MKTG450: RESEARCH METHODS IN MARKETING
Winter 2009, Sections 61 & 62

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Contents of Course Packet

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Syllabus for Winter 2009, Sections 61 & 62

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Nature and Purpose of the Course

The broad objective of the course is to provide a fundamental understanding of marketing research methods employed by well-managed firms. The course is aimed at the manager who is the ultimate user of the research and thus is responsible for determining the scope and direction of research conducted. In the course, we will cover the types of research design, techniques of data collection and data analysis. Emphasis will be on the interpretation and use of results rather than on the mathematical derivations. The course focuses on helping managers recognize the role of systematic information gathering and analysis in making marketing decisions, and develop an appreciation for the potential contributions and limitations of marketing research data.

Content and Organization

The course is broadly structured to follow the steps in the marketing research process. The topics include problem definition, research design (exploratory, descriptive and causal), data collection methods, questionnaire design and attitude measurement, sampling schemes, and data analysis. Emphasis will be given to both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of marketing research.

Required Material

1. Textbook: Aaker, David A., V. Kumar, and George S. Day, *Marketing Research*, 9th Edition, John Wiley and Sons Inc.
2. Software: SPSS Student Version 13.0. This comes bundled with the textbook. A full version of the program is available in the computer lab. A 14 days trial version can be downloaded from the SPSS website.
3. MKTG 450 Course packet (lecture slides and supplemental materials will be distributed in class and/or via the course website)

Course Pre-requisites

The pre-requisites for this course are:
1. Marketing Management Core Course (MKTG 430)
2. Decision Sciences and Statistics Core Course

Class Sessions

Rather than merely rehashing concepts developed in the textbook, class sessions will be devoted to extending and applying the concepts. I will assume that all of you have completed the reading assignments (both chapters in the textbook and articles in the case packet) before coming to class.

If you all come to class well prepared, we will be able to spend time on class exercises that simulate real world problems. You should be prepared to discuss and present in class the readings and/or problems that have been assigned for that session.

- **Cold Calling**: Cold calling will be used in class.
- **Attendance**: If you are unable to attend class you are responsible for catching up on the material covered or announcements made in class on that day.
- **No Laptops**: Please leave your laptop in its case during class.
- **No Cell Phones**: Remember to switch off your cell phone before class.

Preparing a Case for Class Discussion

The objective of the use of cases is to illustrate how different marketing research methods have been applied to solve real world problems. The emphasis will be on the appropriateness and use of the research methodologies and techniques, as well as on the larger strategic issues.

In preparing a case for class discussion, read through the case very thoroughly. Do the data analyses and bring your results to class. Questions in the guideline are there only to guide your thinking. Be prepared to discuss the important marketing research issues addressed in the case and to present your results in class.

Grading

Grades will be computed as follows:

1. Class Participation	the “ole” tie-breaker
2. Individual Assignments	44%
3. Group Assignment	11%
4. Group Project	45% (of which 9% based on peer evaluation)

Re-grade requests must be submitted within 10 days from when the assignment (i.e., homework and the final project) is returned. Along with the graded assignment, you must attach a letter explaining why you are requesting a re-grade. While I will consider the specific concerns cited in your letter, I will re-grade the entire assignment. Please remember that small changes in your grade on a single assignment typically do not affect your overall course grade.

1. Class Participation
During class you should be willing to expose your viewpoints and conclusions to the critical judgment of the class and demonstrate your ability to evaluate and build upon the opinions of your classmates.

2. Individual Assignments
There will be five individual take-home assignments. These assignments will be made available online and require you to apply the marketing research concepts covered in class. Each individual assignment is worth 11% of the total grade and must be completed on an individual basis. I will take the highest four of the five grades. If you choose to submit only four assignments your grade

will be based on the four assignments you submitted. Please use the Individual Assignments form on the web site to submit your assignment [Submit > Individual Assignments].

3. Group Assignment
There will be one graded group assignment. Please use the Group Documents form on the web site to submit your work [Submit > Group Documents].

Note: After submitting an assignment you will receive a confirmation email within 5 minutes. Please keep this email in your email inbox as a proof that you have submitted the assignment on time. If you do not receive the confirmation e-mail the assignment was not successfully submitted.

4. Group Project
The objective of the research project is to provide you with some experience in applying the concepts and methods of marketing research to a real marketing research problem. Please organize yourselves into groups of 4-6 in order to do the group assignment and the group project. Please find group members within your own section.

Please get approval of your research problem before you invest major time and resources in your project. Project approval entails submitting a project proposal in week 3 and meeting with me during weeks 3 and 4. The group can sign up for a time to meet with me via the course website. You have considerable freedom to follow your interests, although it is expected that the problem be relevant to marketing and that it will require a field research strategy that involves primary data gathering. All other things being equal, a project concerned with a realistic problem will be looked upon more favorably than one that deals with a trivial or contrived problem. Purely exploratory type projects with only qualitative data will not meet the course requirement. Projects will have to be of a descriptive variety where the research questions are well formulated.

Quite a few project opportunities are available from the Kellogg student project database, available through the course website. I strongly encourage you to go through the database. However, you are not constrained to select your project from this set. Please feel free to find other projects through your contacts.

