: How to Uncover Compelling Insights*. Rosenfeld Media.
- Ariely, D. (2009). *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape Our Decisions*. HarperCollins UK.
- Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2015). *Blue Ocean Strategy, Expanded Edition: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant*. Harvard Business Review Press.

WEEK TWO

- Kimmel, A. J. (2013). *Psychological Foundations of Marketing*
- Belk, R. W. et al. (2003). The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion. *Journal of Consumer Research* 30 (3), 326–351.
- Johnson, E. J. et al. (2012). Beyond nudges: Tools of a choice architecture. *Marketing Letters*, 23 (2), 487-504.
- Wood, W., & Neal, D.T. (2009). The habitual consumer. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 19 (4), 579-592
- Thaler, R., & Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge: The gentle power of choice architecture*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale.

Syllabus

Programme WEEK ONE

Day 1

- Introduction
- Program and Brief Assignment
- Market, Product and Marketing Plan
- Case studies and Trends

Day 2

- Digital tools to understand the customers
- Getting to know digital tools and methodologies to get actionable insights from customers
- Group Work: Jobs To Be Done Framework

- From marketing to societing: developing new marketing strategies from the study of social trends
- Group Work: Coolhunting

Day 3

- Fieldtrip – Morning | 9:00 - 13:00



Day 4

- Strategical Market Analysis and positioning
- Group Work: Blue Ocean Strategy Framework

Day 5

- Pitch Day: Final group work and setup
- Students present their work to the class and special guests

Programme WEEK TWO

Day 1

- Program and evaluation
- Introduction to the Consumer Psychology: Homo oeconomicus VS homo psychologicus
- Historical evolution of the Consumer Psychology: one discipline, many approaches
- The process of consumption: a framework
- Information seeking, processing, building (theories and case histories)
- Briefing for the assignment

Day 2

- Needs VS wants VS desire: let's clear our ideas (theories and case histories)
- Motivations: positive VS negative, internal VS external (theories, case histories and research hints: the motivational approach);
- Social identities and group identities (theories, case histories and research hints: exercising with the focus group)

Day 3

- Consumer Drivers: personality, attitudes and values (theories and case histories)

Day 4

- Learning and decision making: are we always rational decision makers? (rational VS irrational models, the choice paradox, simplicity VS variety, automatic VS reflective cognitive system, heuristics and frame effect, prospect theory, nudges)

Day 5

- Assignment presentation and discussion
- Final exam