

MKT 622

Country Manager

Introduction

Computer-based simulations are a highly effective tool for learning and applying business concepts. They allow students to engage with the complexity and realism of making business decision-making—within the structured environment of the classroom.

In this course, students will apply their theoretical and conceptual knowledge of marketing strategy and international marketing in a hands-on learning experience. The course centers on *Country Manager*, a computer-assisted management simulation that addresses key challenges that companies face when planning and executing market entry into new countries. Through the simulation, students take on the role of a category manager for a major consumer goods company, allowing them to engage directly with the complexities of international marketing decision-making.

This course is taught as a 1-day seminar on the 23. or 30. October from 8.45 am to approx. 4 pm.

General Information



Lecturer	Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuester
Course Format	Computer simulation
Credit Points	2 ECTS
Frequency	1h 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.

The kick-off session will take place on **25 September, 2025, from 10:15 – 11:45 am**. Attendance at both the kick-off session and the simulation session is mandatory. For the *Country Manager* simulation, students will collaborate in small groups.

Please note: This is a graduate-level marketing course. This course is not suitable for students without prior exposure to marketing. It is strongly recommended that participants have completed at least one course in international marketing and/or marketing strategy.



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Course Registration & Organization

Enrolment in this course is mandatory due to limited capacity. The application process is managed through the student Portal².

After successful enrollment, we will assign students to a 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 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 or multi-country pricing consistency? Pricing for profit? Grey market impact of large across-market price differences.
- *Advertising and Promotion:* Using standardized home country ads or 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:

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

*We will conduct a peer rating to minimize team free-riding or to reward students with above-average team effort. 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

Team performance in the simulation will form the basis for grading. 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 **20 October, 2025, before 12:00 pm** (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 **14 November, 2025, before 12:00 pm** (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 12 Euros which mostly subsidizes the license fees for the Country Manager simulation.

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Course Outline

Dates (<i>Group 1</i>)	Dates (<i>Group 2</i>)	Topic	Assignments
tbd		Exam Registration Deadline	Apply by registering for the “exam” of this course in Portal2. (This is a formal requirement so that the registrar has a record of your enrollment, however, there is no formal exam for this course.)
25 September 2025 10:15 – 11:45 am Room: L 9, 1-2 - 001		Kick-Off Session The manual sale starts afterward.	Purchase and read the Country Manager manual
20 October 2025 12:00 pm (noon)		Strategy Outline	Submit strategy outline
21 October 2025 9:00 am	28 October 2025 9:00 am	Log-in Data/ Practice Rounds	Receive log-in data, get familiar with the simulation software, and play practice rounds <i>Play practice rounds until 22./29. October 6:00 pm</i>
The practice rounds are closed.			
Please refrain from typing in any decisions, as this can jeopardize your performance.			
23 October 2025 8.45 am – 4.30 pm 358 Pool-Room (L7, 3-5)	30 October 2025 8.45 am – 4.30 pm 358 Pool-Room (L7, 3-5)	Simulation Day	Come prepared by reading the manual; mandatory attendance
14 November 2025 12:00 pm (noon)		Final Report	Submit: Final Report Peer Evaluations

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