*Note – sections in red may need to be customised.*

Strategic Marketing - Assignment Brief

Semester X, 201X – XXX University

### Overview

The assignment consists of three interrelated elements, all of which are based on the case, “Marketing for transformational futures: The case of Marshalls PLC”. Please read the “Introduction” and “Working with cases” sections before reading the case itself.

1. Team Assignment, Part 1 (20%). Provide a situational analysis of the assignment Case. Due by[insert date] . Please see the questions you have to answer on page 3 of this document.
2. Team Assignment, Part 2 (20%). Following your situational analysis in A1.1, develop a coherent and succinct document of strategic marketing recommendations to the Marshalls management. Due by [insert date].
3. Team presentation of in-depth findings of one analysis from Part 1 (5% individual + 5% team) + 1 page summary.

### What is a progressive assessment?

Progressive assessment is where a project is graded more than once. This process gives you feedback and grades as you complete project milestones. Use the feedback to get better marks on the next component. Breaking assignments into components also allows you to ‘spread the risk’; you can still do well if you get a bad mark on one component.

Having assessable tasks as part of an academic program serve to:

* encourage you to explore and understand the subject more fully,
* provide you with an indication of how much you have achieved as work progresses in a project, and
* enhance your learning process because you have to ‘fix’ the work you have submitted.

### Team assignment

Strategy is a team based activity. Simulating collaboration in a team assignment gives you a chance to work on a business-case as a team based activity. This process is used at many good schools. It is also the way business cases are put together in most corporations.

You are to form teams of four to six members; this is normally the number of managers involved in strategic planning. Team membership must remain consistent for all assignments. If you eject a team member, you will have to find a replacement. Similarly, if you leave a team, you will have to find another team to join. This is a team assignment; no student can submit an individual assignment.

Teams will act as consultants in a strategic consulting firm. They report to the principal consultant (i.e. the tutor/lecturer). Each team works on the same project, coordinating with other teams to develop a comprehensive strategic solution to the business problem. Similar to the workplace, team members are encouraged to exhibit professionalism and to get the project ‘in’ on time and to task.

Our pedagogy is adult centred learning; this means that we believe in self-moderating teams. This also means that you have to sort out your own team problems - *You must make your team function*. In light of this, choose your team members carefully; they may bring your grades down. I also suggest you have a team leader who coordinates work and acts as a ‘whip’. Your team may elect to give this person extra marks (please write to your professor about this).

All members are expected to enter into a written team contract. A template for this contract appears at the end of this document. The contract should:

* the expected grade,
* stipulate assignment milestones,
* roles and specific work to be handed in (time, person responsible), and
* punitive measures for not performing the agreed upon roles (or not performing up to standards expected by other members).

If you request instructors to mediate conflict, we will ask for your team’s contract. Take the contract seriously as it is a legal document. It details your promises to your fellows. These promises will be enforced by the unit chair. If you do not have a contract, the instructor will decide on the outcome. Upon submission of an assignment/presentation, instructors will not mediate group problems. Once you have put your team-member’s name on the assignment, they will be given the same number of marks. Bring up problems during the course of the assignment and in plenty of time before submission. This learning method enforces good practices for working in groups. Include your own reflection of what you have learnt from being in a team in your assignments. This will form a graded part of your assessment.

### Detailed assignment brief

#### Team Assignment, Part 1 – case analysis

Your team will analyse the assignment case, namely “Marketing for transformational futures: The case of Marshalls PLC”, which is in the green casebook that accompanies your text (Marketing Strategy: Casebook by Edwards and Lee, 2013). You will answer these questions.

1. Define and characterize the industry Marshalls is operating in for the period leading up to 2012? Assess the industry’s attractiveness in 2012, be sure to provide evidence.
2. In terms of business and other types of sustainability, who are the company’s major competitors/threats? Categorize them.
3. What critical issues did the company face in 2012?
4. What are the industry’s key success factors?
5. Based on your analyses, briefly describe your recommendations (e.g. the four Ps) to Marshalls executives. These should cover 2013-14.

Part 1 is based on the strategic analytical methods covered in the first part of this course. Note that analysis and critical thought is important. Mere ‘summary’ of the material from the case will be awarded extremely low marks – read the Introduction of the Casebook, particularly the part about working with cases, and come/listen to seminars regularly. The marking sheet for this assignment is included at the end of this document.

