

Marketing Plan Proposal ¹

The Marketing Plan Proposal is worth 4% of the final grade for this course.² This assignment is **due on the final day of Week 2**, at 11:59pm eastern time.

Marketing Plan Assignment connection

This assignment is related to the *Marketing Plan Assignment* due later in this course. In this assignment you will develop and propose three product/service ideas. Later in the course you will develop one of the ideas from this assignment into the Marketing Plan Assignment. See, The Marketing Plan Assignment in the Assignments area of the classroom for additional detail.

The Marketing Scenario

For this assignment assume you work as a marketing manager at a United States-based company that has experienced steady growth. Company leadership recognizes that continued growth will require a pipeline of new products, as well as a more customer-centric orientation. Your company has decided to sponsor an internal competition for new product ideas based on a similar contest held at PepsiCo (Beer, 2016).³

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² The Marketing Program adheres to the Departmental Policy on Originality of work. This policy appears in the syllabus for this course in the Grading Information section and reads in part, "The work in this class must be your own and original to this course. Work prepared for other courses or use of material obtained from other students is expressly prohibited and can result in a grade of zero "0" for the assignment and/or course failure..."

This means you may not reuse a product idea that you have submitted in a prior course, either at UMGC or elsewhere without prior written permission from the professor teaching this section of this course this term. Please be aware that both the marketing plan proposal and the marketing plan will be submitted to Turnitin.

³ See, Beer, J. (2016, December 1). Why Pepsi held an internal marketing Shark Tank contest for \$1 million in funding. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/3066070/why-pepsi-held-an-internal-marketing-shark-tank-contest-for-1-million-in-fu>

A new product development committee (NPDC) has been formed with representatives from many areas of the company. Your boss, the VP of marketing, chairs the NPDC. You are among a large group of employees invited to propose ideas for new products to the NPDC. This is a great opportunity to get your ideas in front of upper management. However, there will be lots of competition, so you will need some solid product/service ideas and to write a persuasive memo communicating your ideas to the NPDC. Exciting, but not easy!

Getting Started

Step One, choose a real company.

First, choose a real company. It does not have to be the company you work for, but it could be. A good company choice would be one that has a well-established market in the U.S. with a good deal of public information available, *or* one where you will be able to conduct original research by doing interviews with company managers. It could be a consumer-oriented company (B2C) or a business-oriented (B2B) company. You will be researching and writing about this company for several weeks, so give this choice careful thought.

A not-good company choice would be a small business, a start-up business, or a business idea that does not yet exist. Why? Most likely there will not be detailed market information available for the marketing plan you must construct later.

What if you work in the military or government sector? Focus on a company with products/services that might be targeted to individual consumers rather than to the military or the government. Why? There is likely to be more public data available for consumer markets which you will need for the marketing plan. Avoid a product or service with only one or few possible customers.

Step Two, consider some new products or services this company might offer and choose your best three ideas. The product/service ideas should be ones that fulfill a want or need of your company's customers. If your idea solves a problem, lessens pain or increases happiness for a real customer, you probably are thinking in the right direction.

The three ideas proposed must be:

- A product *or* a service;
- For individual or organizational consumers in the U.S. market;
- A *novel* (new) offering;

- *Useful* to the consumer; and
- *Feasible* to produce or offer with current available technology.

Novelty should be measured as a product new to the company *and* also new in terms of the category or market. Offerings similar to what competitors are offering would not meet the novelty criterion.⁴

The ideas must **not** be:

- Minor enhancements of existing products or re-positionings;
- “Free” or without cost to the consumer; or
- An electronic application such as a smart device app.

Minor enhancements of existing products are not likely to impress company leadership, so they are not sufficient for this assignment. Examples of minor enhancements would be a slight change to packaging or a price change.

See the grading rubric below for additional detail on how your ideas will be assessed for this assignment

Step Three, write and submit a 2-page, single-spaced memorandum proposing THREE possible product ideas. The font size is 12. List your ideas in order of your preference (i.e., your best or favorite idea first, second-best listed second, etc).

This is a professional memorandum that you would submit in a marketing setting. Address this memo to the “Chair, New Product Development Committee – give that person a fictional name, any name you wish.

Format & Writing Resources

A professional memorandum or memo generally follows a standard format.

