



## Product and Brand Strategy in the Connected World

MBAD 6273 – Fall 2023

Department of Marketing  
UNC Charlotte

*The following course calendar is “tentative”. Due to uncertainties that cannot be predicted (ie, the pace at which students are grasping the material), I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as I feel necessary. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of announcements posted on Canvas in this regard.*

### **Instructor**

Dr. Lisa L. Rolan  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Marketing  
[lrolan@uncc.edu](mailto:lrolan@uncc.edu)

### **Office Location/Phone**

FRI 210  
Tel # 704-687-7710

### **Lecture Time/Location**

Wednesday, 5:30 pm to 8:15 pm  
Dubois Center, Uptown, Room 606

### **Office Hours**

Tuesday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm  
By appointment

*This syllabus contains the policies and expectations established for MBAD 6273, Product and Strategy in the Connected World. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students.*

## **Overview of the Course**

This course views product and brand strategy from the connected world and allows students to explore the importance of connectivity with a strong brand. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and developing differentiated products, and creating strong brands are fundamental strategic imperatives, as they are critical to a wide range of essential business outcomes. In addition, students will review the digital trend and how omnichannel businesses encompass brick-and-mortar and digital channels. This course explores the concepts, theories, and frameworks related to creating and managing successful products and brands. Students will better understand these issues by examining textbook material, articles, advertisements, videos, and relevant publications.

*“Mass advertising can help build brands, but authenticity is what makes them last. If people believe they share values with a company, they will be loyal to the brand”*

*– Howard Shultz, Retired CEO and Executive Chairman of Starbucks*

*“Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room”*

*– Jeff Bezos, Founder of Amazon.com*

*“Your brand is the single most important investment you can make in your business”*

*– Steve Forbes, Editor in Chief of Forbes Magazine*

Strong brands can help simplify consumers’ decision-making processes, drive loyalty, and build advocacy. Branding is one of the most critical investments that organizations can make in their businesses. This course explores the theories, frameworks, and concepts that organizations use to create, manage, and grow successful brands. These tools have been used across industries and worldwide to help organizations (as well as individuals!) build enduring and profitable brand franchises.

In this class, we have four main modules. Each module culminates in a small group activation assignment started in class and finished out of class.

- In part one, we develop a common understanding of brands and the elements that make up a great brand. We use these to analyze the development of a brand.
- In part two, we explore how a brand comes across as authentic through integrated marketing communications and how we remember a brand through emotion. This is activated with an analysis and content creation for a brand.
- In part three, we explore different ways a brand is valued, and we measure brand equity and performance. This culminates in a brand audit project.
- In part four, we identify how product innovation is integral to growing and sustaining a brand; we look at rebranding and use brand architecture to communicate the brand portfolio.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Explain the role of brands, the concept of brand equity, and the advantages of creating and investing in brands.
- Understand how companies use brand positioning to build competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- Create a differentiated brand positioning using a strategic brand management framework.
- Formulate the intent of marketing communications: setting objectives and defining audiences.
- Understand how to carry out the execution of marketing communications: crafting the message and determining where, when, and how the message is delivered.
- Measure brand equity and carry out a brand audit.
- Develop a brand architecture as a framework to guide the process of change and growth.

## **Textbook, Course Pack, & Calculator**

There is a textbook for this class. It is as follows:

Strategic Brand Management >> Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity

by: Kevin Lane Keller; Vanitha Swaminathan

**Publisher:** Pearson

Print ISBN: 9780134892498, 0134892496

eText ISBN: 9780134877952, 0134877950

**Edition:** 5th

Copyright year: 2020

## **Recommended Course Materials**

Students are required to listen to the weekly Adage podcast: Marketer's brief (available on all common podcast platforms, Spotify, Apple etc) and bring any insights to class.

[https://adage.com/results?](https://adage.com/results?searchBulon=Submit&search_phrase=podcast&sort_by=search_api_relevance&f%5B0%5D=secPon%3APodcast%3A%20Marketer%27s%20Brief)

[searchBulon=Submit&search\\_phrase=podcast&sort\\_by=search\\_api\\_relevance&f%5B0%5D=secPon%3APodcast%3A%20Marketer%27s%20Brief](https://adage.com/results?searchBulon=Submit&search_phrase=podcast&sort_by=search_api_relevance&f%5B0%5D=secPon%3APodcast%3A%20Marketer%27s%20Brief)

## **Course Delivery and Structure**

*This is a face-to-face class. All classes will be held on Wednesdays. There may be the occasion that that class will be held via Zoom instead of canceling class. If this is the case, you will be given adequate notice that the class will be held online. When classes are held online, they meet at the same time, attendance will be taken, and your cameras will need to be on to get credit for attendance.*

In this course, the emphasis will be on experiential and active learning. I will lead and facilitate discussions and learning through reflection and real-world experiences in which the students will interact and critically evaluate the material presented and become actively involved in participating and discussing the topics being taught.

