



MKT 4150
Managing the Service Experience
Bowling Green State University
Spring 2014

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Class Hours:	T, Th 9:30-10:45 a.m. (in BA 117)	
Office Hours:	T, Th 11:00-12:00 noon; and other times <i>by appointment</i>	

Required Readings

Dasu, Srira and Richard B. Chase (2013), *The Customer Service Solution: Managing Emotions, Trust, and Control to Win Your Customer's Business*, New York: McGraw-Hill. (*Used copies of this book are okay.*)

Wood, Marian Burk (2014), *The Marketing Plan Handbook*, 5th Edition, Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson. (If you are a marketing student and/or intend on pursuing a marketing-related career, then you should purchase this book. If you are pursuing something else, you will need to read this book but not necessarily purchase it.)

Recommended Book

William Strunk and E. B. White (1979), *The Elements of Style*, Third Edition, New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Co. (*This is not required, but is an excellent little book for improving your writing skills.*)

Course Prerequisites

Student must have earned a "C" or better in MKT 4050.

Course Description

This course is intended to give you exposure to the role and responsibility of the manager of a service business or organization. The focal point of the class will be the development of a marketing plan, including an environmental analysis, customer analysis, development of product objectives and strategies, and operational details of execution. In particular, the course is designed to give you "hands on" experience in developing a marketing plan for a selected client organization and presenting recommendations to it.

This course will explore the unique managerial problems and decisions that occur when service providers attempt to manage the service experience for their customers. The course is designed to prepare students to deal with service issues that arise in delivering service (i.e., the *service experience*). Of particular interest to marketing managers are concerns of the design, management, and maintenance of all aspects of the service delivery process when considering marketing issues such as segmenting, targeting, and positioning. Special emphasis will be given to service design issues and the role the service experience has in the development of effective services marketing strategy.

Course Objectives

The intent of this course is to introduce, discuss, and analyze several topics important to the marketing and management of service businesses. After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Appreciate the unique challenges involved in managing services and creating good service experiences for customers.
- Understand how creating excellent service experiences for customers can be a source of competitive advantage in almost all industries.
- Develop and execute research strategies for identifying current and prospective markets for a selected client, forecasting demand, and evaluating competitor strategies and tactics.
- Formulate appropriate service marketing objectives and strategies after completing a situation analysis.
- Integrate all of the above into a comprehensive written marketing plan which will serve as a guiding document for the client organization.
- Clearly present and summarize the key aspects of this marketing plan to the client organization.
- Learn to cope with issues you will have to confront in the “real world,” including (but certainly not limited to) uncertainty, insufficient information and resources, other pressing demands on your time, and limited direction provided by management.
- Gain experience in dealing with those over whom you have no control (client, teammates, instructor).
- Enjoy themselves while accomplishing all of the above.

Additionally, the course assignments are designed to continue to improve students’ verbal, written, and thinking skills in preparing them for positions in the business world.

Instructor Expectations of Students

A goal for the classroom is to have a positive, attentive, courteous environment that is conducive to learning. Being on time, being alert, actively participating in discussions and activities, staying for the full class time, and generally contributing to the learning experience of one’s classmates are desirable behaviors. Class will be a combination of instructor lectures, interactive class discussions, field trips, and in-class activities. Students will be required (and *expected*) to complete assigned readings prior to class sessions during which those readings are examined. Assignments that are to be printed are due in class at the beginning of class on the specified due date.

Students are expected to conduct themselves *professionally* in all matters related to this class. Thus, students should act professionally while in class and prepare all assignments in a professional manner. To illustrate:

- Inappropriate verbal comments directed toward others in class will not be tolerated.
- **Cell phones should be turned off during class—and, no texting.** (In an *emergency* situation, the instructor should be notified before class about the emergency and that the phone may disrupt class. If a phone rings/vibrates or a student is found to be texting during class, the student will be asked to leave the room and not return that day.)
- Unless otherwise noted, the major written assignments should be typed or word-processed and free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- Cheating of any type will not be tolerated, including plagiarism. (Any students who are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism should see the instructor. Any assignment containing plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero.)

Role Descriptions

Professor. As I see it, my role has two aspects. The first is to be an important resource (coach?) to students for advice and assistance; the second is to serve as evaluator of student progress and the final product, the marketing plan. As an evaluator of a student's progress, I must apply academic standards to the work performed. As such, my responsibility is to refuse poor work and shoddy methods and to demand rewrites so as to protect the integrity of all involved. (Believe me, I take my part seriously!)

