

## **Case Studies in Global E-Commerce and Marketing Research**

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### **Abstract**

Case studies from at Harvard University, Thunderbird University and Cranfield University (UK) were employed as research tools, for undergraduate and MBA students for 20+ years. Since 1996, internet research added much to the learning. There is a surging need in today's job market, for marketing research and global e-commerce skills. Global E-Commerce course was offered in an undergraduate business program. Marketing Research course was offered in an MBA class. Real-world examples were utilized and applied in class wherever applicable. Students did final projects individually or in a team, by employing case studies via library and internet search. The outcome assessment indicated that the case studies enhanced significantly their overall learning experience. Students rated the courses good to excellent. This paper gave the summary.

Keyword: Case Studies, Team Assignment, Final Projects, Marketing Research and Global E-Commerce

Case studies were published by Harvard University, Thunderbird University and Cranfield University (UK) for 20+ years. Global E-Commerce and Marketing Research were taught in an undergraduate business program and the MBA program respectively. Hsu (2006) wrote a paper on Marketing Research. Job market is very good. A quick search on Indeed (2010) yielded 9,812 jobs for marketing research, 1,401 jobs for e-commerce. The results from CareerBuilder (2010) gave 909 for marketing research, 383 jobs for e-commerce. This search was done for Manhattan zip code 10001, and within a twenty-mile radius.

In the down economy, marketing research managers are still in demand, CNBC (2010). Every business needs to generate revenue. Companies need to do marketing research to collect and analyze data, about the new or existing product/services. Since 1996, internet e-commerce quickly became the new paradigm for doing business. The savvy managers take advantage of employing e-commerce to reach the global consumers. Managing the global e-commerce sales and marketing, will be the growth area for the next ten years.

**(A) Dominican College\*\*\***

Dominican College is located 15 miles northwest of New York City. Division of Business Administration offers Bachelor of Science programs in Accounting, Computer Information Systems (CIS), Economics, and five concentrations of management: Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Information Systems Management (MIS), International Management, and Marketing Management. As of the Spring Semester of 2010, the College enrolled 2000+.

Donald Hsu (DH) taught all courses in CIS/MIS, Hsu (2007). Hsu served as the Director of Business Administration Division, from 1990 to 1996. Starting in 1992, Hsu also taught courses in International Management curriculum: International Business, International Finance, International Management and Global E-Commerce. While the majors in CIS/MIS decreased, there has been a steady increase for students to major in International Management since 2001. In marketing curriculum, DH taught Basic Marketing, Global Marketing, and Marketing Management, Hsu (2010).

### **MG 366 Global E-Commerce course**

This course covers the issues of managing global E-commerce projects. Topics are: project management, business to consumer, business to business, life-cycle patterns, old economy vs new economy, e-banking, e-manufacturing, e-cross culture, e-marketing, e-management and e-society.

Course objectives are:

1. Describe the global E-commerce issues
2. Understand the importance of project management
3. Examine business to consumer vs business to business, old economy vs new economy
4. Explain the life cycle patterns
5. Introduce e-banking and e-manufacturing
6. Comprehend e-cross-culture in global settings
7. Learn the global merger and acquisition, e-style
8. Discuss e-global-marketing and distribution
9. Define e-global-management
10. Provide a socially responsible e-global society
11. Conduct case studies in a variety of topics
12. Perform "hands-on" labs in project management, business plan, Harvard Business School Case study, global M & A, Siebel CRM, to gain insights

Textbooks used were Kraemer (2006) and Laudon and Traver (2010). The twelve chapters of Laudon and Traver (2010) are: The Revolution, E-commerce Business Models and Concepts, The Internet and World Wide Web: E-commerce Infrastructure, Building an E-commerce Website, Online Security and Payment Systems, E-commerce Marketing Concepts, E-commerce Marketing Communications, Ethical, Social, and Political Issues in E-commerce, Online Retailing and Services, Online Content and Media, Social Networks, Auctions, and Portals, B2B E-commerce: Supply Chain Management and Collaborative Commerce. In short, this book explains the technical infrastructure of doing E-commerce.

Kraemer (2006) lists ten chapters, covering E-commerce development success and barriers of eight countries: USA, France, Germany, Japan, China, Taiwan, Brazil and Mexico. The book has plenty of data from the research. Global E-Commerce course was taught as a management course since its inception in Fall Semester 2000. In Spring Semester 2010, this course was taught as a computer and management class. That is why two textbooks were used. Going forward, Laudon and Traver (2010) will be required. Kraemer (2006) will be an optional requirement for students.