If, at any point during the class, you have any problem that prevents you from getting the most out of this course, you are encouraged to meet with me and discuss the issue immediately. If that is not possible, please e-mail me directly. Do not be bashful about discussing any problem related to this course with me. I will be delighted to listen to and respond to any viewpoint or comment. You are also encouraged to build relationships with your classmates. Their backgrounds and experiences are tremendous resources that can only enhance your educational experience.

## **Course Deliverables**

In this course, you will take an active and experiential approach to product and brand strategy in the connected world. Students will explore concepts, theories, and frameworks related to creating and managing successful products and brands. Special attention is paid to how the digital era has influenced product development (e.g., the rise of the sharing economy represented by Airbnb and

Uber) and how the digital age has complicated brand management (e.g., the influence of online consumer reviews on brand equity). Also explored are the strategies that facilitate firms' success in the modern hyperconnected marketplace. The course deliverables include:

- Work individually and in teams to develop a brand position, content strategy, and audit project.
- Apply a framework through in-class assignments, discussions (online and in class), and case studies.

### Course Components

The Canvas course consists of topic modules for each week. There will be reading, research needs, discussions, assignments, in-class activities, projects, and homework assignments each week. See the course schedule and grading sections below for more information.

You must set a regular time to work on class materials individually and as a team, not allow yourself to fall behind, not miss any graded assignments, take advantage of extra credit (if offered), and study and practice the course materials. If you feel that your understanding of a topic could be more robust, you should contact me as soon as possible to seek extra help or advice, or else you might fall too far behind to catch up.

### Grading

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| • In-Class Discussion/Assignments/Attendance ** | 35%         |
| ○ Reading Assignments                           |             |
| ○ Class Participation                           |             |
| ○ Brand You Report                              |             |
| • Group Assignments                             | 65%         |
| ▪ Brand Positioning Analysis                    |             |
| ▪ Branded Integrated Content Strategy           |             |
| ▪ Brand Audit                                   |             |
| ▪ Brand Innovation                              |             |
| Individual Contribution Adjustment*             |             |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>100%</b> |

\*\*Students are evaluated on participation and discussion through active engagement during discussion periods, thoughtful and reflective responses to their peers, and evidence of at-home preparation for classroom discussions

**Final Exam – 100 points** (optional – will replace your lowest grade)

Grading Scale: A = 90 – 100; B = 80 – 89.99; C = 70 – 79.99; D = 60 – 69.99; F = 0 – 59.99

## **Individual Assignments/In-Class Discussion**

There are several discussions and class studies. This class will be more discussion class participation than it will be lecturing. There will be some lectures, but the goal is to have you think about the various concepts you have learned from your other marketing classes and your experience, how they relate to the topic being discussed, and how they will connect to digital connection and product and brand strategy. Assignments relate to what we are talking about. Usually, these will be a one-page response unless otherwise noted on canvas.

Case studies will be part of the discussion, and class time will be given in a group setting to work on the case studies. The goal is to have you in groups to discuss the concepts and case studies and then report your findings to the case.

## **Reading Assignment**

Reading the textbook and the supplementary material is essential to the course. Each week, there will be reading material homework in preparation for in-person discussions and online class discussions. These will serve as the basis for our in-class analyses and exercises. The number and length of responses will vary from week to week.

## **In-Class Participation**

This is a discussion-based course, and students must prepare well for each class discussion. Therefore, attendance and active participation are critical to getting the most from this course. Class participation means coming to class prepared (having read all the set material) by raising and answering relevant questions, articulating ideas or insights, and building upon the opinions of others. The participation grade will depend upon the quality and quantity of contributions. Bonus points for outstanding participation may be awarded to the students at the professor's discretion. Some individual assignments are allocated to in-class involvement. This class is generally structured to have individual work done out of class and some of the group work done in class time. Students who are absent will also be expected to join in the discussions.

## **Group Assignments**

Group assignments help students develop skills and team experience that are increasingly important professionally. Also, positive group experiences contribute to student learning, retention, collaboration, and overall college success.

## **Brand Positioning Analysis**

This introductory assignment will have students develop a brand for a product category such as beverages, automobiles, art supplies, etc. Students will define and communicate the competitive frame of reference and choose and establish POPs and PODs to reach optimal competitive brand positioning.