Client. The client is often the primary source of information available to the students in determining the long-run objectives, problem areas, and critical decisions facing the business. Therefore, the client's primary contact person is expected to be available regularly to answer questions and express opinions regarding issues relating to the business. He or she should recognize that the quality of work achieved by the team will be directly related to the completeness and accuracy of the information provided for analysis. Therefore, the client is expected to make available any records, files, and financial statements necessary for students to complete the marketing plan. Generally speaking, students' out-of-pocket expenses for market research (e.g., copying, postage, envelopes) or printing/copying of the final report/plan are expected to be borne by the client.

Student. In interacting with both the client and the professor, students should conduct themselves in a professional manner. Students are expected to do the best job they can for their clients. In fact, since this is designated as a **capstone course** for the Sales and Services Marketing specialization, *I expect you to put more effort into this project than you have for any class in your college career.* It may come as a surprise to you, but most students can be remarkably successful by simply applying the knowledge of service marketing and management concepts they have—and that clients often lack—to the specific problems their clients face. Students should prepare adequately for client meetings. Information revealed by the client should be shared only with classmates and the instructor. In general, keep the following points in mind:

- Be honest. You are the service marketing and management experts. Tell the client (tactfully) what you really think.
- Be dependable. Be on time for appointments, punctual with promised services.
- Communicate effectively. Be sure the client really understands.
- Do not expect to know all the answers. Seek help if problems arise in areas where you lack expertise.
- Be considerate of the client. Respect his or her confidentiality, time, experience, and opinions.
- Help the client become self-sufficient. Too much help, on the one hand, or exaggerated goals which cannot possibly be reached on the other, are both demoralizing. This project should also be a learning experience for the client in analyzing problems and making decisions. When the semester ends and the team leaves, the client should be able to carry on alone.

Class Attendance

As is the case in most businesses, student attendance and promptness *is expected*. Coming to class late, leaving early, or coming and going during class meeting time is not acceptable behavior. A relatively large percentage of the course grade will depend upon students being present during class. If a student misses class for any reason, the student will be responsible for any material covered, assignments given, or dates changed. Studies have shown that students who attend class regularly and participate fully find assignments and exams to be much easier and more meaningful, and (*surprise!*) tend to get better grades than those who do not attend class regularly.

Most in-class activities are designed in such a way they cannot be “made up” outside of class. According to the *BGSU Student Handbook* (p. 64),

“The student is responsible for knowing and meeting all course requirements, including tests, assignments, and class participation, as indicated by the course instructor. **The instructor has no obligation to give make-up examinations or to review other class work missed by a student as a result of unexcused absence.**”

I support this position. In rare instances, students may have to miss class for what I would call a valid, university-related reason. (*Such reasons include times when the student is: (a) participating in a previously approved field trip or other official BGSU activity (e.g., athletics, debate, music, theater arts); (b) confirmed under doctor’s orders; or (c) granted a leave of absence from BGSU for reasonable cause by an academic dean.*) Except for medical emergencies, which will require proper documentation, all other absences must be approved by the instructor *prior* to the class session that will be missed. Alternative assignments or exams will be given *only* for instructor-approved absences.

Late Work

As specified earlier, assignments are due *in class* at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Electronic submissions are due according to the time and date specified in Canvas. There is **NO PROVISION** for late work on any assignment, and Canvas has been set up to not allow any late submissions. Assignments may be turned in *early!* I strongly suggest that students plan and schedule to complete work early (that is, ***do not wait until the “last minute”***). I also strongly recommend having *backup systems* in place so that all work can be completed on schedule. Having work completed on schedule is a key to early success in one’s business career. A major complaint of employers is that business faculty do not instill a responsibility in students to have work done on time; I have a desire to be a part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Thus, I would suggest students start now to develop good work habits for meeting deadlines.

In this course, *all* printed assignments are due *in class* at the beginning of class on the specified due date unless otherwise specified. Electronic submissions are due per the time specified in Canvas. **Late assignments will result in a 25% point reduction per day; the first day begins at the beginning of class time and date (for printed assignments) and the minute after the deadline for which the assignment is scheduled (for electronic submissions).** The prudent student will NOT be late on those days! (There is no penalty for early submissions!)

Course Format

Most class meetings will be of “seminar” style. That is, there will be limited lectures, and everyone will be expected to have read the assigned materials and contribute to class discussion. In a seminar, ALL participants are expected to ask questions of materials they do not understand and to work with the rest of the class to ensure everyone fully understands the material and client project/issues. Coming to class but not contributing to the discussion will NOT be considered acceptable behavior in this course.