An important point to keep in mind is that respondents in the survey should have the right to remain anonymous. This means that the data collected in the survey must be stored in a manner such that individuals' identities cannot be linked to their responses. Respondents must be assured before you collect data that their responses will be treated as confidential and will be anonymously analyzed. Under no circumstances should you give to your sponsor or anyone else your completed questionnaires, names and contact information of people you have interviewed, or other material that may reveal the identity of your respondents without their prior explicit approval.
Your final project will be composed of a written report and in-class presentation, as outlined below:

Structure of the final report:

1. **An executive summary**. Describe in one paragraph the business problem and your recommendation to the client based on your findings.

2. **Background.** Define the problem to be studied and the purpose to be served by the research.

3. **The research strategy.** Define the population and the sampling frame. Describe your sampling method as well as the size and profile of your sample. If secondary data are used, identify the sources.

4. Describe the **exploratory research** you conducted that led to the design of your questionnaire. Include the final version of your **questionnaire(s)** in the Appendix so that I know exactly what questions were asked and what scales were used in the questionnaire.

5. **Report your findings** in the context of the type of analyses you conducted. If any comparison is made, report the statistical results; include means, proportions, test statistics (e.g., t, F, p-value). Discuss the implications of these findings for your client.

6. **Finally, your recommendation** ~ what should the client do? Make sure that your recommendations are supported by the research findings.

Other guidelines for the final report:
The final report should not be longer than **20** double-spaced pages. Questionnaires and other exhibits are not included in this limit. If you choose to include graphs and tables in the text, then you may make appropriate adjustment to the page limit. It is important to write concisely and well. All pages including appendices, etc., should be numbered consecutively, not just the body of the report.

The table of contents should clearly indicate what each table and exhibit refers to. Every exhibit, table, figure, etc., should have a title. Exhibits, etc., should be appropriately cross-referenced in the text. Do not make me or your client hunt for some result buried in an unlabeled appendix! When you report means or percentages always indicate the sample size on which the figure is based. Do not include simple graphical display of responses for each item. Your exhibits are tools to reflect insights after you have analyzed the data, and should not be used to report raw means or counts that can be easily described (and understood) in one sentence. Please also do not include multiple-page excel spreadsheet and make me or your client go through the file to look for details, formulas or insights.
I will keep the **final copy** that you submitted. So please make a copy for the client and copies for yourself before turning in the project. Please make sure that you turn in a copy to your client in a timely manner.

You should also submit a **soft copy of your report and an excel file** containing the data that you have collected, with proper labels for each column. Submit these two files through the course webpage. There is a good chance that your report (and the data) may be made available to others. **Please note that if your client does not wish the contents of the**

report to be made public, make sure that you put "CONFIDENTIAL" on the front cover of the report.

Structure of the in-class presentation

1. Introduce the business problem
2. Define the research objective
3. Specify the target audience. Describe your sampling method and the size of your sample.
4. Key findings
5. Your recommendation

Your presentation should not be longer than 15 minutes.

Grading Key

I will be grading the project reports based on the consideration of the following issues:

- Specification of research objectives – is the problem well defined? Is there consistency between problem definition and specification of research objectives?
- Identification of research design, choice of sampling plan, questionnaire design, and choice of survey method – are they appropriate given your objective?
- Analysis and interpretation of data – does it address your research objective?
- Recommendation – How do your research findings address the business problem? Are your recommendations supported by your data? Are they insightful (and useful) to your client?
- Assessed relative difficulty of the project
- Overall presentation of the report

Web Surveys

For those of you who would like to use a web survey, Kellogg offers Qualtrics that you can freely access (see: http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/rc/qualtrics.htm). Please look this up on the KIS page.

Peer Evaluation

A peer evaluation form is posted on the course webpage. Group members will evaluate each other's performance. Everyone must submit an evaluation by Thursday March 12th. Twenty percent of your project grade (9 out of 45%) reflects peer evaluation of your input into the group project and the group assignment.

Student/Instructor Interaction

If at any point during the course you have any questions regarding the materials covered in class or regarding preparation for assignments or cases, please raise them either in class so others may also benefit, or via email, or in person during office hours. If the scheduled office hours are inconvenient to you, please email me to make an appointment to meet.

Important Due Dates (project related deadlines are marked with an '*')

Week 1	Monday, 01/05	*Group composition
Week 2		*Schedule Group meeting for project approval in Week 3. Sign-up times will be announced.
Week 3	Wednesday, 01/21	*1-2 pages research proposal for the final project. This proposal should have a brief description of the client background, the business problem, research objectives, and how they follow from the business problem.
Week 3	Thursday, 01/22	Individual Assignment 1
Week 3		*Group meetings with instructor.
Week 4	Thursday, 01/29	Individual Assignment 2
Week 5	Thursday, 02/05	*A 1-2 page progress report. This report should contain a brief description of the project, the research design (i.e., sampling approach, data collection method). Please also attach your draft questionnaire.
Week 6	Thursday, 02/12	Group Assignment
Week 7	Thursday, 02/19	Individual Assignment 3
Week 8	Thursday, 02/26	Individual Assignment 4
Week 10	Thursday, 03/12	*A hard copy of the Final Report is due. Please also submit a soft copy of the report and an Excel file that contains your data.
Week 10	Thursday, 03/12	*15-minute presentation of project in class.
Week 10	Thursday 03/12	Individual Assignment 5