Eight students enrolled. This course was taught in the Accelerated format (Accel Program). The class ran eight Thursday evenings, from 5:45 to 9:50 pm. There were two Blackboard online sessions. Six classes were taught, face-to-face in the classroom. During a typical class, chapters were covered with PowerPoint presentations, and question/answer followed. Real-life examples were given whenever

applicable. Starting with Amazon and Ebay, what are the successful companies outside USA? Wanadoo is successful in France. Neuer market went bust in Germany. Bit Valley Shibuya is doing well in Tokyo, Japan. Lenovo (China firm) bought IBM PC. Acer (from Taiwan) became #2 in PC sales, surpassing Dell. BYD is selling electric cars in China. Gasohol and commodity are great business in Brazil. Maquiladoras and NAFTA are creating jobs and helping economy in Mexico, etc. Due to the economy meltdown in 2008, many entrepreneurs set up e-commerce sites to do business online. Zappos was sold to Amazon for \$880 million July 2009. FaceBook, Twitter and many other social networking websites, are trying everything to become E-commerce sites. How? That is the question.

One-hour was allocated for team exercise in each lecture class. These exercises were done: Harvard Business Review case study, Project Management, Business Plan, Merger Acquisition, and Siebel Customer Relationship Management. Eight students were divided into two groups, of four people each. They did these exercises to develop communications, interpersonal, team-building and leadership skills. Global Finance sheets (two parts) were employed as two Blackboard online assignments. Blackboard submissions were collected and graded for each student.

The global airline industry benefited, largely on the use of E-commerce technology. In the continental Europe, there are 40 discount airlines, Discount (2010). This number is down from 63 two years ago, due to consolidation. Students used online and library search to get information on two airlines, one regular and one discount airline. The final project consisted of a 9-12 page paper and 12+ PowerPoint slides. Table 1 lists the project assignment and the requirement for the final project. Students presented their final projects with question/answers followed. It was a very successful learning experience.

#### **(B) Keller Graduate School of Management\***

Keller is part of the DeVry University (DV) system. DV is a for-profit firm that has significant impact to the University Education community. DV has 90+ locations offering online or onsite courses, throughout the United States. It trades in the stock market under the stock symbol DV. The price was \$61.40 as of 5/24/2010. DV has 80,000+ students. Dr. Michael Hamlet (MH) is the Associate Academic Dean at Keller. MH is responsible for overall faculty placement, course offering, scheduling, and related management issues. DH has been working at Keller since September 2007 under the supervision of MH.

The Oracle based DV eLearning platform (eDV), is a very powerful learning tool for both the instructor and the students. DV eCollege helpdesk is available 24/7 and 365 days, with toll free telephone and online support. Registered MBA students signed in with the D numbers and passwords. They were able to preview course syllabus, chapters, assignments and references. Instructor's screen contained the same materials, but instructor could modify assignments, create the grade book, and receive assignments online. Short quizzes using multiple choices and true/false questions were graded by eDV. This feature saved much time on the instructor part. Threaded discussion questions were displayed on eDV. Students answered them in the threaded manner every week, and instructor graded them easily. Students must post threaded discussion a minimum of five times per week. Midterm exam could be done online if needed. Team or individual project was posted on eDV. The important thing to cover for the instructor is the terminal course objectives (TCO). eDV did an extensive work in TCO for each course.

#### **MM 570 Marketing Research course**

Marketing Research teaches students how to gather and analyze data to assist in making marketing decisions. The course addresses both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, including written questionnaires, telephone surveys, test marketing, and Focus Group. Emphasis is placed on examining how marketing research can help managers make better decisions regarding target markets, product features, product positioning and pricing, advertising and new product introductions. Ethical implication of marketing research activities was covered. Prerequisite is MM522 Marketing Management

DH taught Marketing Research many times: (1) NJ Bulk Mail Center with 6 people. This was sponsored by Education Committee, North Jersey Section, Institute Electrical Electronics Engineers, Hsu (2007); (2) Baruch College, City University of New York with 36 MBA students. Six final projects were completed successfully, Hsu (2006); and (3) University Phoenix with 3 students in 2009.

The terminal course objectives for this course are listed:

1. Understand the role marketing research can play in helping management to make better decisions.
2. Identify areas of ethical concern and make recommendations for the appropriate behavior of respondents and users of marketing research.
3. Define the program to be addressed and write a research proposal to help solve this problem.
4. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data to gather relevant data about the issues.
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the basic methods for collecting primary data and recommend which tools to use.
6. Evaluate the proposed survey instrument based on how effectively it will gather the appropriate information.
7. Recommend the best sample size and method to gather the necessary research data within budget and time constraints.
8. Analyze the data and interpret the results in order to make recommendations regarding marketing decisions.

Textbook was written by Parasuraman et al (2006). You can purchase this book or you can download the book as e-book. Keller Graduate School Management has an agreement with the publisher that students can do the free download, by using the MyScribe Reader. They can make notes and save them. MyScribe allows students to download e-book up to five computers. Therefore, students can read this book at many different locations. It is cost saving and convenient.

