MBA630 Marketing Strategy  
Fall Semester 2013 -- 3 credit hours  
Instructor: Paul L. Sauer  
Class meets: Thursday 6:00 – 8:45 p.m.  
Canisius Center @ Amherst  
Phone: 888-2631  
E-mail: sauer@canisius.edu  
Office: Churchill Tower 402  
Office Hours: Tu, Th 2:30 to 3:45 p.m.  
and by appointment

REQUIRED MATERIALS


StratSim Marketing, Michael Deighan, Stuart W. James, and Thomas C. Kinnear, Interpretive Software. (students purchase online directly from: http://www.interpretive.com/students).

NOTE: All students are required to pay for StratSim. You will need to directly pay for it at: http://www.interpretive.com/students. No team decisions may be entered until all team members have paid and registered for StratSim. Interpretive Solutions has the names of all members of all teams.

Course prerequisites

- Graduate level MBA 508 Minimum Grade of C-
- Graduate level MBA 506 Minimum Grade of C-

Communications - ANGEL & GoToMeeting

Teacher-student communication in this course is conducted not only during class meetings and office hours, but also through the use online Internet software supported by Canisius College, namely Angel, accessed at http://angel.canisius.edu. Please check Angel regularly for updates to the syllabus, the course schedule, and other course related matters.

Working on team projects can be difficult, especially if you are working during the day when enrolled in a part-time evening MBA program. Increasingly new software developments, notably in the realms of social media and cloud computing, are enabling collaboration between team members who cannot physically meet to work on a project. While you are free to use any media you wish to use to communicate and collaborate with your team members on the StratSim project, there are two which are available to you through Canisius College.
1. Team-oriented communication features of Angel such as team chat rooms and team discussion boards and discussion threads may be helpful in your StratSim team project. Each team will have restricted team intra-communication privileges that members of other teams cannot view set up Angel.

2. Canisius has adopted and implemented Citrix GoToMeeting software. GoToMeeting now offers us a new 'student room' feature. Please sign up if you have not already done so. You may sign up for your own GoToMeeting accounts now at: http://www.canisius.edu/gotomeeting.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The characteristics and management of markets are described in topics that include the marketing environment, components of the marketing mix, market segmentation, and planning. You will find the organization of the textbook and course generally follows that of a marketing plan.

**COURSE PERSPECTIVE**

The course focuses on formulating and implementing marketing management strategies and policies, a task undertaken in most companies at the strategic business unit level. The marketing management process is important at all levels of the organization, regardless of the title applied to the activity. Typically, it is called corporate marketing, strategic marketing, or marketing management. For our purposes they all involve essentially the same process, even though the actors and activities may differ. The course will provide you with a systematic framework for understanding and applying marketing strategy.

Accordingly, the course emphasizes the following:

- Primary and changing perspectives on marketing strategy.
- The impact of interactive media on marketing strategy.
- Applied marketing strategy, domestic and global.
- An international focus in developing marketing strategy.

The course is intended for:

- Marketing concentration students who wish to deepen their understanding of marketing management in a strategy-planning context.
- Non-marketing concentration students who desire a course in marketing strategy, with a management and planning orientation.
COURSE GOALS

To further disseminate and develop the knowledge and skills in the essential aspects of marketing management, marketing strategy, and emerging marketing applications, with a focus on the development and execution of programs, audits, and plans.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is concerned with the development, evaluation, and implementation of marketing strategy in complex environments. The course deals primarily with an in-depth analysis of a variety of concepts, theories, facts, analytical procedures, techniques, and models. The course addresses strategic issues such as:

- What business should we be in?
- What are our long-term objectives?
- What is our sustainable marketing competitive advantage?
- Should we diversify?
- How should marketing resources be allocated?
- What marketing opportunities and threats do we face?
- What are our marketing organizational strengths and weaknesses?
- What are our marketing strategic alternatives?

To ensure that students have a solid foundation of the fundamental marketing decision-making tools and management of all of the elements of the marketing plan.

Through the in-depth semester-long simulation, students will be provided the opportunity to apply those marketing planning and decision-making skills. We will be building upon these principles throughout this course, especially those principles that you have learned in Marketing MBA506 or equivalent.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the range of decisions implicit in strategic marketing management and planning.
- To develop skill in using a variety of analytical frameworks for making such decisions.
- To develop an understanding of how markets contrast in terms of their “enduring characteristics, and their stage of development and how the nature of competition in such markets is impacted.
- To develop skills in planning a variety of marketing management tools, ranging from new product entry strategy to international market product life cycle management and strategy.
- To develop skill in organizing for effective strategic marketing and in implementing the
COURSE STRUCTURE

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” (William Butler Yeats)

While the major part of the course centers on the StratSim simulation, it also includes weekly quizzes on assigned reading material and in-class discussions of current marketing-related decisions and announcements of major companies and organizations.