For Part, you will write a maximum of 1500 words.

You are **required** to use graphics, charts and tables to present your solution clearly. Some tools to generate these graphics may be available on the unit website and on the textbook website. In business, people often respond better to ideas presented in tabular and graphical formats. Assignments without graphs, flowcharts and tables will be awarded substantially lower marks. Look at the “General Assignment Standards” section of this document for formatting guidelines.

Answers will be assessed for appropriateness and persuasiveness. Application of strategic marketing concepts is expected. It is up to you how to present your analysis – for example, by answering directly from the questions, using appropriate subtitles, and/or using a marketing report format. You are to use only the material from the case. **No research outside of the material provided in this course is permitted.** The aim is to analyse and make deductions from the evidence available, not research.

Success in this assignment (and in the business world) depends on your ability to communicate effectively. You should apply a sustained effort on assignments throughout trimester – do not leave writing to the last minute. Your write-up will be graded on the quality of your expression. Keep it clear and concise.

#### Team Assignment, Part 2 - Strategic recommendations

Following your strategic analysis in Part 1, your team will prepare a document containing strategic recommendations to cover Marshalls in the company’s markets for the period of 2014-16 (warning: do not give us an operational plan). This plan must account for the constraints on the business’s future. This plan should also suggest some alternative strategies if applicable; your job is to describe the strategic thrusts needed to achieve one or more complementary strategic directions.

Using your analyses from Part 1 to explicitly and clearly justify your recommendations, the anticipated outcomes, and the sort of market(s) you expect to operate in. Like Part 1, no additional research is permitted. As your strategy follows your analyses, I suggest first fixing your analyses from Part 1 if your marker found it unsound, as large sections of Part 1 are expected to appear in Part 2.

Your document will have a maximum of 3000 words (body only – all attachments do not count, tables, charts, figures do not count). It should be of a professional (commercial) standard. Page and late penalties are identical to Part 1. Your document should, at a minimum, include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Executive summary  2. Table of contents  3. Introduction and background info (shortened) 4. Environmental analysis (shortened) – historical, product/company/industry, consumer, competitor, opportunity analysis  5. Strategy & positioning recommendations  - overall strategy – address PLC (e.g. growth, differentiation, diversification)  6. Marketing goals & objectives (inc your dfn of SBU’s and a depiction of their relationship using an organisational flow chart)  - marketing mix variables (strategy for 4Ps) | 7. Sales and profit objectives –which manager does each obj.belong to? – key into org chart  8. Customer objectives – who are you going to target for your obj to work? detail enough so that the manager in charge of the objective can find and sell to these customers  9. Financial impact statement  10. Monitoring and control  - performance analysis  - consumer data feedback  11. Conclusion  12. References  13. Appendices |

In grading Part 2, your ability to overcome internal weaknesses, use strengths, and your ability to cancel your competitors’/detractors’ SCAs are prime considerations. Other prime considerations for grading is how all of the parts ‘fit together’ and address the outcomes of the internal and market analysis in Part 1. You should strive to be clear and concise. The use of graphs and tables is greatly encouraged as they provide a document that is graphic and easy to follow. The recommendations must be coherent, and be strategic. I suggest that you “work” on your planning weekly, and not leave it to the end. The plan should be the cumulative outcome of your planning and analysis work.

#### Case presentation

Each team will lead a discussion of the assignment case in different weeks of the course. This serves as a part of the progressive development of the case solution.

The presentation should present a solution or an aspect of analysis not yet presented by other teams – e.g. customer analysis, competitor analysis. Do not present your entire assignment, just one part of your analysis in-depth. You should also prepare a very brief (1 page) word processed synopsis of your presentation – this should not be a copy of presentation slides. Be careful to highlight the ‘theme’ of the day’s talk. Point form is acceptable. The document can be a handout.

In grading, a heavier emphasis will be placed on presentation skills. You must have the role of host (opens and closes the presentation, summary, introduces speakers), and speakers who present content. We will be looking for individual performance as well as team performance. Presentation expectations will be conveyed in the seminar. **READING and use of NOTES during the presentation = failing grade.** You have done the research and know the information. Use the presentation to tell us what you have found.