Grading

Generally speaking, students expect that the effort they put into the class will be related to the grade they will receive. My experience in teaching this class leads me to believe that, for most students, the quality of their work related to this class does indeed increase as the time spent in activities related to this class increases. However, effort alone is NOT sufficient for doing well in the course. Students must also demonstrate understanding of the material.

As the instructor, my job is to assess the extent to which students have learned the material. I have created a variety of assignments and examination activities to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their proficiencies in the material covered this semester. Grades (based on my interpretation of what they are supposed to indicate) will be awarded as follows:

Grade of “A” (*Student demonstrates a **thorough understanding** of the subject—and throughout the semester consistently displays a **mastery** of the material.*)

To receive a grade of “A” a student will be expected to demonstrate a mastery of **all** of the components of the course. The student will need to consistently do “A” quality work on all of these components, meaning that at least **89%** of the total possible points must be accumulated to achieve this grade.

Grade of “B” (*Student demonstrates a **good understanding** of the subject and provides consistent evidence of this in class.*)

To receive a grade of “B” a student will be expected to demonstrate a good understanding of most of the components of the course. The student will need to consistently do “B” quality work across these components, meaning that at least **80%** of the total possible points must be accumulated to achieve this grade.

Grade of “C” (*Student has a **solid overall understanding** of the subject.*)

To receive a grade of “C” a student will be expected to demonstrate solid overall understanding of the issues and topics discussed in this course. The student will need to consistently do “C” quality work across the course components, meaning that at least **72%** of the total possible points must be accumulated to achieve this grade.

Grade of “D” (*Student **knows more** about the subject than before the class started.*)

Although I assume that no student sets out to receive a grade of “D,” for various reasons (e.g., other priorities, overwhelming work schedules, and/or poor time management skills) some students do not put a sufficient amount of effort into this class. Thus, s/he may not demonstrate a solid understanding of course concepts on a consistent basis. To avoid failing the course, students will need to accumulate at least **65%** of the total possible points.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to participate in several different activities in this course. The final grade is based on a portfolio of work which assesses the student's understanding using a variety of learning methods. In particular, grades in this class are determined based upon the components listed in the following paragraphs. **Students should keep track of their score on each course component throughout the semester**, as the scores presented in Canvas can be misleading at times.

Exams (0% of course grade)

No exams will be given in this course. If you were wanting exams, I am sorry to disappoint you.

Marketing Plan (30% of course grade)

The major team effort for the semester will be the preparation of a marketing plan. The marketing plan will be the primary vehicle for synthesizing your knowledge of a given situation and making specific service marketing and management recommendations. The marketing plan will be prepared for a client organization which has requested assistance. The marketing plan (both a printed version and an electronic version) is tentatively scheduled to be submitted to the instructor and to the client by **9:30 a.m., May 1**; however, depending on the presentation schedule, physical copies of the marketing plan must be given to the client at least two full business days before the presentation.

The purpose of the marketing plan is two-fold. First, it allows students to apply various concepts introduced in previous service marketing classes. Second, it allows students to gain hands-on experience in putting together a comprehensive marketing plan for a "real" client. The marketing plan will include the major components listed in the textbook and discussed in class. Several components are likely to be turned in during the semester *prior to* the final marketing plan. Students are expected to revise each section, as necessary, for inclusion in the final report. At the end of the semester, all of the pieces will be put together into one final marketing plan to be given to both the instructor and the client organization.

Peer evaluations will also be incorporated into the grading of the marketing plan. Each student will complete an evaluation of all members of his/her group, including him/herself. The same score will initially be given to all group members; however, **an individual's score on the marketing plan may be adjusted up or down depending upon the group consensus of that member's contribution**. Any adjustment to that person's score will apply to the total amount of team points awarded (both the written portion and the presentation) for the marketing plan. Further details of the marketing plan requirements and of the peer evaluation process will be provided as the semester unfolds.

Presentation of Marketing Plan (10% of course grade)

In addition to the written plan, a presentation will also be made to the client organization. Further details of the presentation will be provided as the semester unfolds.

