

EPS7574-XX Course Description

Graduate Level

Marketing for Entrepreneurs

Fall 2008

Instructor: Bob Caspe

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Introduction

This document is intended to set the correct student expectations for the elective course titled “Marketing for Entrepreneurs” EPS7574-71 as taught by Bob Caspe for the Fall 2008 semester. This will provide students the opportunity to add or drop it before attending any of the thirteen sessions. As well, please feel free to distribute this document to other students who you think might be interested in this course.

General Description and Course Objectives

This course is intended as a practical workshop and guide for those who are interested in starting small companies. Although it is part of the Marketing curriculum, this course is interdisciplinary and covers topics ranging from strategic marketing and tactical marketing to finance and leadership. The course contains hands on guidance and instruction in the process of tuning one’s business plan, value proposition, and strategy so as to achieve real success.

You will be asked to focus upon short term objectives that can be readily achieved for your business as opposed to longer term abstractions. The goal of the course is to allow each of the business plans to achieve measurable success with initial forays that lead to cash flow positive results as soon as practical. This means actually pushing the plan forward with potential customers and channel partners. You will be required to identify, plan and execute a “first transaction” with a real customer or reseller.

The students will be divided into roughly 9 business teams. Each team will work together to create a clearer sense of strategy, value and direction. Teams are formed voluntarily. The maximum number of students per team is 4. Those students who are coming to the class with strong business ideas that they are already committed to should be prepared to pitch their ideas to other students at the first session in order to recruit team members. For students without prior commitments, this is an opportunity to gain practical experience while working on someone else’s idea.

This will involve the creation of real marketing materials including brochures, advertisements and direct mail pieces and it will involve research conducted with actual potential customers or resellers. A substantial part of the semester is taken with the active discussion and debate of the team concepts and plans with an attempt to focus on positive and constructive feedback.

This course is not designed for those who are interested in marketing careers in large well funded companies. Nor is it useful if you do not have a desire to learn through the exercise of actual hands-on research and execution. This is not a theory based course, but rather a course based upon the real life experiences of the instructor, guests and those experiences gathered by the class during the process of developing their business and marketing plans. The class will be

encouraged each week to present their current progress and then to critique the plans of each of the other teams.

I encourage students to carefully review the primary textbook before deciding to continue with this course.

Instructor – Bob Caspe

The instructor of this class, Bob Caspe, has substantial experience in small company startup. He has founded and served as CEO of three high technology companies within the Boston area. He has direct hands on experience in developing OEM relationships, retail and consumer direct marketing programs and various business-to-business endeavors. A detailed resume and a review of his current consulting activities can be found on his company website: <http://www.caspegroup.com>. He is not a professor by trade and his teaching methods are based less upon theoretical principals and more upon the practical experience that he has gained in his 30 years of corporate development.

Tests, Presentations and Final Exam

There is no final exam. There are several **optional** tests located on the blackboard system which serve as a review and guidance for developing a clear understanding of the reading and lecture material. The grades earned for these tests are **not** used in determining your final grade. They are only for the purpose in assisting you in getting the most out of the reading and lecture materials.

It has been found to be most helpful if you diligently take these tests just prior to or just after the lecture on the related material.

Teams are responsible for generating and updating over the semester two presentations: a **Basic Business Presentation** and a **Campaign Presentation**. The required contents for these presentations are called out in the Blackboard document area.

- The **Basic Business Presentation** should be started once the team formation has been done and should be updated over the course of the semester.
- The **Campaign Presentation** should be started after the session on Research.

Class Format and Agenda

Classes are 2.5 hours, meeting on Wednesday from 6:30PM to 9:00PM. Class will start promptly at 6:30PM. Each class will have the following format:

- ½ hour to 1 hour presentation by the instructor on the Session Topic
 - ½ hour Guest presentation with Q&A or Case Study Discussion
- 10 minute break

- 80 minutes of Team Presentations and discussion of individual team projects. Note that with 9 teams, each team will present for roughly 30 minutes, once every 3 weeks. Actual presentations may be 10 minutes or less with the remaining time used for feedback and discussion.

Laptops and Cell phones

While laptop computers are not prohibited the instructor asks that everyone please remember that it is extremely difficult to teach or for your fellow students to present when members of the audience appear to be distracted or disinterested. Therefore, please show the courtesy of turning off your cell phone and using your laptop only for relevant course related items.

