

Marketing Department Assessment Report 2008-09 Student Learning Outcomes Marketing Department Assessment results Report

Department/Program: Marketing
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Degree: MSBA

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

Several of the areas identified in previous assessments of the MSBA in Marketing evidenced substantial improvement had been added to both conceptual and casework to MSBA courses. Consequently, no changes were made in the 2008-09 academic year to the curriculum or to the project that is a requirement of the final course, MKTG 790. It is this project that provides the mechanism for faculty to evaluate Student Learning Outcomes

A weakness found in the results of previous assessments of the MSBA program was a deficiency in the achievement of SLOs as related to Branding issues. A Branding class was added to the curriculum and offered each semester since Spring, 2007. Since the class is an elective, not all MSBA students take the course. Scores of specific SLOs for branding actually declined in the 2008-09 year despite many students taking the Branding class. No specific correlation analysis was conducted to determine which students had been in the Branding course and which students performed less effectively on the Branding concept.

Overall, few changes were made in the MSBA Program in Marketing or in the assessment tools. The MSBA is being diminished and replaced with only an MBA option. The Marketing Department has had and will continue to have fewer participants in the program making substantial changes to currently effective assessment methodology unwarranted. This reduction in the size of MSBA programs is occurring across the College of Business Administration as changes to the MBA program have resulted in many students choosing to pursue that degree rather than the MSBA.

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?

The goals and SLOs for the MSBA have remained unchanged for the academic year, 2008-9. The measured goals are:

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.

The assessment of graduating MSBA students within the Marketing Department is measured in a project in the form of development of a Marketing Plan for a functioning firm. Each plan was evaluated by two faculty members in each case using the same instrument. All goals and SLOs are assessed by this culminating project.

Students were assessed to be performing unsatisfactorily during the two semesters in the areas of: Branding, Distribution, and Pricing. However, overall performance was not below the Marketing Department's target of 85% of students being evaluated as either Good or Very Good. While there were individuals who did not meet those two evaluation categories on individual concepts, no single student performed poorly on their entire project.

What has been done in the past is to increase the focus and coverage of the concepts on which scores were critically lower in evaluations of students' attainment of SLOs. It is in the two required courses, (at least one of the two must be taken by all MSBA students,) Marketing 701 and 779, that additional coverage of the weaker performing concepts has been increased.

However, for the forthcoming academic year a decision must be made by the department as to how much to respond directly to assessment results. Each year, there has been a small change in the degree of volatility of many of the concepts measured with the exception of Pricing and Placement, which are always among the weakest issues. Responding each year to a different set of issues other than Pricing and Placement might prove to be unproductive.

III. Assessment Methodology

The MSBA Program has been assessed using the same rubric each semester for the past six years to evaluate individual MSBA students' Marketing Plans. Each MSBA student develops a marketing plan in his or her final semester as part of the fulfillment of the culminating experience. The project is supervised, reviewed and subsequently assessed by two faculty members independently. Should there be a substantial discrepancy, a third faculty member would be asked to also assess the project. No discrepancies occurred during the 2008-09 academic year. The rubric used to assess the projects is found in Appendix A.

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

The evaluation is a four point rating scale and totals of the evaluations for 2008 students are compiled in Appendix B. In Spring, 2008, there were ten students who wrote MKTG 790 Marketing Plans that were fully evaluated. In Fall, 2008, there were eight students who wrote supervised and fully evaluated marketing plans.

In no case did the two faculty evaluators disagree sufficiently on evaluations of each element of the MSBA Marketing plans that a third evaluator needed to be enlisted. In fact, the evaluations indicated high levels of inter-rater reliability. One of the raters was the same individual in each case while the second reader varied across eight other faculty members as assigned to the semester's projects.

Of the eighteen MSBA students who completed their course work and the Marketing Plan during 2008, there was respectable performance and achievement of SLOs although it was slightly lower than the previous year. The average for 2007 was 94.5%, and for this year it was 92.2%. The overall evaluation was that MSBA students were meeting the departmental learning outcomes fairly well. While no student scored a "Poor", a 1, on any single SLO in the previous year, there were four out of 234 total evaluations that were rated as Poor. Additionally, 23 out of 234 individual scores were rated as Fair. This 10% is substantially below the proportion in the previous year. They were countered by a larger percentage of individual concept evaluations as "Very Good."