StratSim Experience – A Ten-year Marketing Effort

An effective way to help you learn about marketing management is to experience the challenges of managing a business or a brand in a simulated environment. Reading textbooks teaches the foundations of business theory, and real-world experience often demonstrates the challenges of putting those theories into practice. The lessons of experience usually have the greatest impact because people tend to learn best by doing, not solely by reading or hearing about other people’s experiences. However, real-world experience has its drawbacks as well, most notably expense and the passage of time. Simulations represent a sensible balance between the two. Though clearly not as rich as reality, simulations can capture the essence of reality and help us practice implementing business theory without the potentially large costs of errors. This project is designed to accomplish such a task.

Simulations are one of many different methods for learning business skills. The purpose in StratSim is to use the strengths of both the case and simulation methodologies and have the two build on each other for the benefit of the student. Therefore, StratSim is designed to have all of the characteristics of case analysis, while also placing the participant into a dynamic, simulated business environment. The participant may access a number of in-depth marketing reports in the software that enhance the information provided in the case and provide the foundation for the simulation. These reports cover a broad spectrum of functional areas and can easily be used as the basis for a number of class discussions.

StratSim focuses on the following framework:

- Situation Analysis and the 5Cs (context, customers, competitors, collaborators, company)
- STP - Segmentation, targeting and positioning
- Marketing mix (4Ps – product, price, promotion, place)
- Integrated marketing decision-making and analysis

The class will be divided into groups to form management teams (three students maximum per group). During the course of the semester each team will manage this business and make decisions based on the concepts presented in class and in the textbook. See the course schedule at the end of this syllabus to see when specific decisions and assignments are due.
In the simulation, you or your team will be competing directly against other teams in your class who are in the same industry. Decisions are centered on the 4Ps of marketing, and made once each simulated year. All your decisions will be saved to the server, so you must be on-line to make decisions. Anyone else on your team will be able to see your decisions after you have left a particular decision screen.

**Important! Everyone on your team is sharing one decision file, so you will need to decide how best to divide the decision responsibilities. Please note that as a safeguard against overwriting each other’s decisions, no two people will be able to enter the same decision screen at the same time.**

Once all competitors have made these annual decisions, the simulation will be advanced, and the results will be updated. These results will be dependent upon your decisions, those of your competitors, and the evolution of the market.

Each industry will develop uniquely based on how the competitors interact, what new products are introduced, and how these products are supported. As you will soon see, StratSim provides a very dynamic learning experience. Customer needs will evolve, new products will be introduced, and the economy will have its ups and downs. The simulation is designed to be a fun, but challenging, experience.

Competing in the StratSim environment will require complex analysis and decision-making. Therefore, take some time to familiarize yourself with the program and manual before beginning the exercise. While working through the simulation, you will find it helpful to refer to the manual for information and strategy tips. Sections 3 and 4 of the manual contain helpful reference material.

The design of the application of StratSim in this course is such that your team will have an opportunity to make a first year practice decision on Sept. 5. This practice run gives your team the opportunity to view the results of the simulation’s first period, which you can analyze before restarting the simulation from the beginning. This gives your team a chance to learn how to use the interface, experiment with a set of decisions, and work out some basic logistics in a low-risk environment.

As of the third class meeting on September 12, the simulation will be reset. From that point on the actual team simulation will begin. Your team will have until September 19 to discuss among yourselves your actual first year decisions and enter them into StratSim. You will have until 9:00 a.m. on the Friday morning after each Thursday class to finalize and submit your final decisions for the designated year. Once the simulation is run on Friday morning you will not be able to revise your decisions for that period and results will be permanent. Once the simulation has been advanced, select REFRESH DATA, or just login again to view the updated results. Review the results in the market before making decisions for the next year.
**StratSim Assignments**

During the 10 year period when you are making decisions, your team will have four StratSim assignments to help you improve and implement your marketing plan. These assignments are available in Angel and are due on the following dates:

1. StratSim Market Attractiveness Assignment Due Sept. 12
2. StratSim SWOT Assignment Due Oct. 3
3. StratSim Competitor Assignment Due Oct. 24
4. StratSim Outside Assignment Due Nov. 14

**StratSim Marketing Performance: Team & Individual.**

**Team performance** in the StratSim simulation will be graded on a combination of metrics that are available in the simulation. Teams will be evaluated on: (1) Comparative cumulative figures and (2) Improvements in the metrics.

