

MKT 622

Country Manager

Introduction

Computer based simulations are an invaluable tool for learning and applying business concepts. For students, simulations offer the opportunity to experience much of the realism of making business decisions in the classroom. They can sharpen their strategy formulation skills or learn about market dynamics. In this course, students will be able to apply their theoretical and conceptual knowledge of marketing strategy and international marketing in a hands-on application exercise. The course focuses on the computer simulation Country Manager, a computer-assisted management simulation pertaining to the managerial issues arising when companies plan and execute market entry into new countries. The exercise is designed to allow students to experience the challenges in international marketing by playing the role of a category manager for a major consumer products company.

This course is taught as a **1-day seminar** on **28 March 2023** from 8.45 am to approx. 4 pm in the 358 Pool-Raum.

There will be a kick-off session held on **28 February 2023** from 10:15am to 11:45am (B2) in 001 Hörsaal. Attendance of the kick-off session and the simulation session is mandatory. For the Country Manager simulation, students will work in small groups.

Please note that this is a graduate level marketing course. This course is not appropriate for students without prior exposure to marketing. It is recommended that participants have completed at least one course in international marketing or marketing strategy.

General Information



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|----------------------|---|
| Lecturer | Angeliki Kalogeraki, M.Sc. |
| Course Format | Computer simulation |
| Credit Points | 2 ECTS |
| Frequency | 2h kick-off session, 1 day seminar |
| Language | English |
| Grading | 1. Simulation Performance (50%) 2. Strategy Report (25%) 3. Final Report (25%) |
| Exam Date | No formal exam |
| Term | Spring semester |
| Range of Application | M.Sc. MMM, M.Sc. MMBR, M.Sc. Bus. Edu., M.Sc. Bus. Inf., M.A. K&W, M.Sc. Econ., LL.M. |

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Course Registration & Organization

Please note that it is mandatory to apply for this course as we have a restricted capacity of 35 students. The application process is coordinated via the student portal². The 'help' section of your portal² landing page provides detailed information on the application process for courses with restricted course capacity in the Mannheim Master in Management. After successful enrolment, we will assign students to their simulation team. We will communicate the team allocation during the kick-off session. For organizational reasons, team switching is not possible.

Country Manager Simulation

Played from the perspective of a domestic manufacturer of consumer products determined to expand into Latin American markets, Country Manager encompasses the international dimensions of marketing and business. Students experience market entry and expansion as a category manager for Allstar Brands, a major consumer products company. The U.S. market has matured, and Latin America has been identified as having the best potential for future growth. The toothpaste brand management team must decide which of six pre-selected Latin-American countries is most attractive for their Allsmile brand and how to expand their presence throughout the region. The team can develop and implement local or regional strategies using customized and/or standardized marketing programs. Countries being considered for expansion include Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

The Country Manager simulation will allow students to explore the following topics in an interactive and engaging environment:

- *Market Entry:* Which markets to enter? In what order? At what time? How to determine a country's attractiveness and market potential?
- *Type and Mode of Entry:* Local production versus exporting; distribution through a company sales organization versus indirect wholesales; managing types and modes of entry over time.
- *Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning:* Which segments to target? How to position brands for the chosen segments?
- *Product Management:* Global product, adapted product, or local product? How to choose appropriate products for a market from an existing set?
- *Pricing:* Pricing to meet local market conditions versus multi-country pricing consistency. Grey market impact of large across-market price differences. Pricing for profit.
- *Advertising and Promotion:* Using standardized home country ads versus developing local campaigns (cost and customer trade-offs). Allocating budget across advertising and other promotional expenditures. Different advertising and promotional objectives across markets.
- *Distribution:* In addition to the mode of entry issues raised above, decisions will be made about allocating sales force to types of accounts, implying the relative emphasis on channels.

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Your decisions on these issues will be incorporated into a computer-simulated market to reveal how both you and your competition performed. Decisions cover a time span of 7 to 8 simulated years, allowing you to observe both your decisions' short-term and long-term effects.

Reading the provided simulation manual is mandatory to prepare for the simulation. Well-prepared students benefit the most from their simulation experience, and good grades correlate with good preparation.

