

Course Outline

Course Code : MKT4719
Course Title : Distribution Management: Channels & Platforms
Semester : Semester 1, AY 2024/2025
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Overview

Overview and Objectives

Channels (pipelines) and platforms are the distribution “structures” that link demand and supply. These structures (both physical and virtual) make possible the transactions between buyers and sellers by enabling the exchange of information, product (and service) and payment. In short, the structures enable distribution. This course teaches the learner about these structures, paying particularly attention to the efficiency and effectiveness of their distribution.

The efficiency and effectiveness of a distribution structure are affected by the idiosyncratic characteristics of the product (and service), as well as those of (intermediate and end) sellers and buyers. This course put together the knowledge base needed to understand the impact of these characteristics on the distribution structure and the impact of the design of a distribution structure on the behaviours of sellers and buyers.

This course has theoretical, empirical, and practical components. It exposes the students to the necessary theoretical background to evaluate existing empirical phenomena in distribution. Armed with theory and empirics, students take a step further using the knowledge to discover and appreciate the challenges and opportunities of the existing distribution structures in various product categories. At the end of the course, the diligent learner will have a well-grounded understanding of the structures that enable the transactions between buyers and sellers and will be competent in applying this knowledge to handle challenges and opportunities in the linking of demand and supply.

Learning Outcomes

Students shall attain the following learning outcomes in order of difficulty:

1. Know how channels and platforms enable demand and supply to link,
2. Identify challenges and opportunities a distribution structure face and why,
3. Appreciate the implications of such challenges and opportunities for business,
4. Design effective structures to resolve challenges and exploit opportunities.

Course Approach

We will use the textbook, videos and articles as the primary teaching materials. In addition, lecture notes and handouts will be made available throughout the semester. The pre-class readings are generally meant to introduce concepts, principles and frameworks. Students are expected to co-create the learning experience by researching and contributing examples from the marketplace that illustrate the principles covered in class.

Preparation for Class

A class schedule is provided at the later part of this document. The class schedule contains the topics that I will cover in this course. For each week, it lists the topic for the week and the pre-class readings. Some suggestions for a good preparation before class:

1. Read the essential course material assigned at the minimum. For the highly motivated, you are encouraged to research from different sources to expand your knowledge online and share your discovery
2. Note down the difficulty you encounter, doubts and questions that you have during the reading. Think carefully about how you want to ask the questions. Prioritize your questions. If we don't have time to cover your question fully in class, I invite you to schedule 1-1 or small group consultation session.
3. Go through the topics and materials that we cover in previous classes. Can you make a connection?

Assessment

This course has no final examination; Your final grade in the course will be based on four components. The evaluation is as follows:

| Assessment Components | Weightage |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Class Participation (Attendance, Contribution, Quiz & Critique) | 20% |
| 2. Individual Assignments | 30% |
| 3. Group Exercises or Assignments | 15% |
| 4. Group Project (consist of) | 35% |
| - Relevant Business & Channel Insights from quality research | |
| - Application of Course Concepts onto Analysis & Solutions | |
| - Cohesiveness & Quality of Presentation | |

1. Class participation

Class participation reflects your engagement, demonstrates understanding and ability to apply key concepts covered in the course. Class participation can take many forms; quality of response in-class or on CANVAS, through quiz, group discussions and thoughtful (written) critique of peer project presentations. Attendance is a critical component of the overall score and absence will result in deduction of marks.

2. Individual Assignment

- Assignments will be briefed in Session 3 and Session 7
- All assignments are to be in PowerPoint format, no more than stated number of slides. Assignments should be submitted by the communicated deadlines.
- A folder will be created on CANVAS for your assignment submission. Penalty will be imposed for plagiarism.

3. Group Exercise or Assignment

- Assignments will be discussed in Session 4
- All assignments are to be in PowerPoint format, no more than 7 slides. Assignments should be submitted by the communicated deadline.
- A folder will be created on CANVAS for your assignment submission. Penalty will be imposed for plagiarism.

4. Group Project

- Project Membership assignment and discussion is scheduled during Session 3 (4-5 members per Team). Deadline for Project Submission on CANVAS is due not earlier than 28 Oct 2024.
- At Session 12, each team (about 4-5 students per team) will prepare and present (no more than 12 slides) (15 min presentation). All group members need to participate, in the presentation.
- Concurrently, you will be given a graded individual Learning Journal assignment connected to the presentations of other Teams. This is part of the Individual Assignment component.