**Individual Team Member Performance:** If during the semester someone in your team is not pulling their weight, the other team members may fire that person. This fired member must find a new team or receive an F in the course. (Note: If you get fired, good luck in finding a new team!). Please inform me of the team’s decision, so I may have a conversation with the ousted member. **Peer evaluations** will be used to evaluate and possibly adjust the StratSim related grades of team members at the end of the semester.

**StratSim Performance Report**

See Chapters 14 to 16 in *Market-based Management*: A written report is to be submitted with supporting exhibits and spreadsheet reports. Report is to be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides of the paper, using 12 point Times New Roman font. Each team will present their report on the final exam date, December 12.

Include the following:

1. A **debriefing** of the performance over the past ten years including key decisions and their impact on performance.

2. Prepare a **letter to shareholders**: Part of a company’s annual report is a letter to shareholders that provides a CEO’s perspective on the current state of your business. Now that you have formalized your strategy and become a more seasoned StratSim management team, it is time to convince current and potential shareholders that an investment in your company has positive potential returns. Your goal is to provide a persuasive, yet honest appraisal of your company and its future prospects. Your letter to shareholders should consist of an update on your strategy, including target markets, management structure, key accomplishments and challenges, and future performance objectives. In addition, please discuss your most direct competitor and how and why you
are positioned to outperform them in the future. **The letter itself should be only 1-2 pages**, but you may provide up to 5 supporting exhibits on additional pages. Here are a couple examples:


3. **Future strategic direction**: Your strategy will serve as your firm’s “roadmap” throughout the simulation. Your marketing plan should consist of 5 elements: Business definition and rationale, source of competitive advantage, performance objectives, key success factors, and strategic assumptions. You may also find it helpful to review the Market-Based Marketing Management section of the StratSim manual. Please respond to the following questions to create an overall definition of your strategy.

1. **Business Definition**: Who do you want to serve and why? Be sure to include customers/segments to be targeted and customer needs satisfied. What is the rationale for these choices (examples: segment attractiveness, market gaps, fit with resources, synergies)?
2. **Source of Competitive Advantage**: With which competitors will you compete and how do you intend to win against them?
3. **Performance Objectives**: What performance goals do you have for your firm? (examples: highest cumulative profit, highest stock price, largest market share in target markets, etc.)
4. **Key Success Factors**: What is required of your firm to execute this strategy successfully? (examples: product development, outspend competition, first in market, etc.)
5. **Strategic Assumptions**: For your strategy to be successful, are there any underlying assumptions that you have made? (examples: Firm A exits the family segment, able to introduce a new truck by period 4, first mover advantages, etc.)

A strategic marketing plan that includes 10 years of history and projects activity 2 years into the future.

This strategic marketing plan will be evaluated in terms of:
- Appropriateness of the plan
- Depth of analysis
- Reasonable assumptions
- Support for the plan
- Careful and thorough use of strategic marketing concepts
- Comprehensiveness
- Professional presentation including writing style and support materials
- Adherence to the Marketing Plan structure
**StratSim Oral Presentation**

Your team’s oral presentation will be primarily graded on the use of strategic marketing concepts and the professionalism of the presentation. Treat the oral presentation as an annual shareholders meeting at which you making a case for investing in your company. Use the content of the debriefing, letter to shareholders and future direction of your company to guide the content of your oral presentation. Examples:

- General Motors
- 3M Investor Meeting

**Quizzes**

Long-term retention is improved when students engage in numerous study sessions (distributed practice) rather than when they “cram” during a single session on the night before a quiz or exam (mass practice). To encourage students to keep up with the readings, which are also important for the quality of in-class interactions, I will be giving a 10-question quiz at the beginning of each class. Quiz questions will be based on assigned textbook readings for that class meeting date with a couple questions from the StratSim student manual. The questions will be multiple choice. It should not be difficult to do well on the quizzes if you have carefully read the assignment for the week and are familiar with StratSim. We will have a total of thirteen quizzes, one at the beginning of each class meeting beginning with the second class meeting on September 6 and continuing through to the last class on November 28. I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

**Current Topic Presentation & Class Discussion**

Students designated for presentation at each class meeting will present a real-world example of a recent marketing decision by a company or organization or a marketing trend and lead a brief class discussion that critiques that decision or trend. Marketing decisions often involve changes in strategy or tactics. Consider any changes in any one of the 4-Ps: the product/brand itself, the price, the channel of distribution, or the promotional mix. Examples of recent decisions or trends include:

- (Pricing) A la carte airline pricing and seat reservations
- (Product) Starbucks Refreshers beverages
- (Distribution) First Niagara to buy HSBC branches
- (Promotion) United Airlines' decision on new ad agency still in holding pattern
- (Retailing) Best Buy will close 50 of its 1,100 U.S. big-box stores and convert 60 of the rest to the new format -- fighting back against 'showrooming'
- (Promotion) The president's campaign puts out a steady stream of smears against Mitt Romney
- (SBUs) General Electric is splitting its energy-infrastructure business into three stand-alone operations
Best 6th with StratSim

• (New product; pricing) Microsoft upgrade to Windows 8 Pro - available to users running Windows XP, Vista, or 7 - will cost $40 to download.

To balance the student presentations across the semester, a sign-up sheet will be circulated at the first class meeting. Presentations should relate to the assigned material for that specific class meeting. Each student should plan to spend about 5 to 7 minutes explaining the real-world marketing-related decision. The discussion that pursues should focus on why the marketing-related decision was good or not.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

“If you think you’re too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito.” (Bette Reese)

The course is interactive both between class members and with the instructor. Students will have the opportunity to apply the marketing concepts, tactics, and strategies described in the textbook and discussed in class through the StratSim project. The textbook used in this includes references to the StratSim simulation.

Classes will begin with a twenty-minute, ten-item quiz. We will follow the quiz with a discussion of the material designated for that class meeting. At this time you should raise any questions or make any comments you have regarding the assigned material and how it relates to StratSim. After our class discussion we will take a ten-minute break. After the break students will present their chosen current topic and lead a brief class discussion. The remainder of the class following the discussions will be allocated to StratSim team decision-making. At this time I will be available to consult with each team on an as-needed basis.

Note that occasionally, changes in the schedule of the course, or in the assignments, are announced during class. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have received all of the changes and you will still be responsible for this information.

EVALUATION

Evaluation will be based on twelve quizzes, current topic presentation and discussion, StratSim Performance, and your final group oral and written presentation of performance results and plans for the next two years centered on your StratSim marketing plan. If you miss or are late for class and fail to take a quiz you will receive 0 points for that quiz. There will be no make-up quizzes. You may, however, drop two quiz grades, only one of which is a quiz that you missed. The second quiz score you may drop is for a quiz you actually took, but most likely the one on which you received the lowest score.

The weightings for the individual components are as follows:
### Work Evaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Topic Presentation &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StratSim Assignments (4 @ 50 points each)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StratSim Performance</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StratSim Written Report – Letter to Shareholders, Performance Metrics and Strategic Marketing Plan</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StratSim Oral Presentation of Performance and Strategic Direction</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**GRADING**

Grading components for this course is as follows:

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900-929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>870-899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830-869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800-829</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>750-799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-749</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 700</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Grades lower than C do not count toward a Business Degree.

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**PROGRESS IN COURSE**

At any time during the semester you can determine your progress in this course by dividing the total points you have earned up to that date by the maximum number of points you could have earned and multiplying this quotient by 100. Then use the letter grade chart above to determine into which letter grade range you would fall. By adding the number of points still available in the remainder of the course, you can estimate based on your projected performance what your expected grade in the course may be. *No curving or rescaling of the letter grade scale will be done on individual assignments, quizzes or exams.* At the end of the semester when all grades are in, I will reevaluate the scale to determine if an adjustment should be made. Every semester there are usually students who fail this course, so failure is an option.
COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance:** There is no minimum or maximum number of absences set for this course. Students are expected to prepare for each class, to attend regularly, and to make responsible decisions about time management and attendance. No make-up privileges will be granted for classes, quizzes or exams missed without a valid reason (e.g. verifiable illness, accident, etc.).

- **Academic Conduct:** Students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical manner in this course. Guidelines of unacceptable behavior and the penalties incurred by such are described in the Academic Misconduct section of the Canisius College catalog (http://www.canisius.edu/catalog/graduate/procedures.asp). Essentially the Code is self-administered as follows:

  The Code of Academic Integrity automatically binds all Canisius College students. As a reminder and reinforcement of the ideals this code embodies, faculty members are asked to place a pledge on scheduled tests and assignments, as well as in the course syllabus. Students, in turn, are asked to carefully consider and sign the pledge, which reads:

  As a member of the Canisius College Community, I understand and will uphold the standards for academic behavior as stated in the Code of Academic Integrity.