## **Brand Integrated Content Strategy – IMC Activation**

Students will analyze an existing brand's multichannel communication, considering audiences and setting objectives. The students will develop a marketing communications strategy, generating and

recommending actual on brand content to actualize growth. To experience different branding types, students may be given a non-profit organization as the subject.

### **Brand Audit Project**

Working in teams, students will immerse themselves in an extensive analysis of the consumers, competitors, and strategies of a specific brand. They will develop a comprehensive assessment of the current brand strategy and the exceptional elements used to support it. The final report will integrate research findings to generate marketing recommendations that address specific branding issues. An example of a completed brand audit will be provided in class.

### **Brand Extension Project**

Teams will either identify a weak brand, rebrand it, and/or create a product extension and propose it to their marketing manager. It will include activation, product mock-ups, and an abbreviated launch strategy (target market & positioning statement) for the new product.

### **Attendance**

It is solely your responsibility to obtain class material if you are absent. Attendance is taken at every class. You will earn full credit for attendance if you have your cameras on and actively participate in class. If you do not have your cameras on, you will only get 50% of the attendance grade for that day.

### **Late Work, Extra Credit, Retakes, & Contesting Grades**

You should complete your work on time as a sign of professionalism and respect. However, your instructor has the discretion to accept late work or extend due dates as appropriate. It would be best to plan to complete work as soon as it is available and avoid risking closer to the deadline and missing the assignment because something happens. I do not allow retakes. I will post grades on Canvas. If you think there is a grading error, you have one week to contest the grade; otherwise, the grade stands. Late work, if accepted, will be deducted based on the following schedule:

- 5% reduction if turned in within one week from the original due date
- 10% reduction if turned in after one week but within two weeks from the original due date
- 50% reduction if turned in after two weeks but less than three weeks from the original due date
- A zero will be assigned if an assignment is turned in more than three weeks from the original due date.

In the past, I have allowed students to turn in late work, only to be grading and regrading assignments constantly. Because of the workload and the number of assignments, late work will receive a deduction based on the above schedule.

### **Communication Policy**

An email address is required for this course. Course announcements will be distributed on Canvas via Assignment/Announcements or the email address listed with Registration and

Records. The student's responsibility is to ensure their correct email address is listed and that they know how to receive notifications of assignments posted on Canvas. My response time is within 24 hours from receipt, except on Fridays, weekends, holidays, and after 7 p.m. on weekdays. If you email me on Friday, over the weekend, on holidays, or after 7 p.m., please do not expect an immediate reply. If you have not received my response within 48 hours, something went wrong. Please email me again. **Please ensure you state which class and section you are in in your email.**

### **Laptop and Webcam Requirements**

*All students taking business courses, including all students in this class, must have their personal laptop computer with a working webcam and microphone.*

**It is each student's responsibility** to have a working laptop that meets the minimum requirements per the Belk College Laptop Policy, has the required course software installed, and is ready for classroom usage. It is each student's responsibility to have their laptop charged and ready for usage before class time. Students should expect that device charging may **not** be possible during class time. Therefore, battery life should be sufficient for an entire class period.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. The work that you submit for grading must be your own work. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are outlined in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at <https://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>. Students found violating either Code may be subject to failure of the assignment, exam, and/or course.

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

Students are expected to attend every class and remain in class for the entire session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives, which could affect your course grade for the duration of the session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives, affecting your course grade. An excused or unexcused absence does not relieve a student of any course requirement. Regular class attendance is a student's obligation, as is a responsibility for all the work of class meetings, including tests and written tasks. Any unexcused absence or excessive tardiness may result in losing participation points.

**Class Absence(s):** The authority to excuse a student's class absence(s) and to grant a student an academic accommodation (turn in a late assignment(s), provide extra time on an assignment, reschedule an exam(s), etc.) sits with the individual instructor. Students are encouraged to work directly with their instructors regarding class absences for medical appointments, military/court orders, and/or personal and family emergencies, such as a death in the immediate family, where a student is able to provide an instructor with appropriate supporting documentation of the absence. The instructor determines the final decision to approve absences and missed work or make-up work.

## Online Etiquette

Over the years, online students have made various excuses/explanations as to why they couldn't attend class online or have their cameras on during class. The following is expected when class is online: 1. Video on washed, wall, or themed backgrounds. Not using your video indicates that you are not present in the class. 2. Dress for your desired job – don't wear your pajamas to class. Therefore, clothing is NOT optional, meaning we can still see you even though you are home alone. 3. Stage your video area. People are seeing you, your surroundings, and those that might pop in and out of your screen. 4. Do your own tech support before class starts. 5. Stay on mute unless you are speaking. 6. Do not do private things while in a meeting. 7. Use the chat with everyone for things related to the class discussion. 8. When your camera is on, do not get up and move and cook. If you have to leave from in front of the camera, please shut your camera off.