Co-production (including In-Class Participation) (25% of course grade)

To assist in everyone's understanding of service marketing issues, students are encouraged to contribute to in-class discussions. A student's participation and interaction with other students, as well as the professionalism displayed in all aspects of this class, will be a major component of the class instruction. As you should well know by now, any educational "service" (such as MKT 4150) requires *active* co-production and participation of the student customer for it to be a success. And, as you should also know by now, **attendance in class is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for good participation**. (Merely showing up for work, but contributing nothing verbally, is not generally considered acceptable behavior in the workplace.) Further details of how students' co-production scores will be awarded will be provided as the semester unfolds.

Course Requirements (continued)

Individual Assignments (35% of course grade)

A variety of assignments will be completed individually by each student.

Personal Goals Paper. This course is intended to be a capstone course that provides you with an opportunity to integrate all you have learned from previous marketing courses. To facilitate such integration, you are to write a brief paper, 2-3 pages in length (single-spaced is okay), stating what your goals are for this class. In communicating your goals, you should discuss (1) what you would like to get out of the class, (2) what *you* are going to do to achieve your goals, and (3) what you will need from *the instructor* to facilitate the achievement of these goals. Further details about the paper will be provided on Canvas.

Team Role and Responsibilities Description. Once the semester begins, you will be assigned a position and will be expected to responsibly fulfill the duties of that position. To ensure that everyone on the team is in agreement as to what your role will be, you are to write a brief description of your position. This description will subsequently be shared with the rest of your team. Examples of position descriptions from previous semesters will be provided on Canvas.

Service Experience Brief and Presentation. This assignment requires students identify a business press article or book that emphasizes concepts and issues related to *service experience management*. Students will be required to identify the article/book, carefully read it, prepare a one-page brief to the class that summarizes it, and lead a discussion on it during class. Further details will be provided on Canvas.

“What I Learned” Reflection Paper. As your “final,” each student is to write a paper (4-7 pages) addressing what you learned this semester in doing the client project. The paper will give you an opportunity to reflect upon your experience over the semester (and, perhaps, over your college career) and discuss what you have learned from working on the marketing plan. Further details will be provided on Canvas.

Draft of Marketing Plan Component. To ensure each student is actively participating in the development of the marketing plan, each student will be expected to submit a significant portion of the first draft of a major piece of the plan. Although different portions of the plan will have different lengths, the draft should (roughly) be $1/n$ of the entire plan (where n is the number of students working on the plan). Further details will be provided on Canvas.

Quizzes (Up to 30% of course grade if used)

If students are sufficiently prepared for class and attending regularly, there will be no quizzes. However, sometimes students do not take their role seriously and need an incentive to prepare in advance for class (e.g., read assigned materials) and arrive for class on-time. **The (ideal) plan is to NOT have any quizzes.** However, if I suspect that students are not adequately preparing for class, or are arriving to class late on a regular basis, quizzes may be given on various assigned readings. Such quizzes, usually worth about 10 points, will either be given using Canvas or administered in class. Canvas quizzes will be announced in advance, but in-class quizzes *may* be unannounced. The intent is to encourage students to keep up on their reading assignments and to see if they are synthesizing the material. The most likely time for an in-class quiz will be the *beginning of class*. If a student does not take the (online) quiz before the stated deadline, he/she will receive 0 points. Similarly, if a student is not in class at the time the quiz is distributed, he/she will receive 0 points. (**NOTE:** Students must be *in class at the time a quiz is distributed* to be able to take the quiz. *In other words, late arrivals will not be given a quiz.*)

Other Important Information

Success-Oriented Course. MKT 4150 is a success-oriented course. My desire is that all students in the class meet their individual learning (and grade) goals. However, *this does not mean that students can avoid working hard in this class.* What this does mean is that *all* students who do well in the class will be rewarded accordingly. That is, the grade distribution will *not* be adjusted to make sure it fits a bell-shaped curve—thus, students are not in direct competition with their classmates. That is, if ALL do well on their individual components and the marketing plan is done well, then ALL may receive a good grade in the course. However, if the marketing plan is done poorly, this will also be reflected in everyone's final grades. Also, there are many written assignments to help students demonstrate their understanding of the material we cover in class since there are **no exams** in this course.

Study Time. Most college courses require students to spend a significant amount of time outside of class in individual study time. A general guideline is that at least **two hours should be spent outside of class on course materials and activities for every one hour spent in class.** (*In this 3-credit class, this equates to 6 hours/week!*) Actual in-class meeting time is short in college courses because students are expected to work independently outside of class to meet the course requirements. My experience suggests that students who regularly spend this amount of time *each* week in preparing for this class tend to do very well, assuming they make effective use of their time.