All team members must present. Your presentation is expected to be clear and address the application of an analysis or framework to the case. Your team must nominate the week you will present. Nominations will be on a first come first serve basis. The **timeslots for presentation (weeks 4, 5, 6) need to be booked by week 2, with your instructor** by signing up to the presentation sheet in class or by emailing Al Lee.

You will be awarded a ‘team’ and an ‘individual mark. These are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Team mark (5%) consisting of | Written 1 page 2% | Concise, clear, appearance counts – must answer topic (can be handout) |
| Discussion 3% | Actively lead discussion, get ideas from other class members (e.g. brainstorming) |
| Individual mark (5%) consisting of | Individual’s presentation | Professional dress, logic, thinking, visuals, evidence of preparation |

Teams are expected to be ready for the presentation at the commencement of the allotted slot. You are allotted 20 minutes for the presentation (10 minutes + questions).

### How you will be assessed

**Written assignments**

* Logically and critically written, demonstrating understanding of material (50%)
* Quality and relevance of references + appropriate referencing system (30%)
* General presentation, including grammar, spelling, flow, layout, attractiveness, professional looking written work (20%)

**General Assignment Standards Note: these can be substituted with your university’s policy**

A high standard of presentation in all regards is expected. All written assignments will be marked accordingly. As a guide, the following requirements must be observed:

* Correctlyreferenced (Harvard Referencing), with a Reference List. Plagiarism (i.e. copying) of any kind will not be tolerated. Please include a turn-it-in report.
* All pages numbered, cover page, TOC, headings, and paragraphs.
* Must be neat, free from spelling/punctuation mistakes, typographical errors and be grammatically well-composed.

**Prerequisites**

We assume that you have an adequate command of:

* Written and oral English – you are expected to understand, and be able to express yourself in written assignments and oral presentations according to prevailing Australian business standards,
* Basic mathematical and statistical skills,
* Basic computing and internet use and Library research skills, and
* Word processing and presentation skills.

This unit requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation. If you are not well-versed in any of these areas, you should make every effort to learn these skills by undertaking additional reading and/or practice in your own time. Do not hesitate to ask your instructor about the level of work required.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment, Part 1 – Marking sheet**  **Strategic Marketing** | | | |
| **Group members names** | | | **Subjective comments** |
| Analysis | Suitable? Critically written | /5 | Environment  Competitor/threats  Customer  Company  Critical issues  KSF/Competitive strength grid  Recommendations |
|  | Well articulated?  Logically written | /5 | Can I understand it?  Do the parts fit together? |
| Presentation | Graphs + figures? | /2 | Is it understandable?  Are these explained? |
|  | Easy to follow? | /2 | Do I have to flip back and forth to understand what you are writing?  Do I have to re-read your writing because of language problems? |
| Referencing | Referencing style correct? Each mistake -.25 marks until 0 marks achieved. | /1.5 | Harvard. In-text and end-text. |
|  | Page numbers, headings, figure numbers, graph numbers, table numbers. (each missing -.25 marks until 0 marks) | /1.5 |  |
| Group | Reflection | /1.5  for each member | Attached at the end of document |
| Language + grammar + typos. | (each mistake -.25 marks until 0 marks achieved) | /1.5 |  |
| General comments (**this is feedback**)  Turn-it-in report? Yes/No | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment, Part 2 – Marking sheet**  **Strategic Marketing** | | | |
| **Group members’ names** | | | **Subjective comments** |
| Analysis | Suitable based on analysis from Part 1? Critically written | 0/5 |  |
|  | Well articulated? Logically written | 0/2 |  |
|  | Do the different parts synthesize? | 0/3 |  |
| Presentation | Graphs + figures? | 0/2 |  |
|  | Easy to follow? | 0/2 |  |
| Referencing | Referencing style correct? Each mistake ‐.25 marks until 0 marks achieved. | 0/1.5 |  |
|  | Page numbers, headings, figure numbers, graph numbers, table numbers. (each missing ‐.25 marks until 0 marks) | 0/1.5 |  |
| Group | Reflection | 0/1.5  for each member |  |
| Language + grammar +  typos. | (each mistake ‐.25 marks  until 0 marks achieved) | 0.75/1.5 |  |
| General comments (**this is feedback**)  Turn‐it‐in report? Yes/No **Yes** | | | |

