

Marketing Department Assessment Report 2007-2008

Student Learning Outcomes Marketing

Department Assessment results Report

Department/Program:

Degree: MSBA

Submission date: March 28, 2008

I. Working from your assessment report of last year, please discuss some changes made or strategies implemented in response to last year's results.

Both conceptual and casework on the concept of segmentation/targeting (found to be weak) were added to MSBA courses as a result of the 2006 Assessment of the MSBA in Marketing. These courses included MKTG 701 and MKTG 779 (students are required to take one of these two). Both courses are typically taken in semesters that precede the final course, MKTG 790, in which the marketing plan is written. The marketing plan produced in MKTG 790 provides the mechanism for faculty to evaluate student learning outcomes for the program.

In addition to new content being added to courses, the department added a new course on Branding to the curriculum in the past year. The course was offered in both Spring and Fall semesters 2007. Branding was one of the areas of weakness found in previous assessments of the MSBA program.

Finally, as part of the departmental response to previous assessments, goals and student learning outcomes were revised to further clarify the abilities desired of students graduating from this program. Further, all student learning outcomes were modified in order to replace "demonstrate an understanding" with more action-oriented verbs. The enhanced and revised set of goals and SLOs are found in Section II of this report.

II. Drawing upon the goals and objectives contained in the department/program student learning assessment plan, what was the focus of the program's student learning assessment for the past academic year?

As described above, the goals and corresponding student learning outcomes established by the Marketing Department for the MSBA degree were modified during the past year. The new set of goals is:

Goal #1: Demonstrate effective analytical and critical thinking skills to evaluate marketing problems and develop solutions to them.

- 1.1 Analyze theoretical and applied marketing problems regarding the role and practice of marketing within the organization.
- 1.2 Identify the influence of external business environmental forces on marketing issues and offer appropriate solutions that address these influences.
- 1.3 Identify marketing problems and appropriately evaluate alternative solutions and courses of action.

Goal #2: Understand the role and practice of marketing within an organization including theoretical and applied aspects of specific marketing concepts..

- 2.1 Define and apply knowledge of key concepts in marketing to business situations:
 - 2.11 Market Segmentation
 - 2.12 Target Marketing
 - 2.13 Positioning
 - 2.14 Branding
 - 2.15 Product/ Service planning
 - 2.16 Pricing concepts and strategy
 - 2.17 Distribution concepts and strategy
 - 2.18 Advertising and Promotion
- 2.2 Identify significant trends and developments in current and future marketing practices and explain how they affect marketing decisions.

Goal #3: Understand how to develop and evaluate strategic and tactical marketing plans and programs and assess marketing performance.

- 3.1 Develop and implement comprehensive marketing plans.
- 3.2 Analyze marketing strategies and plans that include various elements of the market mix.
- 3.3 Use primary and secondary sources of information to develop and analyze markets and customers.

Since the tool for assessing goals and student learning outcomes in this program is a comprehensive marketing plan that is intended to demonstrate all skills acquired throughout the program, all identified SLOs are assessed each year. Of particular interest and importance among the stated SLOs for the next year however, are those that have been assessed as low previously and have not been substantially improved. Two areas on which students were measured as not performing satisfactorily for more than two annual assessments, Positioning (SLO 2.13) and Promotion (SLO 2.18), are key concepts on which we intend to focus.

The addition of material to the curricula (as mentioned in Section I) to cover segmentation concepts in MKTG 701 and MKTG 779 yielded good results in 2007. To counter low performance in Branding, the addition of a course on Branding substantially improved students' measured learning outcomes. These efforts to improve the students' performance on Branding and Segmentation are a model for improvements in Positioning and Promotion, repeatedly weak areas in multiple assessments, and Pricing and Placement which were identified as weaker areas in this current assessment.

III. Assessment Methodology

As mentioned briefly in the previous section, the MSBA program relies on the comprehensive marketing plan required of students as their culminating project in the program capstone course, MKT 790 to assess the knowledge and skills they have learned throughout the program. Each project is supervised, reviewed and subsequently assessed by two faculty members. The department chair provides overall direction for the MKT 790 effort and participates on all rater teams. The departmental faculty share “second rater” responsibility by being assigned individually across projects. The faculty member raters use a rubric that maps to the student learning outcomes for the program to assess the project. The rubric is found in Appendix A. Should a substantial discrepancy arise between the raters in the assessment process, a third faculty member would be asked to also assess the project. During 2007, no such discrepancies surfaced. Strong inter-rater reliability was found across all projects assessed. All students completing MKT 790 during the 2007 calendar year were assessed. In Spring, 2007, there were nine students who wrote MKTG 790 Marketing Plans that were fully evaluated and in Fall, 2007, there were eleven students who wrote supervised and fully evaluated marketing plans.

IV. What conclusions were drawn on the basis of the information collected?

The evaluation was made using a four point rating scale where 4=Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, and 1=Poor. The department uses the standard of 85% of students achieving an average rating of 3 or higher as evidence of an SLO being successfully met. Totals for the evaluations for 2007 students are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Learning Outcome	Spring Mean	Fall Mean	% of projects achieving mean rating ≥ 3
SLO 1.1 Analyze role and practice of MKTG within the organization- theoretical and applied.	3.46	3.5	96.8%
SLO1.2 Identify influence of external business environmental forces.	SLO added after SPG assessment	3.17	88.3%
SLO1.3 Identify problems and evaluate alternative solutions and course of action .	SLO added after SPG assessment	3.11	88.3%
SLO 2.11 Define and apply: Market Segmentation	3.35	3.3	95.2%
SLO 2.12 Define and apply: Target Marketing	3.21	3.2	92%
SLO 2.13 Define and apply: Positioning	3.64	3.3	87.5%
SLO 2.14 Define and apply: Branding			