Class Pace. In this class we hit the ground running and move at a very fast pace. Much time is allocated in this class for group discussion of the assigned readings. As a result, the class will follow a seminar format; not much time is spent in the traditional lecture format. To cover all of the course material in the limited time the class spends meeting together, discussion of the material must occur at a fairly quick pace. **DO NOT FALL BEHIND ON READING THE ASSIGNED MATERIALS.** It is essential that students (a) keep up with the assigned readings, (b) budget their time wisely to complete all of their assignments, and (c) seek clarification on any material that they do not understand.

Flexibility. There is no predetermined schedule for the entire semester included in this syllabus. Generally speaking, a tentative schedule will be announced about a week in advance and will be communicated via e-mail, Canvas, or during class. In-class announcements will take priority over the other two means of communication. Thus, it is the *student's responsibility* to be in class and keep up-to-date on whatever announcements are made concerning the schedule.

Active Learning Activities. Active learning methods may be used in this class. This means students will be part of a group in which they will work together to complete a number of assignments. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that active learning results in higher grades, increased critical thinking skills, positive relationships, deeper level understanding, and much more. In addition, student evaluations of such classes show that most students enjoy the active role they play in the class, have fun in the process, learn more, take responsibility for their own learning and the learning of others, and develop meaningful friendships which encourage them in their studies and in their personal lives.

Evaluation of Assignments. Several written assignments are required in this course. Specific guidelines are provided and will need to be followed. These assignments will also be graded for grammar. Students should expect to do fairly well if *all* of the instructions are followed. However, if only some of the instructions are followed, then only *some* of the possible points will be awarded.

Academic Dishonesty. University policy and the BGSU Student Handbook indicates that academic honesty violations (e.g., cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, as well as collaborating with fellow students on exams and individual assignments and having access to unauthorized material) requires the instructor to fail the offender(s) for the course. If serious enough, any such situation will be handed over to university authorities for further action.

Emergency Communication. Occasionally situations occur where there is a question as to whether a class will be held or not (heavy snowfall, icy roads, floods, instructor illness, etc.). Should the university or the instructor decide to cancel classes, an announcement will be sent via e-mail to all students on the official class roster using the student's **university e-mail address**. Thus, when in doubt about whether or not there will be a class, assume that class will be held unless an e-mail message from the instructor indicates otherwise.

Classroom Behavior. Some miscellaneous expectations that I (as the service provider) have of students (i.e., customers) in the delivery (co-production) of this educational service:

Do not hesitate to ask questions. If something is unclear to one student, it probably means that several others have the same question. However, please ask *me* the questions in class or to slow down and repeat something, not another student. In other words, no talking when I am talking. Likewise, no talking when a fellow student "has the floor." This is not only common courtesy, but such talking annoys and distracts other students in the class (as well as myself).

Do not come to class late or leave early. Neither your fellow students nor I appreciate such disruptions. Students expect instructors to be on time, and I expect the same behavior from my students.

Please do not wear hats or caps in the classroom. Wearing a hat to class is not professional behavior. This is as inappropriate in an educational setting as it is in a church. (There are relatively few business situations where wearing a hat during a meeting in an office building is considered acceptable behavior.)

Please avoid my "Pet Peeves." Over the years I have observed a variety of student behaviors. Some of them bother me more than others. The worst behaviors that I believe students can exhibit include:

- Attempting to turn in assignments late. (*They are not accepted; Canvas is particularly tough.*)
- Not following directions in doing assignments. (*You will end up with a lower grade.*)
- Asking "did I miss anything important?" after not attending a class. (*How should I respond?*)
- Asking "will I miss anything important?" prior to not attending a class. (*See above.*)
- Using contractions (e.g., can't) in written assignments. (*Not a good idea when writing.*)
- Turning in written assignments with page-long paragraphs and/or no headings. (*Such assignments are difficult to read and follow.*)
- Improperly using *it's* and *its*. (*It's not appropriate; a firm would not want its employees misusing these words.*)
- Asking "are we going to get out early today?" (*I want students to get their money's worth!*)
- Turning in assignments held together by paper clips. (*Use staples!*)
- Sending unidentified e-mails. (*Always include a full name and class section in the message. Students who do not identify themselves should not expect a response from the instructor.*)
- Getting up and leaving class in the middle of a lecture. (*This is very rude.*)
- Packing books, notebooks, pens, etc. into bags before class is over. (*This is also very rude.*)