MAR 6905 RETAIL CONSULTING
SPRING 2017

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Class hours: MAT 120 Tuesday and Thursday period 7-8
Office hours: Monday 2-3 pm & Friday 3-4 pm
Course website: Canvas

Course Overview:

This course is an action-based experiential learning class. Working with a client, a team of five students will perform problem identification, explore opportunities, collect data, and provide recommendations to a client. Students are expected to integrate and apply everything they've learned to date in diagnosis, analysis, research, and making strategic and tactical recommendations for a client. Through this experiential learning, students will enhance analytic skills, practice strategic decision-makings, and gain practical insights into actual retail business operations.

Learning Objectives:

- Gain practical knowledge and skills in planning, conducting, managing, and presenting a consulting project
- Improve ability to identify and analyze key factors and issues relevant to solving a problem
- Develop and enhance analytic skills to improve information analysis and insight generation
- Develop and enhance ability to present analysis-based insights in a concise, accurate, and clear manner from the perspective of a client
- Develop cross-functional team skills

Course Structure

The course is a full semester long. As an experiential course, the focus is on the team project and its delivery to the sponsoring company. Students will meet and work during class time with team members and the professor to discuss the analysis, flow of work, final presentation, and client delivery. Teams will present the progress of their work to the class every week. Participation is mandatory and graded.

Teams

The specific project will be assigned based on each student's preference, experience, and academic history. Teams will be formed on the basis of 1) an expressed preference, 2) competencies and skills shown in background information such as courses taken, work experience, and skillsets that contribute to a project, and 3) multi-functional group composition consideration. Students are likely to be assigned to either their first or the second choice. All students are expected to participate fully in team efforts. A **team contribution evaluation form** will be provided in class. ***The group grade will be adjusted for individual grades on the basis of team evaluation.***

The following documents will be collected in the first day of class.

1. **Team contract**: Team members will decide team rules (e.g., performance expectation regarding quality and timeliness, meeting scheduling issues, communication policies). Also, discuss and specify termination policy for any team member who is not performing. This termination policy will be used as grounds for "firing" if necessary. Team members should agree on the expectations by signing the team contract.
2. **Team coordinator:** Each team needs to select a team coordinator.
3. **Team contact information**

Group Presentations

Each team will present project progress and findings on **Tuesdays** to receive feedback from class and the professor. Each team will have 15 minutes in total including both presentation and feedback from the professor (and the client, if required).

Project Management

Project planning and management will be regularly checked and evaluated. Teammate software will be used to track team performance for grading. In addition, project management logs will be reviewed. Make a record of project management logs in google docs. Each week the team may make decisions and adjust specific activities regarding how goals are being accomplished. Additionally, the team will need to maintain project management logs for the professor's review.

Instructor

The role of the instructor is merely to guide the teams. The students will be acting as consultants for their potential clients and thus get to engage their technical, interpersonal and consulting skills thoroughly. The instructor will provide relevant and meaningful resources to help students succeed.

Task

Your task is to provide deliverables agreed upon with your client. Each set of requirements and deliverables will vary by project. During the process of developing solutions to the client's identified problems, you should be able to articulate why new initiatives/strategies/plans you recommend will be successful on the basis of a thorough analysis. You will be expected to think analytically and creatively in developing recommendations for the firm. You will be expected to provide evidence to support your plan; therefore, you must conduct appropriate market research and analysis prior to recommending strategies. Progress reports will function as checking points for those processes. Throughout the semester, we will complete four progress reports to receive feedback from the instructor.

Progress Reports

Progress Report I: Project Plan and background (Due by Jan. 21st at 7:00 pm):
           Project goal, scope and background
           Project plan
           Include client meeting briefs
Progress Report II: Secondary & Exploratory Research Findings (Due by Feb. 4th at 7:00 pm):
           Relevant literature review (academic journals, trade articles, industry white papers, etc.), situation analysis and the evaluation of client against benchmarking and best practice cases, and qualitative research outcomes (interviews and observations)
Progress Report III (Due by March 25th at 7:00 pm):
           Summary of data collection, analysis, and discussion of findings
Progress Report IV (Due by April 8th at 7:00 pm):
           Recommendations

Final Report/Deck (Due by April 14th 7:00 pm)

    Since each group works on different topics, the best format may vary across groups. Prepare a report of your group project using the best suitable format. The outline shown below is just a suggestion. The report may be formatted in Word or PowerPoint.

1. Executive summary (Should be clear and effective as a stand-alone overview of your project)
2. Table of contents
3. Background and Objectives
4. Findings
5. Conclusions and recommendations
6. References
7. Appendices

Grading

Assignment	Point Value(s)
Progress report I	30 points
Progress report II	30 points
Progress report III	30 points
Progress report IV	30 points
Weekly presentations	100 points
Participation	80 points
Final report (evaluation from both instructor and client)	100 points
Final presentation (evaluation from both instructor and client)	100 points
Project management: Plan and its progress check and completion (Teamwork and project management)	100 points
TOTAL	**600 points**

POLICIES

Class Participation/Attendance
The role of the MBA students in the group is that of a manager. Therefore, MBA students are not required to attend class on non-presentation days, but are expected to keep up-to-date with team members and ensure progress is being made. Attendance on presentation days is mandatory.