The course was taught on Sunday 1:00 to 4:30 pm, for eight weeks. Sixteen chapters were covered: The Nature and Scope of the Marketing Research, The Marketing Research Process, Types of Marketing Research, Secondary Data, Using Geographic Information for Marketing Research, Primary Data Collection, Qualitative Research, Measurement and Scaling, Questionnaire Design, Experimentation in Marketing Research, Sampling Foundations, Quality Control and Initial Analysis of Data, Hypothesis Testing, Examining Associations: Correlations and Regressions, Overview of other Multivariate Techniques, and Presenting Research Results.

For the online discussion (150 points), students were asked to post at least five times for each question in any given week. Project proposal (30 points) was due on Week One. Two online quizzes (120 points) were given, one in Week Three, and another one in Week Six. "You Decide" assignments (100 points) were graded at Week Two and Week Five. Survey exercise (100 points) was collected in Week Four. Course projects (150 points) were presented at Week Seven. Final exam (350 points) was a written exam, in the closed-book and closed-notes format. No PC, cell phone or any other electronic equipment was allowed. The total points were 1000. To get the A grade, student needs to score 930 or higher points.

Nine people enrolled. Every class started with PowerPoint presentation, with questions answers followed. Real-world sales examples in cars, construction, financial service, human resource, international business, insurance, pharmaceutical, real estates and retail stores, were given wherever applicable.

Chapter 11 through Chapter 15 listed theories and applications of statistics methods, correlation, regression, sampling, hypothesis testing, multi-variables, etc. Teaching these topics required a sound knowledge of statistics. DH spent much time, going through textbook equations on blackboard, and explained details. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is one of the widely used software tool to do the data analysis for social research and for marketing research. DH installed SPSS software Version 17 on his Dell laptop PC and brought it to class. Each student would key in data to the SPSS program and do the one-way frequency analysis, ANOVA, bi-variate test, T Test, etc. Every example in the textbook was

carried out by students successfully. Students found the “hands-on” practice extremely valuable, for learning data analysis in this course.

Marketing research involved the start of a Focus Group, with 7 to 11 people. A moderator would ask questions and get feedback from the people in the Focus Group. This normally took about 90 minutes. Then the questionnaire was designed based upon the data collected from the Focus Group. The questionnaire was distributed to 25 to 100 people for a survey. The survey could be done online. After collecting data from the survey, students entered the data via the SPSS software. Next step was to analyze and interpret the SPSS outputs. Then student concluded the research and made recommendations in their summary report.

For the final project, Harvard, Cranfield, Thunderbird cases were used. Students wrote a paper (10 pages) and prepared 12+ PowerPoint slides (150 points). Five final projects were competed and students did good jobs, see Table 2.

### **Conclusion**

With the down economy, many students were interested in learning real-life global e-commerce and marketing practices. Global E-Commerce and Marketing Research courses were taught at two different firms to 17 people. Reading the PowerPoint slides with real-world examples made the lecture interesting. Hands-on approach, in-class team exercises, homework assignments, role play, use of Business Plan, MS Project and SPSS software, Harvard case studies, online Blackboard discussion and exercises in global finance, internet search, final oral presentation, gave the best chance of success. Student assessments were good to excellent.

**\*\*\* Full-time position for DH**

**\* Part-time consultant for DH, Full-time position for MH**

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<b>Table 1</b>	<b>MG 366 Final</b>		
	<b>European Airlines</b>		
	<b><u>Names</u></b>	<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Project</u></b>
1	Rafferty	Germany	Lufthansa Air Berlin
2	Campbell	Ireland	AerLingus Ryanair
3	Todd	Sweden	ScandJet SAS
4	Thomas	Czech Republic	Czech Airline Smart Wings
5	Nunez	Spain	ClickAir Air Madrid
6	Buret	Poland	Lot Airline Wizz Air
7	Bayani	Belgium	VLM Airline Virgin Express
8	Martin	UK	British Airway EasyJet
<b>A.</b>	<b>Start with a country, pick two airline firms, one traditional and one E-commerce website.</b>		
<b>B.</b>	<b>Compare the two firms on business models,</b>		

	CEO/founders, # of employees, global locations,	
	sample routes, fares, discount features,	
	global competitors, benefit of E-commerce	
	and future trend using global E-commerce.	
C.	Written paper: 9 - 12 pages, doubly spaced	
	Oral Presentation using MS Power Point, 10 - 20 slides	
	13 minute presentation, 5 minute Q& A	
	<i>You are the best to win win win!</i>	

Table 2	<b>MM 570 Final Projects</b>	
	<b><u>Names</u></b>	<b><u>Project</u></b>
1	Aurelian Mehta	Energy Drink Analysis using SPSS software
2	Blake Marwaha	Navib Day Spa Other Survey Method
3	Morales Pietri	Smart Cars Focus Group
4	Savice Szotkovska	Inavas Medical Online Survey
5	Caicedo	Vonage Questionnaire Design