Performance Assessment

The course has the following grading components:

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|---------------------------|------|
| 1. Simulation Performance | 50%* |
| 2. Strategy Report | 25%* |
| 3. Final Report | 25%* |

*We will conduct a peer rating to minimize team free-riding. For this peer rating, each team member will evaluate the performance of all other team members. Team members with consistently higher/low group evaluations will receive a higher/lower grade than the rest of the team.

1. Simulation Performance

Teams will be graded on their performance in the simulation. Overall contribution and brand equity measures will be considered when evaluating simulation performance. We will also look at the overall situation and competitiveness of the company at the end of the simulation and gauge its future prosperity (i.e., maximizing revenues by reducing your company's assets in the last period will hurt your grade).

2. Written Assignment: Strategy Outline

Each group must write a strategy outline representing the road map for the first round of the simulation. Even though we only ask you to submit your **strategy report for Year 1**, we recommend that you make decisions about your international marketing strategy (your strategic thrust) for your entire endeavor in Latin America. Before working on your strategy outline, it is necessary to read the Country Manager manual. The goal is to determine which strategy you want to set and how to implement it (i.e., what decisions you will need to make) in order to best explore the opportunities of the Latin American market. This outline must not exceed 2 pages of text and should be 12pt Times New Roman single-spaced. You may add as many exhibits as you like. All exhibits, however, must be referred to in your text.

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Organize your strategy outline as follows:

1. Cover Sheet with group number, members' names, country/countries you plan to enter, date, and course name.
2. Problem statement and introduction.
3. Situation analysis (opportunities and threats).
4. Market entry (which country/which countries to enter first).
5. Market segmentation and target marketing strategy (for the country/countries you enter first).
6. Positioning and marketing mix strategies (for the country/countries you plan to enter first).

Please submit the strategy outline until **March 24 at 12:00** (noon) at the latest via ILIAS under the respective task.

3. Written Assignment: Final Report

Each group has to submit a final presentation describing the team's performance and learning during the simulation. The report must include 3 main slides (+1 slide cover page). You may add as many exhibits as you like. All exhibits, however, must be referred to in your main slides.

Organize your final report as follows:

1. Cover Sheet with group number, members' names, countries you entered, order of entry, date and course name.
2. Slide 1: Description of your group's success in implementing your original strategy and revisions that you made.
3. Slide 2: Performance overview.
4. Slide 3: What you learned about being a country manager for a company expanding internationally.
5. Your appendix should include the following company performance information (last period only): Net income, product contributions (for each product), brand awareness (for each product), market share (manufacturer sales), customer satisfaction, marketing efficiency index, and stock price.

Please submit this final report until **April 18 at 12:00** (noon) at the latest via ILIAS under the respective task.

Course Material: For this course, you will need to purchase a reader which contains the simulation manual. Readers will be sent to you digitally after the kick-off. The cost for the reader will be 15 Euros which mostly subsidizes the license fees for the Country Manager simulation.

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Course Outline

| Date | Topic | Assignments |
|--|---|---|
| Deadline for registering at the student portal (BWL Master) | Application Deadline | Apply by registering for the “exam” of this course in the student portal. This is only a formal requirement so that the registrar has a record of your enrollment, but there is no formal exam for this course. |
| 28 February 2023 10:15 am – 11:45 am 001 Hörsaal (L 9, 1-2) | Kick-Off Session The sale of Country Manager digital manual starts afterward. | Purchase and read the Country Manager manual |
| 24 March 2023 12:00 am (noon) | Strategy report | Submit strategy report |
| 26 March 2023 9:00 am | Log-in data | Receive log-in data and get familiar with the simulation software <i>Play practice rounds until 27 March, 18:00 pm</i> |
| The practice rounds are closed. | | |
| Please refrain from typing in any decisions, as this can jeopardize your performance on March 28. | | |
| 28 March 2023 8.45 am – 4:30 pm 358 Pool-Raum (L 7, 3-5) | Simulation Day | Come prepared by reading the manual; mandatory attendance |
| 18 April 2023 12:00 am (noon) | Final report | Submit: Final Report Peer Evaluations |

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