
Master of Science
in Marketing and
Transformative Economy

Second year
Fall semester

Elective course

6 ECTS

Brand Management: Strategic Design and Creative Applications

Professors Luca M. Visconti (3 ECTS)
Benoit Heilbrunn (3 ECTS)

Objectives

Standing from the perspective of brand managers/companies, the Course aims at familiarising participants with both the strategic thinking and the creative abilities required for today's branding.

The first part of the Course – Branding: Strategic Design – focuses more on the strategic design of branding. It posits that brands are not mere identification signs, but identity platforms capable of establishing relationships with customers and multiple audiences.

Strategic brand design is articulated around three main spheres:

- (1) Morphology, consisting of decisions allowing customers to sensorially experience and recognise a brand. Strategic decisions revolve around the choice of the brand name, logo/symbol, brand character, aural identity, and more.
- (2) Axiology, consisting of the grounding values, visions, and ideologies that make a brand unique, authentic, and relevant. Axiological design allows brands “to stand for something”.
- (3) Narratology, consisting of the way narrative contents are constructed, disseminated, and consumed. Story-making, storytelling, and story-living are key strategic steps we will address.

The second part of the Course – Branding: Creative Applications – focuses on how creative brand decisions intersect brand strategic design. After clarifying the difference between creativity and creation, the Course investigates how distinct creative approaches boost brand appeal, identity, and value. Creativity is proposed as a means for brands to provide significant value to the market.

In line with Part A, creative methodologies are applied to:

- (1) Brand morphology, in terms of creative ways to express a brand through packaging, product design, visual identity, merchandising, digital activation, etc.
- (2) Brand axiology, in terms of creative ways to understand a brand's reference market and build consumer insights.
- (3) Brand narratology, in terms of creative ways to stage stories through appropriate touchpoints and connect dominant ideologies with appealing brand stories.

Overall, the Course aims at:

- (1) Developing a multidisciplinary and multi-epistemological understanding of the processes behind brand management and consumer interaction with brands.
- (2) Improving students' ability in designing and fostering brand recognition (brand morphology), brand essence (brand axiology), and brand narratives (brand storytelling).
- (3) Acquiring theoretical understanding and practical skills in the context of contemporary branding.
- (4) Decoding and practicing creativity in the context of brand management.

Participation

Students must attend at least 60% of the in-person classes for each of the two blocks (Prof. Visconti's and Prof. Heilbrunn's parts) to validate the course. In case of personal impediments, students need to inform professors and discuss with them the best way to proceed.

Assessment

Assessment is based on an individual written exam (accounting 60% of the grade) and a group project (accounting for the remaining 40%). The written exam covers the two parts of the Course. To validate the course and average the project grade, each student must achieve a grade of 5 out of 10 or higher on the written individual examination.

Detailed evaluation criteria are set at the beginning of the course.

References

Brand Management: Strategic Design

Articles

- Aaker, Jennifer (1997), Dimensions of brand personality, *Journal of Marketing Research*, XXXIV, 347-356.
- Arvidsson, Adam and Alessandro Caliendo (2016), Brand public, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42, 727-748.
- Borghini, Stefania et al. (2009), Why are themed brandstores so powerful? Retail brand ideology at American Girl place, *Journal of Retailing*, 85(3), 363-375.
- Diamond, Nina et al. (2009), American Girl and the brand gestalt:

Closing the loop on sociocultural branding research, *Journal of Marketing*, 73, 118-134.

- Holt, Douglas B. and Douglas Cameron (2012), Triumph of a better ideology, *Market Leader*, 1, 24-27.
- Kapferer, J.N., (2009), Kapferer's Brand-Identity Prism Model. *European Institute for Brand Management*, 1-3.
- Muniz, Albert M. Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guinn (2001), Brand community, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27, 412-432.
- Van Laer, Tom et al. (2014), The extended transportation-imagery model: A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of consumers' narrative transportation, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(5), 797-817.
- Van Laer, Tom, Luca M. Visconti, and Stephanie Feiereisen, Need for narrative, *Journal of Marketing Management*, forthcoming.

Book

- Keller, Kevin L., and Vanitha Swaminathan (2020), *Strategic Brand Management*, Harlow: Pearson, fifth edition, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 11.
- Holt, Douglas B. (2012), *How Brands Become Icons*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, chapters 1 and 2.

Book chapters

- Visconti, Luca M. (2020), "Communicating Luxury Brands through Stories," in Felicitas Morhart, Sandor Czellar, and Keith Wilcox (ed.), *Research Handbook on Luxury Branding*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 225-247.

Brand Management: Creative Applications

Books

- Burkus, D. (2013), *The Myths of Creativity: The Truth About How Innovative Companies and People Generate Great Ideas*, John Wiley.
- Catmull, E. (2014), *Creativity Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces that Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*, Random House.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2013), *Creativity: The Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, Harper.
- Koestler, A. (1964), *The Act of Creation*, Mc Millan.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966), *The Savage Mind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson,
- Sternberg, R.J. (2014), *Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge University Press.