## Suggestions for Success

For most students, this will not be a "difficult" course. However, some students will probably do well in academic classes where information is essential and will be surprised at the relative difficulty of this course, where manual skills and visualization are most important. So do not think that if you are a "B" student, you will probably get a "B" in this course. You might get an "A" with relative ease . . . or a "C" with difficulty and still be (and correctly so) a "B student" in your information-heavy, mainly lecture-type courses. The courses that follow this will be significantly different.

## Classroom Etiquette

Inappropriate behavior in class distracts from the ability of others to benefit from their in-class experiences. Such inappropriate behavior includes arriving late, leaving early, conducting independent conversations, surfing the web during class, etc. **Rude and inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.** Since it is the instructor's responsibility to provide an environment that is conducive to learning for everyone in the class, points will be deducted from the grade of any student who chooses to distract others repeatedly. The student will be permanently removed from the course in particularly egregious cases.

No wandering in and out of class (This is not a drop-in event.) Under no circumstances will students be permitted to spend their class time working on assignments for other classes, checking email, surfing the web, or printing out homework. Attempts to pursue such activities will be reflected in lower grades and may lead to removal from the class.

## Canvas

UNC Charlotte utilizes "Canvas" as its Learning Management System (LMS). A LMS simplifies teaching and learning by connecting all the digital tools professors use in one easy place. Be sure to read any weekly announcements and check Canvas for important information and updates about the course.



Canvas is also the central hub for posting assignments and handouts. For more information on Canvas, please visit [canvas.uncc.edu](https://canvas.uncc.edu). If you have any technical questions or problems, contact UNC Charlotte Information and Technology Services at 704-687-5500 or [itservices.uncc.edu](https://itservices.uncc.edu).

## **Diversity**

The Belk College of Business strives to create an inclusive academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate the diversity that includes but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

My intent and goal are to create a safe environment that fosters honest and open dialogue through the strength of the diversity that students bring to this class. I also intend that all students' views and opinions will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit to this class; as a result, students are expected to contribute to creating a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment. Therefore, classroom discussions should always be conducted in a way that shows respect, honor, and dignity to all class members. Materials presented and activities done in the class will respect diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Should there be a disagreement between students, everyone must demonstrate an understanding of how others' views may differ from their own. It should be pursued without aggression and personal attack but handled with care and grace, allowing for a more profound learning experience and intellectual engagement for everyone if there are ways for me to improve the effectiveness of the course for you individually or for other students or student groups.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

All students and the instructor are expected to engage with each other respectfully. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that person's actual or perceived race, real or perceived gender, color, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

## **Electronic Video, Image Capture, and/or Audio Recording Statement**

Electronic video, image capture, and/or audio recording **IS NOT** permitted during class, whether in person or online, unless the student obtains permission from the instructor. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Students with specific electronic recording accommodations authorized by the Office of Disability Services do not require instructor permission; however, the instructor must be notified of any such accommodations before recording. Any distribution of such recordings is prohibited.

## **Copyright Ownership of Material**

My lectures and course materials, including discussions, presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. For any material created and presented, I am the exclusive owner of the copyright of those materials. I have obtained consent and give credit to the

material I have used in my course. You are encouraged to take notes and make copies of materials for your educational use. However, you may not knowingly allow others to publicly reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials without my express written consent. This includes providing materials to commercial course material suppliers such as CourseHero, Chegg, and other similar services. Students who publicly distribute, display, or help others publicly distribute or display copies or modified copies of an instructor's course materials may violate University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Similarly, you own the copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or documents on the course website, I will request your written permission.

### **Plagiarism Detection Service**

As a condition of taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **SimCheck** [or another plagiarism detection service] to detect plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the SimCheck [or another plagiarism detection service] reference database solely to detect plagiarism of such documents. No student papers will be submitted to SimCheck without a student's [written consent and permission](#). If a student does not provide such written consent and authorization, the instructor may:

- Require a short reflection paper on research methodology.
- Require a draft bibliography before submission of the final paper.
- Require each reference source's cover page and first cited page to be photocopied and submitted with the final paper.

### **Classroom Culture**

I want our classroom to be where we deeply listen to each other and respect the feelings, experiences, and wisdom behind what we all say. I want us all to speak the truth as we understand it but to feel safe questioning things we don't know or understand. We all hold pieces to the puzzle.

