Course Relevance
Marketing as an organizational function is closely identified with Product and Brand Management. Ever since its origin in Procter and Gamble as an organizational innovation to deal with the resource allocation and strategic decision making needs for individual products and brands, product/brand management has become a widely accepted structural arrangement in organizations. While product/brand management is more closely identified with consumer marketing, nothing prevents its use in business markets. As such, knowledge of product/brand management is essential for those contemplating a career in marketing. In addition, insights into product/brand management are relevant for people planning a career in consulting and financial services, and for those interested in setting up their own ventures.

Marketing managers are often responsible for creating new products and continuously improving existing ones, a vital way for companies to grow and profit. A product manager is usually the team leader in new product development and needs to understand innovation and how to manage it. He/she must also understand “design thinking” as a powerful way to identify and realize marketplace opportunities. This often involves strategic choices that are possible under the organization’s brand(s) and an understanding of the brand’s constraints.

This course focuses on the above topics.

Learning Objectives of the Course
1. Examine the challenges of product/brand management, product line and portfolio planning, and encompassing marketing strategy and tactics.
2. Explore new product development and introduction, product life cycle management, and branding strategies and procedures.

Organization of the Course
The course is organized into three closely interrelated parts:
1. Product: In this part, we examine management of new product development, product design, and new product introduction and the identification and realization of a company’s opportunities.
2. Other Product Management Decisions: In this part, we deal with the positioning, communications, and pricing decisions that fall within the purview of the product manager.
3. Brand Management: In this part, we focus on the meaning of a brand, brand audit, and brand valuation and the advantages and disadvantages that accrue to incumbent and entrant firms within an industry.

Teaching Method and Class Preparation
The teaching material used for the course will include a mix of cases, articles, and audio-visual material. Cases are not meant to be examples, but as a means to examine the complex decision-making scenarios that product/brand managers face that rarely have clear or “right” answers. My role as a professor is to guide you in your discussion of the case by providing concepts and alternative approaches. Therefore, thorough preparation of the case is imperative if the class is to deliver on its learning objectives. Some cases will tend to be more quantitative while some others may emphasize the more qualitative aspects of decision-making. Regardless, a sincere attempt must be undertaken to employ the data provided in the case in guiding decisions, in the true spirit of ‘evidence-based’ marketing.

Grading and Course Requirements
Class Participation – 45% - 60%
TBD - Project – up to 30%
Exam TBD

Evaluation of Class Participation (45%-60%)
Discussion questions for each case will be posted on Blackboard. These questions, however, will not be exhaustive and should not prevent students from raising other pertinent issues. Class participation will be evaluated as follows for the cases as well as the non-case classes:
A: Consistent, high-level participation displayed through questions, comments, new insights, and analytical rigor. Original contributions that go beyond the mere restating of facts in the case and an ability to build on the comments of others will be rewarded.
B: Consistent contribution to class discussion through questions and answers. Shows evidence of originality.
C: Periodic contributions to class discussion with relevant comments and questions. Needs to be called upon to participate, but shows familiarity with the material.
D: Sporadic contributions to class discussion. When called upon to participate, does not show evidence of familiarity with the material.
F: Passive member of the audience. No contribution to class discussion. When called upon to participate, does not show evidence of familiarity with the material.

I strongly urge you to discuss the case with one or several of your classmates prior to class to test your reasoning and conclusions.

Absences will seriously affect your participation grade. Being absent from class without a university excused reason and without prior intimation will result in substantial reduction in points for class participation. Disruptive behavior inside the classroom would also hurt your class participation grade. You accept responsibility for any material or class credit opportunity missed due to absence from the class. I will cold-call on students to elicit participation in the discussion.
Project: New Product Development Project (30 %)
You will work with a team and be tasked to develop a proposal for a new or redesigned product or service. In developing the product concept, you can select an existing company or develop it for a new company. You should follow the basic NPD design process (Understand-Observe-Visualize-Evaluate and Refine).

The project should include a visual representation of the product or service and a clear explanation of how it will serve customer needs better than existing products or services. In developing new ideas, it would help to focus on major trends in consumption behavior. These trends include, among others, a more environmentally conscious consumer, an aging population, and security (terrorism-related) concerns. If you think along these lines, you can potentially develop ideas for designing or re-designing products to meet special needs that relate to one or more of these concerns. The format for the report will be PPT slides, at a minimum it should include:

a) An executive summary
b) Details of efforts made to understand the product or service

c) Details of observation of product use and identification of problems
d) Solution to the problems with a visual representation

e) Evaluation of the solutions and refinement

In grading the project, emphasis will be placed on the thoroughness of the process undertaken to develop the product or service. The project will be graded based on the breadth and rigor of the analysis, the relevance of the recommendations, and the quality of the presentation.

Grades are not negotiable. To be fair to the entire class, there are no opportunities for extra credit assignments. Exceptions will not be made for individual students. Grades can be changed only if I have made an input or calculation error. I believe that we should maintain fairness and integrity. This means: (1) your opportunity to achieve a successful outcome should be maximized, and (2) the integrity of the grading system should be upheld by requiring a high level of performance from each student and rewarding those who perform at a superior level.

Academic Honesty
You are expected to follow the Honor Code of the University of South Carolina with respect to academic honesty. Violations of academic honesty will not be tolerated. Appropriate actions under the student code of academic conduct will be taken to remedy any alleged instance of misconduct. Misconduct in this class includes, but is not limited to, cheating on any assignment or exam.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Students requesting classroom accommodation are encouraged to contact me at the start of the semester so that we can make the appropriate accommodations.
Jim Kindley’s Bio
Mr. Kindley was a senior lecturer of marketing at the Cox School of Business at SMU from 1996 to 2009. He continued to teach several classes at SMU in its Executive MBA program until 2019. He was recently the director of the MBA program and an instructor at the College of Charleston. He has taught at the University of South Carolina and the University of Missouri. His research interests center on innovation and creativity, specifically focused at the front end of new product development. He received eight distinguished teaching awards in the graduate and undergraduate programs at Cox and two at the University of Missouri.

Mr. Kindley has helped develop and market numerous successful consumer products for companies such as Rubbermaid, Bissell, Williamson-Dickie, American Pottery, and Base4. He is presently assisting several companies with their new product efforts as a consultant. He holds over fifteen patents related to the above.

Mr. Kindley served on the board of Williamson-Dickie Manufacturing Company and is an advisor to several small, early-stage enterprises.

Mr. Kindley has a BS in Industrial Design from Georgia Tech; an MS in Product Design from Illinois Tech, and an MBA from Harvard.

USC MKTG 707
Product Development, Policies, and Branding

Schedules of readings and cases have been forwarded