If you must miss a class for an unavoidable reason (such as a verifiable medical issue), please notify me in advance by email. Failure to contact me before missing class may result in the lowering of your grade. In addition, if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes for that class from one of your peers.

Academic Honesty

The University of Florida's honor code requires all students to be honest in their academic work. University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at:
http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.html.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Student Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.
Please bring your documentation from the Dean of Students Office. I'll make the necessary accommodations.

Client companies: TJX, Luxottica, Walmart, Nielsen, Tyco Retail Solutions, Shoppertrack, Nodlus, Honest Tea - the Coca-cola Company

2017 Project Descriptions

A. Traffic pattern analysis: Regular Shoppers versus Non-receipted Refunders (TJX)

While retailers try to improve customer service with convenient return policies, a substantial portion of returns made without receipts are fraudulent and add costs to retail operations. To find the right balance between customer service and fraud prevention, it is important to identify shopping and purchase patterns of non-receipted refunders that are distinguishable from those of regular shoppers. This project will analyze store videos, traffic, and transaction patterns to **suggest the best practices of fraud prevention.**

Skillsets needed: analytics, coding/programming, data analysis, model development
Method: Analytics with video recordings of shopper behaviors, shopping paths, and transactions
Analytical programs to use: Excel, Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, JMP, or Stata), Genesis security systems, Video analytics software (Nodlus)

B. Geography Intelligence and Loss Prevention (TJX)

Keeping the shrinkage rate (the portion of inventory that gets lost or stolen) low is critical to success in retail operations. Organized crime has emerged as a more serious driver of theft. Geographic intelligence such as crime indices, police stations, transportation access, demographic and socio-psychographic data by geo-location can be used to identify and predict high risk stores for loss prevention. This project will use geo-data (e.g., ESRI Business Analyst) to **predict high risk stores.**

Skillsets needed: data analysis, model development
Method: Big data, data integration, and data analytics
Analytical programs to use: Excel, Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, JMP, or Stata), Tableau, Maptitude or ArcGIS, ESRI business analyst

C. Behavioral Patterns of Shoplifters (Luxottica – Sunglass Hut)

Sunglasses are most vulnerable to shoplifting because they meet all criteria for stealing: **C**oncealable, **R**emovable, **A**vailable, **V**aluable, **E**njoyable, and **D**isposable. The practice of enclosing merchandise in a locked case reduces theft, but also decreases sales. Retailers implement policies that provide engaging shopping environments instead

polies that prevent loss. To figure out how to promote sales without locking products out, it is important to understand behavioral patterns of shoplifters. This project will analyze video clips of reported thefts and to **develop models and alert systems that can identify and predict potential incidents.**

Skillsets needed: data analysis, model development
Analytic programs to use: Excel, Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, or JMP), RetailNext,
Method: observations of video clips, develop models that characterize behaviors and identify/predict incidents (Noldus – Observer XT)

D. Location analysis ((Luxottica – All Brands)

Store locations are determined by the sales potentials. The same locations might or might not be high risk stores in terms of shrinkages. This project will **analyze location-based characteristics** (competition, demographics, socio-psychographics, transportation, crime activities) and **identify the drivers of sales and loss.**

Skillsets needed: data collection through ESRI Business Analyst, data analysis, model development
Method: Big data, data integration, and data analytics
Analytical programs to use: Excel, Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, JMP, or Stata), Tableau, Maptitude or ArcGIS, ESRI business analyst

E. How to increase in-store engagement and conversion? (Luxottica-Sunglass HUT)

This project will explore ways to **increase foot traffic, in-store engagement and conversion rates with store promotions.** Students will have the opportunity to test these ideas with research and implement/track/select successful ideas.

Skillsets needed: creativity, promotion and marketing knowledge, research design, data analysis
Analytic programs to use: Qualtrics, Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, or JMP), RetailNext, behavioral pattern analysis software (Nodlus)
Method: observations, analysis of coded video clips, testing of promotions, and implementation and tracking

F. Virtual Reality Store and Engagement by different mind-sets (Luxottica-Sunglass HUT)

Shopping behaviors in a store are determined by many factors, including shoppers' goals and unique mindsets. Using a virtual store viewed with Oculus, the project will **explore ways of quantifying shopper engagement** from virtual viewing characteristics (coded responses will be provided) **and examine how they change by different shopper mind-sets.**

Skillsets needed: modeling, programming, data analysis
Analytic programs to use: Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, JMP, or Stata)

G. Promotion Lift analysis along with Shopper segmentation and basket analysis (Walmart, Nielsen, Tyco Retail Solutions, Visual Latina, Honest Tea-Coca Cola company)

Health claims on organic and healthy foods are ubiquitous. This project **will investigate the impacts of consumers' inferences on product choices and purchases** by answering the following questions:

- How do consumers perceive health-related food claims (e.g., gluten-free, GMO-free, organic, all natural, fresh, etc.) and make inferences?
- How do their inferences influence product choice?
- Would the sequence of choices (organic item first and then unhealthy item; unhealthy item first and organic item next) matter regarding the basket size and basket composition?
- Are there segments of the retailer's shoppers who behave differently from different inferences (e.g., health versus prestige-expensive)?
- How should a retailer design promotions on organic foods to influence these segments of shoppers?