Free-riding is strongly discouraged. The University takes a stern view of such behaviour. In instances where groups report severe inequity, a peer assessment form may be used to moderate and alter the final scores of students who free-ride.

Course Materials

Required Text:

Robert W. Palmatier, Eugene Sivadas, Louis W. Stern, and Adel I. ElAnsary,
Marketing Channel Strategy: An Omni-Channel Approach, 9th Edition,
Routledge (2019) [RP]

Geoffrey G. Parker, Marshall W. Van Alstyn and Sangeet Paul
Choudary, **Platform Revolution**, W.W. Norton & Co. (2016) [GP]

References & Resources

Matchmakers – The New Economics of Multisided Platforms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnwCOyavVnQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLaeD1YQ8Rw>

Platform & Ecosystem

Platform Revolution – Sangeet Paul Chowdury

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daQoVUA0wD8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v23jbqJhghk>

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

- [Administrative Policies](#)
- <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/acceptance-record#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>
- <http://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

Schedule and Outline

| Session | Topic | Reading & Assignment |
|---------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | Introduction – Role of Distribution. Demand & Supply | RP Chapter 1 |
| 2 | Channel Basics – Participants, Functions & Structures. Audits & Gaps | RP Chapter 2 |
| 3 | Channel – Design (Omni- and Multi-Channel). Key Trends & Challenges. End Users & Touchpoints | RP Chapter 1,9,11 |
| 4 | Channel Design - Wholesale, Retail & Distributor | RP Chapter 6-8 |
| 5 | Channel – Franchise, User Analysis | RP Chapter 10 |
| 6 | Channel - Relationship & Power | RP Chapter 3-4 |
| Recess | Mid-Semester Break | |
| 7 | Channel Conflict, Grey Market, International Markets | RP Chapter 5 |
| 8 | Revise Key Concepts in C-Mgt. Platform Basics - Overview | GP Chapters 1 & 4 |
| 9 | Platform – Function & Design | GP Chapters 3 & 9 |
| 10 | Platform – Network Effects | GP Chapters 2 & 6 |
| 11 | Platform – Strategy, Ecosystem & Market | GP Chapters 8 & 10 |
| 12 | Group Project Presentation | |
| 13 | Summary & Outlook: The Future | GP Chapter 12 |

RP: Robert W. Palmatier, Eugene Sivadas, Louis W. Stern, and Adel I. El-Ansary;

GP: Geoffrey G. Parker, Marshall W. Van Alstyne and Sangeet Paul Choudary;

About me . . .

Maurice holds a portfolio of Senior Advisory and Academic roles focusing in Public Healthcare Transformation and Human Capital Development. He most recently served as Senior Consultant with Ministry of Health Office for Healthcare Transformation advising on Digital Mental Health Solution, Population Health Strategy & HealthierSG after transitioning from the Health Promotion Board where he served as Deputy CEO. Concurrently, Maurice also appointment across Snr. Adjunct Faculty, Mentorship, Senior Fellowship, Program Directorship & Board roles in NUS Business School, NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NTU Entrepreneurship Academy and SMU Academy.

In Maurice's last corporate role, he led the M&A Integration/divestiture effort for Microsoft in Asia. Prior to that, he was helping the role of Managing Director & Senior VP leading P&L for 7 years driving Business Strategy, Operations & Transformation for Microsoft's Consumer Businesses in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore & Maxis' Telco business in Malaysia.

Earlier in his career, Maurice led many high-profile marketing campaigns across diverse consumer-centric industries. His operations, sales & marketing leadership experiences span diverse categories from Restaurants, Snack Food, Petcare, Soft Drinks, Mobile Phone, Automotive, Telco to Technology Hardware & Software in country, regional and global roles.

Maurice's career journey and expertise is focus on Consumer facing Businesses (and Population Behavioural Intervention in Public Service) within large complex organizations in pursuit of Change & Transformation.

The theory and concepts of Distribution Management: Channel & Platform resonates with Maurice's industry experience in Channel Management role in FMCG (Mars Inc.), Franchise Model businesses (McDonald's & PepsiCo) and driving Platform business at Microsoft (Xbox Video Game & Windows)