Across all evaluations during 2008-09, there were four goals that were particularly well met, with students scoring in excess of 95% performing at a 3 or 4, the "Good" or "Very Good" level. Of particular importance is the fact that Market Segmentation was a conceptual area on which

MSBA students had performed poorly on previous Assessments and student performance had responded well to the additional effort made in two required courses, MTKG 701 and MKTG 779. Those student learning outcomes on which students fared well are:

- 1.2 effect of the external environment
- 3.1 development of a market plan
- 2.15 product/service planning
- 2.12 targeting

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

- 2.16 pricing
- 2.17 distribution
- 2.18 promotion

There were a larger number of individual scores that were ranked as a 1 or 2, "Poor or Fair" than in previous years employing this method of assessment. However, no single student project was evaluated with a substantial number of low scores. Often, the coverage and execution was identified as being weak due to the nature of the firm and/or industry on which the marketing plan was written. They were often scenarios that did not lend themselves to extensive application of various elements of the marketing mix.

In the previous assessments, Pricing was repeatedly the SLO on which MSBA students performed most poorly. For this assessment, that was not the result. Instead, Branding and Distribution concepts shared the position for the lowest evaluation, a 2.66 on 1-4 rating scale and students performed slightly better than Pricing issues in their marketing plan.

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

Performance by the eighteen MSBA students in meeting the Marketing Department's goals was good. There was some variability from student to student in their performance on individual concepts and student learning outcomes. There has also been some variability from year to year on how students fare on individual concept SLO achievement. In part, that could stem from different material covered in cases in the required courses Marketing 701 or 779 from semester to semester. It is also somewhat driven by the actual firms and the industries on which students conduct the analysis for their marketing plans. Some topics do not lend themselves as well to, for example, an aggressive distribution strategy or a full-scale IMC due to limited funds.

A solution might be to set financial guidelines on the size of the firms students select to develop the market plan. However, in many cases, they are small firms presented to the marketing

department or to the student seeking guidance and advice. Many are also service-related firms for which it is more difficult to address placement decisions in the same manner as for tangible products.

Finally, the Marketing Department will be meeting to consider the somewhat lower performance in the area of branding on this year's assessment especially in light of the addition to a branding elective to the MSBA curriculum.

Report completed by: Lois Olson

Date: March 11, 2009

Appendix A

Marketing 790 Project Rubric

Name of Project: _____

As part of our assessment process for the M.S. Specialization in Marketing, we are using a review of the comprehensive marketing plan projects developed by students in MKT 790. The marketing plans should be evaluated with regard to the various criteria that are relevant to the goals and student learning outcomes for the M.S. degree in Marketing. As you read each plan, please indicate how well you feel it reflects each of the following criteria by circling the appropriate number on the 4 point scale where 4=Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, and 1=Poor:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Proficiency in analyzing marketing problems and issues facing companies and organizations. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of key concepts such as: | | | | |
| • Market Segmentation | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Targeting | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Positioning | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Branding | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Product/Service Planning | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Pricing | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Distribution | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Promotion | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of how marketing decisions are influenced by: | | | | |
| • Various forces in the external environment | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| • Significant trends and developments affecting current and future market practices. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 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.

Appendix B
Marketing Plan Assessment 2008-09

Learning Outcome	2007-08 (1-4)	2008-09 (1-4)	Rating \geq 3
SLO 1.1 Role and practice of MKTG within the organization- theoretical and applied	3.48	3.4	92%
SLO1.2 Influence of external business environmental forces	3.15	3.5	92%
SLO1.3 Identify problems and evaluate alternative solutions and course of action	3.3	3.3	95%
SLO 21 Define and apply knowledge of key concepts: 2.11Market Segmentation	3.4	3.5	92%
SLO 2.12 Target Marketing	3.2	3.25	97%
SLO 2.13 Positioning	3.34	3.0	95%
SLO 2.14 Branding	3.1	2.65	92%
SLO 2.15 Product/Service Planning	3.25	3.25	90%
SLO 2.16 Pricing Concepts	2.6	2.85	87%
SLO 2.17 Placement Concepts	3.2	2.65	87%
SLO 2.18 Promotion Concepts	3.25	3.0	87%
SLO 2.2 Understanding significant trends and developments in current and future marketing practices	3.4	3.5	92%
SLO 3.1 Develop comprehensive plans and implement the plan	3.6	3.5	90%
SLO 3.2 Development and analysis of marketing strategies + plans that include various elements of the mix	3.3	3.3	95%
SLO3.3 Development + analysis of markets + customers employing primary/ secondary sources of information	3.2	3.4	87%