## Presentation marking sheet

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tutor: | | Date/time: | |
| Presentation copy  YES  NO | | Within time  YES  NO | |
| Overall numerical mark | | | |
| Specific positives | | Specific negatives | |
| Marking guide (+) Excellent (🗸) Acceptable (-) Poor | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Organization and presentation** | | **Content** | |
|  | | | |
| Length |  | Situational analysis |  |
| Organization of presentation |  | Is the material presented using an angle that aids understanding? |  |
| Speaker balance |  | Strategic analyses |  |
| Understandable |  | Strategic recommendations |  |
| Visual |  | Budget |  |
| Q& A |  | Supporting material for analyses |  |
| Flow |  | Did the parts ‘gel’ together? |  |
| Overall team mark |  | Summary |  |
| Marking guide (+) Excellent (🗸) Acceptable (-) Poor | | | |
| **Individual mark /5** | | | |
| Speaker 1 | | Speaker 2 | |
| Dress |  | Dress |  |
| Manner |  | Manner |  |
| Flow |  | Flow |  |
| Understandable |  | Understandable |  |
| Acknowledgement/Handoff |  | Acknowledgement/Handoff |  |
| Content appropriate |  | Content appropriate |  |
| Examples |  | Examples |  |
| Individual mark |  | Individual mark |  |
| **Individual mark /5** | | | |
| Speaker 3 | | Speaker 4 | |
| Dress |  | Dress |  |
| Manner |  | Manner |  |
| Flow |  | Flow |  |
| Understandable |  | Understandable |  |
| Acknowledgement/Handoff |  | Acknowledgement/Handoff |  |
| Content appropriate |  | Content appropriate |  |
| Examples |  | Examples |  |
| Individual mark |  | Individual mark |  |
| **Individual mark /5** | | | |
| Speaker 5 | | Speaker 6 | |
| Dress |  | Dress |  |
| Manner |  | Manner |  |
| Flow |  | Flow |  |
| Understandable |  | Understandable |  |
| Acknowledgement/Handoff |  | Acknowledgement/Handoff |  |
| Content appropriate |  | Content appropriate |  |
| Examples |  | Examples |  |
| Individual mark |  | Individual mark |  |

## Strategic Marketing Team Contract

Teams must consist of members attending the same tutorial. The tutor’s permission is required if you wish to have teams fewer than 4 members. We prefer 6 per team. Please nominate a group leader.

Tutor’s Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tutorial Day:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Tutorial Time:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Group Members (Names, Student ID, contact information, and signature):

Teams will endeavour to resolve disputes within the group. If you are experiencing difficulties with group interaction mechanics and cannot work it out, please approach your tutor prior to handing any work in. The teaching staff will not mediate any complaints that arise after work is handed in.

All members will get the same mark for group-work unless there is a dispute. In the case of a dispute that cannot be resolved, each member will have to complete a confidential peer-evaluation form that states the percentage of marks awarded to the other group members. The final grade awarded to each group member will be an average of what their peers have awarded them.

**Please hand this form to your tutor by Week 3 of semester. Your tutor will keep this form on file until the results for this unit are released.**

**Tutorial Make-Up Attendance Sheet**

This sheet is to be signed by the tutor in the make-up tutorial. It is to be countersigned by the tutor in your assigned tutorial. Your normal tutor will keep this slip for records. Even with make-up tutorials, missing more than three of your regularly scheduled tutorials will result in a lower mark. You can miss a maximum of three tutorials.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student name |  |
| Student ID |  |
| Normal tute time/day |  |
| Normal tutor  Signature |  |
| Make-up time/date |  |
| Make-up tutor  Signature |  |

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student name |  |
| Student ID |  |
| Normal tute time/day |  |
| Normal tutor  Signature |  |
| Make-up time/date |  |
| Make-up tutor  Signature |  |

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student name |  |
| Student ID |  |
| Normal tute time/day |  |
| Normal tutor  Signature |  |
| Make-up time/date |  |
| Make-up tutor  Signature |  |