Attendance

As a graduate course, attendance is up to the individual.

Instructor Meetings

The instructor is available for meetings with either teams or individual students. Students or teams should request a meeting by email to: rcaspe@babson.edu with several alternative desired dates and times. **It is strongly suggested that each student either individually or as part of their team meets with the instructor at least once every three weeks. Note that it is the responsibility of the students to request and initiate these meetings.** The instructor's schedule is quite flexible. Meetings in general will be in Olin on the ground floor unless the student specifically requests privacy.

Any student who is entitled to an academic accommodation based on the impact of a documented disAbility should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Please also contact Erin Evans, Coordinator of disAbility services, at 781-239-4075 or in Hollister Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

The Blackboard Contents

The Blackboard system will be used extensively for posting of all class materials. The Documents area has a separate folder for each Session. Within that folder will be the instructor's PowerPoint presentation, reading materials, resumes of guests and other relevant materials to the session. As well, there is a General Folder which contains materials that are useful throughout the course.

Once the teams are specified, there will be individual Group areas designated for each group so that they might more easily exchange documents. As well, there will be a discussion board for each individual group. **ALL** students are required to comment on the other teams through these discussion boards.

Syllabus

The syllabus for this class is divided into 13 Sessions that are described in detail as follows.

SESSION	DESCRIPTION
1	Course Introduction & Innovation. Instructor Introduction. Homework review. How does a business begin? Finding opportunities. Looking at a few examples including Liberty Medical Supply. Individual presentations for Team proposals.
2	Pre-existing Categories. Creating plans for new category products or pre-existing category products. Identifying your product category. Identifying competition. Discussion of the TIVO case study.
3	New Categories and Direct Marketing. How to handle a new category and how direct marketing works.
4	Value Systems. Value statements are necessary for both the customer and the channel partners. We'll look at the differences.
5	OEM. Structuring an OEM deal with a corporate partner.
6	Film Making and Advertising Tools. Introduction to audio and video editing.
7	Transaction Selling. Selling skills, transaction based selling, running a sales meeting, sales measurement tools, and public speaking.
8	The Campaign & Campaign P&L. Create a campaign and understand how to figure out if it's working.
9	Public Relations. The role of PR for small companies.
10	Retail Distribution. Selling through conventional Retail channels like Wal-Mart.
11	The Venture Presentation and Deal. Raising money. Making a VC pitch
12	Student Presentations Begin. . Teams will begin to present their final presentations.
13	Leadership & Student Presentations End. Recruiting. Leading. Decision making.

Grading

As a graduate level course, the focus of this course is on learning and the exercise of ideas and strategies. It is not on grading or student evaluation. Often, students will discover that their business strategies are fatally flawed. This is considered a normal part of this course. Grading is therefore a function of commitment and hard work to both the process of developing one's own plan as well as the assistance with other teams in the evaluation of their plans. Everyone in the class is expected to be knowledgeable and involved in all of the proposed business strategies.

Grades will be a function of:

- **50% team submissions – based upon clarity, rationality and completeness.**

- **50% Class participation including active review and discourse of other team's projects both in-class as well as on the discussion forum. Students are expected to add a minimum of three discussion board comments per week relating to other team presentations.**

Guest Speakers

Several of our classes may be joined by guest speakers who are directly from industry. They will give a brief 15 minute talk on a particular topic and then are available for Q&A. They will also remain for the entire class and assist in providing critique for the Team Presentations that are made. This schedule is highly flexible. Speaker's resumes and presentations can be found in the course Session folder. Students are encouraged to independently research the guest speaker's background and be prepared to question them.

Textbook and other Reading Materials

The principal textbook (approximately 150 pages) for this course “Marketing for Entrepreneurs” was written by the instructor and is available in PDF format at no charge on the Blackboard system located in the General Folder of the Documents Area. Specific required readings from this textbook are called out in each session folder and must be done prior to that session.

In addition to other documents that may arise during the semester, the following documents are required reading. Each document is available as shown and must be read prior to the Session in which it is referenced. The individual reading lists are shown in each Session Folder in the Document Area of the Blackboard System.