  Signed ___________________________ Student ID ____________________

  Please include this pledge along with your signature on all written assignments, reports, etc. that you hand in to me during the semester.

- **Plagiarism & Team Projects:** Students working in teams have the obligation to check each other’s submissions to guarantee that no part of the team submitted document is plagiarized. In the event that any part of a team project is plagiarized, all members of the team will be held responsible and penalties will be applied to all, regardless of whether or not one member later confesses. Submissions may be checked for plagiarism by utilizing one of the programs such as Turnitin.com available through the Canisius College library website.

- **Withdrawal:** Students may withdraw from this course without academic penalty at any time before the end of the twelfth week of the semester. Please consult the online Canisius College catalog for further details: (http://www.canisius.edu/images/userImages/chuckp/Page_4285/GraduateCat_2010_12.pdf)
• **Disabilities and Health Issues:** Students with disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, hearing impairment, etc.) which might make it difficult to complete any activities, assignments or testing required in this course should notify the instructor as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements may be made. They should also contact the Office of Disabilities Support Services (Old Main 004, ext. 3748) for detailed information about campus resources and services available to them. Students with health conditions (e.g. seizures, hypoglycemia, etc.) which might require emergency intervention during class time are encouraged to share this information with the instructor so that appropriate care may be provided in the event of a classroom occurrence.

**LEARNING ASSISTANCE**

**Learning Assistance:** Students who wish to pursue learning beyond the classroom or who are encountering difficulty in this course should consult with the instructor. The Department of Academic Development (Old Main 319, ext. 2265) also provides tutorial assistance to students upon demand.
# PLANNED COURSE SCHEDULE
**MBA 630 MARKETING STRATEGY**  
**FALL SEMESTER 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Period/ Date</th>
<th>Read Best Chapter</th>
<th>Market-based Management By Roger J. Best Chapter Topic</th>
<th>StratSim Assignments Due Beginning of Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 AUG. 28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Customer Focus, Customer Performance, and Profit Impact</td>
<td>Introduction to StratSim. Group formation for StratSim. StratSim Case Preparation and Review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SEPT. 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marketing Metrics and Marketing profitability</td>
<td>Quiz 1.Best Ch 2 StratSim Practice Decision Round (understand the environment and competition, market research &amp; consumer surveys)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 SEPT. 12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Market Potential, Market Demand, and Market Share</td>
<td>Quiz 2. Best Ch 3 Market Attractiveness Assignment Due Simulation Restart</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 SEPT. 19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Customer Experience and Value Creation</td>
<td>Quiz 3. Best Ch 4 StratSim Decision 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 SEPT. 26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Market Segmentation and Segmentation Strategies</td>
<td>Quiz 4. Best Ch 5 StratSim Decision 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 OCT. 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Competitive Position and Sources of Advantage</td>
<td>Quiz 5. Best Ch 6 StratSim Decision 3 StratSim SWOT Assignment Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 OCT. 10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Product Positioning, Branding, and Product Line Strategies</td>
<td>Quiz 6. Best Ch 7 StratSim Decision 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 OCT. 17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Value-Based Pricing and Pricing Strategies</td>
<td>Quiz 7. Best Ch 8 StratSim Decision 5</td>
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105
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Period/Date</th>
<th>Read Best Chapter</th>
<th>Market-based Management By Roger J. Best Chapter Topic</th>
<th>StratSim Assignments Due Beginning of Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 OCT. 24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Marketing Channels and Channel Mapping</td>
<td>Quiz 8. Best Ch 9</td>
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<td>StratSim Decision 6</td>
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<td><strong>StratSim Competitor Assignment Due.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 OCT. 31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Marketing Communications, Social Media, and Customer Response</td>
<td>Quiz 9. Best Ch 10</td>
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<td>StratSim Decision 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 NOV. 7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Market Planning</td>
<td>Quiz 10. Best Ch 11</td>
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<td>StratSim Decision 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 NOV. 14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Offensive Strategies</td>
<td>Quiz 11. Best Ch 12</td>
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<td>StratSim Decision 9</td>
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<td><strong>StratSim Outside Assignment Due.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 NOV. 21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Defensive Strategies</td>
<td>Quiz 12. Best Ch 13</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>StratSim Decision 10</td>
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<td>14 NOV. 28</td>
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<td><strong>Thanksgiving Recess</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Market-based Management and Financial Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC. 12</td>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>StratSim Team Presentations</td>
<td><strong>StratSim Final Presentations: Letter to Shareholders, Debrief &amp; Future Strategic Direction</strong></td>
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