	3.07	3.1	92%
SLO 2.15 Define and apply: Product/Service Planning	3.21	3.28	90.2%
SLO 2.16 Define and apply: Pricing Concepts	2.76	2.5	70.7%
SLO 2.17 Define and apply: Placement Concepts	3.27	3.1	85.3%
SLO 2.18 Define and apply: Promotion Concepts	3.3	3.2	87.8%
SLO 2.2 Identify significant trends and developments in current and future marketing practices.	3.3	3.5	92%
SLO 3.1 Develop and implement comprehensive plans.	3.71	3.56	95.5%
SLO 3.2 Analyze marketing strategies and plans that include various elements of the mix.	3.2	3.54	92%
SLO3.3 Develop and analyze using primary and secondary sources of information.	3.7	3.23	86%

Of the twenty MSBA students who completed their course work and the marketing plan during 2007, there was respectable improvement performance compared to the previous year. In 2006, there were five elements of the Marketing Plan on which 85% of students or greater, did not achieve a Good or Very Good evaluation on an SLO. In the most recent assessment, that dropped to an unsatisfactory performance by MSBA students on just one factor, Pricing.

The overall evaluation was that MSBA students were meeting the departmental learning outcomes fairly well. No student scored a “Poor” on any single SLO. In Spring, there were 14% of all evaluations, 182 for the nine projects, that were ranked at the “Fair” level, a 2. Fall semester, on the MSBA student projects, only 15% of all faculty evaluations on the total 255 scores were rated as “Fair.”

Across all evaluations during 2007, there were three Goals that were particularly well met, in excess of 95% scoring a 3 or 4, “Good” or “Very Good.” Of particular note is the fact that Market Segmentation was a conceptual area on which MSBA students had performed poorly on previous assessments. Those goals on which students fared well are:

- 1.1 the role of marketing within the firm
- 2.11 market segmentation
- 3.1 development of a marketing plan

While the majority of scores were measured as 90% scoring a 3 or above, Good or Very Good, there were seven elements on which between just 85-90% scored at least 3-4 thus just reaching the Marketing Department’s goal of 85% or better attaining a Good evaluation. These six were within the accepted range of goals but indicate room to improve these concepts and learning objectives within the MSBA curriculum. They include

- 1.2 understanding of external forces on the market 1

- 1.3 ability to identify and solve problems
- 2.13 positioning
- 2.17 placement
- 2.18 promotion
- 3.3 use of secondary and primary data sources

Although adequate student achievement was not met in the previous year's assessment on Market Segmentation, branding, and targeting, these areas showed improvement in 2007. SLOs 1.2 and 1.3 were among the additional goals added during the year under the Department's desire to clarify student objectives in identifying and defining problems and solutions. Positioning and promotion were two of the not-fully-met goals of 2006 and they remained slightly weaker in 2007 with less than 90%.

While promotional and placement goals were also measured at only 85% or better receiving a Good or Very Good evaluation, there were numerous qualitative comments on the evaluations from faculty that scoring was difficult for those two factors in many cases due to the budget and revenue size of the firms for which the Marketing Plans were written. Frequently the organizations were not sufficient in size and/or resources to fully develop a complete marketing plan especially as related to Placement and Promotion.

There is one SLO on which performance was substantially lower than any other element of the market plan, Pricing, on which only 70% of students were evaluated as a Good or Very Good attainment, the departmentally defined acceptable level for SLOs. This element is unquestionably a very low performance that requires attention of the department in working with students in preceding classes and within the final MKTG 790 course.

V. How will the information be used to inform decision-making, planning, and improvement?

The areas recommended for improvement after the 2006 assessment showed progress on several dimensions. A few concepts remained slightly lower on the department's measure of acceptability, positioning, placement, and promotion elements in particular. Those three factors should be targeted for better coverage in required courses, either MKTG 701 or MKTG 779. That approach, following the 2006 assessment, worked fairly well to rectify problems generally to substantially improve scores of Good or Very Good achievement in Targeting, Segmentation, and Branding.

Overall, evaluation of MSBA attainment of SLOs was substantially improved from the previous assessment. The one remaining serious problem for the department to address is the low scores in students' ability to proficiently analyze and develop sound Pricing strategies. Performance on this dimension was so much below all other elements that serious discussion within the department on how to integrate more conceptual and casework instruction dealing with pricing strategy into not only the MKTG 701 and MKTG 779 courses but perhaps in all MSBA classes.

A final note regarding needed changes may be considered based on the feedback regarding the nature of the organizations that were the subject of many of the marketing plan projects. As mentioned in Section IV, several raters felt unable to clearly assess learning regarding some marketing plan components due to the limited size or resources of the organizations chosen as the subjects of the plans. The department needs to give consideration to setting financial guidelines on the size of the firms students select to develop the market plan in order to ensure that an organization provides sufficient opportunity for the student to demonstrate learning across all appropriate SLOs. This is a challenge, however, as in many cases small firms seek guidance and advice which the department and its students are anxious to provide. Further, many of the organizations are services which make it more difficult to address placement decisions in the same manner as for tangible products.

Completed by: Lois Olson and Kathy Krentler

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| 4. Ability to demonstrate a proficiency in the development and analysis of marketing strategies and plans that include various elements of the marketing mix. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Ability to demonstrate a proficiency in analyzing markets and customers utilizing primary and secondary sources of info. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Please add any comments you have regarding specific strengths or weaknesses of the project with regard to meeting the above student learning outcomes for the M.S. program in Marketing on the back.