At this point in your academic pursuit, out of respect for the learning process, we should all show up on time, be prepared, refrain from using cellphones and other electronic devices, and not pack up and leave early. If you have caring or medical obligations that mean you must arrive late or leave early, please speak to me. I also commit to being prepared, present, and engaged for our first time together.

### **Professional Behavior**

Throughout your college experience, you will meet many important stakeholders of UNC Charlotte and the Belk College of Business. We expect you to conduct yourself as aspiring professionals who respectfully interact with your peers, faculty, staff, alums, and corporate leaders. You should respectfully listen to and engage with faculty, classmates, and guest speakers in class without having side conversations. Failure to apply professional behavior in class may result in points deducted from the participation grade and potentially being asked to leave class.

## **Assistance**

It is common for college students to experience challenges that may interfere with academic success, such as academic stress, sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events, relationship concerns, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus at no additional cost.

- If you are struggling academically with this class, please visit me during office hours or contact me by email at [lrolan@uncc.edu](mailto:lrolan@uncc.edu).
- Meet with your academic advisor if you are struggling academically in multiple classes, unsure whether you are making the most of your time at UNC Charlotte, or unsure what academic resources are available at UNC Charlotte.
- Visit the Counseling and Psychological Services website at [caps.uncc.edu](http://caps.uncc.edu) for information about the broad range of confidential on-campus mental health services, online health assessments, hours, and additional information.
- Call CAPS at (704) 687-0311 if interested in scheduling an appointment with a counselor. After-hours crisis support is also available through this phone number.

## **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

UNC Charlotte is committed to access to education. If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide an email message from Disability Services early in the semester. For more information on accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at 704-687-0040 or visit their office in Fretwell 230.

## **Syllabus Modification**

The standards, requirements, dates, and topics outlined in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the professor. Notice of such changes will be by an announcement in class or via email.

## **Additional Information**

I have had the pleasure of teaching since 2013 and at UNC Charlotte since 2018. Before getting into the teaching profession, I was a Chief Financial Officer for local governments across the United States and the Small Business Center Director at South Piedmont Community College for the past six years. After spending 20 years in finance and business start, I decided to pursue my dream of educating others. I am a graduate from UNC Charlotte with my Doctorate in Business Administration. My passion is entrepreneurship and business, as well as health care administration.

Outside of my college life, my husband Mike and I enjoy buying and remodeling homes, traveling, fishing, and anything that involves being outdoors. I am a North Carolina native and have two great children and two granddaughters, a grandson and another grandson on the way!

## MBAD 6273: Product and Brand Strategy in the Connected World

*The following course calendar is “tentative”. Due to uncertainties that cannot be predicted (ie, the pace at which students are grasping the material), I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as I feel necessary. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of announcements posted on Canvas in this regard.*

Note: Class information printed in regular font, exams and assignments in **bold**, and *University information in italics.*

DATE		TOPIC	TEXT
W	8.23	<i>Introduction, Classroom Expectations, Syllabus, Group Projects Brands and Brand Management</i>	
W	8.30	<i>Developing a Brand Strategy</i> Read Chapter 2 & 3 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
M	9.4	<b>NO CLASS -- HOLIDAY</b>	
W	9.6	<i>Brand You Presentations</i>	
W	9.13	<i>Designing and Implementing</i> Read Chapter 4 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	9.20	<i>Designing and Implementing</i> Read Chapter 5 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	9.27	<i>Brand Position Presentations</i>	
W	10.4	<i>Designing and Implementing</i> Read Chapter 6 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class <i>STP Memo</i>	
W	10.11	<i>Designing and Implementing</i> Read Chapters 7 and 8 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	10.18	<i>Brand activation Presentations</i>	
M/T		<b>NO CLASS – FALL BREAK (10.23 TO 10.24)</b>	
W	10.25	<i>Measuring and Interpreting Brand Performance</i> Read Chapters 9 and 10 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	11.1	<i>Measuring and Interpreting Brand Performance</i> Read Chapters 11 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	11.8	<i>Presentations brand audit</i>	
W	11.15	<i>Growing &amp; Sustaining Brand Equity</i> Read Chapters 12 and 13 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
		<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING (11.22 TO 11.24)</b>	
W	11.29	<i>Growing &amp; Sustaining Brand Equity</i> Read Chapters 14 and 15 and articles and links posted on Canvas prior to class	
W	12.6	<b>Final presentations – Brand Extension and Rebranding a Weak Brand</b>	