⁴ It has been said there are three types of novelty: novel to the individual, novel to society, and novel to history (Shah & Vargas-Hernandez, 2000, as cited in Kudrowitz & Wallace, 2013). In the realm of product design, as here, novelty to society and/or history are the goal. See, Kudrowitz, B.M. & Wallace, D. (2013). Assessing the quality of ideas from prolific, early-stage product ideation. *Journal of Engineering Design*, 24(2), 120-139, Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.umuc.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=85199283&site=eds-live&scope=site>

- These are the parts of a typical professional memo:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/memos/parts_of_a_memo.html
- Here is a sample professional memo:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/memos/sample_memo.html

In marketing, clear communication matters! Therefore 20% of the grade is devoted to writing and format. UMGC provides resources for students who wish to obtain assistance with writing. Any student in this class may register for Writing Tutoring through the link in the classroom. Simply click on the link and register. There is no charge for the writing tutoring service and it is available for the duration of the course.

Requirements

Format this a Professional Memorandum. Include these required sections.

- I. Introduction [one paragraph]
Describe your role in marketing at the company and why you are writing. Assume this memo may be read by people who are not familiar with you and your work. Make a strong positive first impression!
- II. Proposed Products/Services [three paragraphs]
 - a. Product/service #1: name and description. Discuss the usefulness to customer, feasibility, and what makes this novel.
 - b. Product/service #2: name and description. Discuss the usefulness to customer, feasibility, and what makes this novel.
 - c. Product/service #3: name and description. Discuss the usefulness to customer, feasibility, and what makes this novel.
- III. Conclusion [one paragraph]
Thanking the chair of the NPDC for the opportunity and requesting feedback is a good way to conclude.

Questions and Feedback

Questions about this assignment are welcome in the “Ask the Professor” area of the classroom.

Scroll down for the full grading rubric for this assignment.

Rubric

	Qualities & Criteria	Excellent 90-100%	Good – Very Good 80-89%	Improvement Needed 70-79%	Unsatisfactory Below 70%
Fo	Con	Content – Possible points: 80			
	Product/ service & Novelty of Product /service Ideas	Product/service description is clear and highly appropriate for all three products. Product/service appears to be exceptionally novel for all three products.	Product/service description is clear and appropriate for at least two products. Product/service appears to be novel for at least two products.	Product/service description may lack clarity for one or more products. Product/service appears to lack novelty for one or more products.	Product/service description missing or inaccurate for all three products. Product/service appears to lack novelty for all three products.
	Possible Points: 20	20 – 18	17-16	15-14	Below 14
	Points				
	Usefulness of Ideas	Product/service appears to be exceptionally useful for all three products.	Product/service appears to be useful for at least two products.	Product/service appears to lack usefulness for one or more products.	Product/service appears to lack usefulness for all three products.
	Possible Points: 20	20 – 18	17-16	15-14	Below 14
	Points				
	Feasibility of Ideas	Product/service appears to be exceptionally feasible for all three ideas	Feasibility of product/service may need more information and/or support for one product, but at least two products appear to be feasible.	Feasibility may be unclear for one or more products/services.	The ideas presented are missing, missing parts, unclear, not practical or not feasible for all three.
	Possible Points: 20	20 – 18	17-16	15-14	Below 14
	Points				

Consumer Focus	Exceptional focus on meeting a specific want or need of the consumer for all three.	Consumer focus of product may need more information and/or support for one product, but at least two appear to have consumer focus.	Consumer focus may lack clarity for one or more products.	The consumer focus of ideas presented is missing, unclear, not practical or not apparent for all three.
Possible Points: 20	20 – 18	17-16	15-14	Below 14
Points				
Total Content	80 - 72	71 - 68	67 – 66	Below 66
Content Points				

Communication of Ideas - Possible points: 20				
Form, format writing	Proposal is exceptional with respect to format and professional presentation. Overall, graduate level writing is reflected throughout the marketing plan proposal, including accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure.	Proposal is well formatted and professionally presented. Overall, writing in marketing plan proposal meets graduate standards. Fewer than 5 errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and/or sentence structure in marketing plan proposal.	Proposal is not well formatted or professionally presented. Overall, writing in marketing plan proposal does not meet graduate standards. Unacceptable number of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure in marketing plan proposal.	Proposal appears to have been hastily constructed. Overall, writing does not meet graduate standards. Unacceptable number of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure in marketing plan proposal.
Possible Points (20)	20 – 18	17-16	15-14	Below 14
Communication Points				
Content Points + Communication Points= TOTAL Grade				

END