Skillsets needed: data analysis

Method: Market research with focus group interviews and online surveys, observations, behavioral pattern analysis from coded responses from video clips, basket analysis, segmentation

Analytic programs to use: Statistical software (SPSS, SAS, or JMP), Qualtrics, Video analytic software (Nodlus), Tyco-Retail Solutions, Shoppertrack

Tentative Schedules

Date	Milestones and Activities	Details
Week 1 Jan 5	Course Introduction, Team Formation And Client Briefing • Course structure • Project briefing • Experience sharing • Composition of team members • Project team contract	Prepare presentation on your background, work and other experiences, and skills relevant to your project
Week 2 Jan 10 & 12	Secondary Research and Project Plan • Identify specific problems, issues and opportunities to explore • Develop the project plan	Develop research plan Gather competitive intelligence Client company situation analysis Progress Report I – Project Plan (Jan. 21, 7:00 pm)
Week 3 Jan 17 & 19	Explorative research • Conduct exploratory research (*e.g.*, interviews, observations) to collect information needed	
Week 4 Jan 24 & 26	Explorative research • Conduct exploratory research (*e.g.*, interviews, observations) to collect information needed • Presentation of main findings of exploratory research and analytic data	Progress Report II – Secondary and exploratory research findings (Feb. 4th , 7:00 pm)
Week 5 Jan 31 & Feb 2	Preliminary exploration of issues Develop the main study plan • Develop the main study plan • Design the study and questionnaires if Needed • Data collection plan • IRB Application	The main study plan (Feb. 7th)
Week 6 Feb 7 & 9	Implementation Plan Formulation	
Week 7 Feb 14 & 16	Main study	
Week 8 Feb 21 & 23	Main study revision	
Week 9 Feb 26 & Mar 2	Data collection	
Week 10* Mar 7 & 9	Spring Break	

Week	Topic	Deliverable
Week 11 Mar 14 & 16	Data collection & Analysis	
Week 12 Mar 21 & 23	Reporting Write Summary of Findings	**Progress Report III** – Summary of findings and analysis (March 25th, 7 pm)
Week 13 Mar 28 & 30	Develop recommendations and implementation plans	**Progress Report IV** – Recommendations (April 8th, 7 pm)
Week 14 Apr 4 & 6	Final Reports	**Final Report** (April 15th, 7 pm)
Week 15 Apr 11 & 13	Final Presentation	**Final Presentation PPT** (before class on April 17th)
Week 16 April 18 & 20	**Presentation to Clients**	Formal presentation to client and instructor. Client and the course instructor will evaluate the presentation and the implementation plan.
Week 17 **April 25**	Project Briefing and class evaluation	

Student Testimonials

"In my opinion, this class was the most rewarding and engaging class I have taken in my entire time at UF. For this class, I was placed on a cross-functional team with other business and IT students to work on finding a solution to Sunglass Hut's high shrinkage problem. This project required me to work collaboratively within my group to perform data analytics and to come up with strategies to combat the problems faced by the company. These skills are essential for entering the business environment and helped me secure a corporate job opportunity post-graduation. In addition, Sunglass Hut is currently using some of my team's recommendations which is such a rewarding feeling. This class will prepare you for the real world and teach you more about yourself than you could ever realize, I strongly recommend anyone taking it."

-Matthew O'Sullivan, Class of 2016

"I applied for this class at the last minute and it was one of the best decisions I have made during my undergraduate career at UF. This class allowed me to work on a real company project with a diverse group of students and present these recommendations to company executives. This class sparked my interest in retail studies and I am now doing research with Dr. Oh as a follow-up to my class project. I highly recommend this class to any student interested in consulting, retail studies, or analytics."

-Mary Polidan, Class of 2017

"Retail Consulting is one of the most important courses where you can utilize the analytical skills that are taught in the ISOM program. It provides a real-life professional experience within an academic environment. It is my advice to consider this course if you can handle the course load because otherwise you will not be able to learn. The project that I completed in this course has been a topic of discussion during interviews and still shines on my resume. Professor Hyunjoo provides you with enough resources and advice to help you learn and deliver the project and she is an absolutely amazing mentor. Lastly, being an ISOM alum, I can tell you that this was the best decision i made in terms of selecting electives."

-Awais Shah, Class of 2016