Graduate School of Management
UC-Davis MBA Program

Course Title: MGT 293, Seminar in Consumer Behavior
Spring Quarter 2009

Professor: Dr. William J. Rhyne, DBA, MBA
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Class Location & Time:
Davis Location-- Tuesdays, 12:10-3 pm in 261, MGT 293 CRN 93927,
Sacramento Location-- Thursdays, 6-9 pm in OCM 2, MGP 293-1 CRN 93928
San Ramon Location-- Friday 6-9:00 pm, Saturday 1-4:00 pm in BISRCH 1503, MGP 293-2
CRN 93929
(Dates: Mar. 27, 28 Apr. 10, 11, 24, 25, May 8, 9, 22, 23)

Course Credits: 3
Course Description: In this course, we study the influence of consumer behavior upon
marketing-management strategy, and vice versa. Consumer research examines behavioral
concepts as they relate to the buying situations, decision making, consumption and disposal
behaviors, the role of products and services on a consumer social interactions, personality,
culture, and health. Students will be exposed to consumer research instruments, articles, and
marketing issues. The orientation in this class is on maximizing consumer and community
welfare while supporting a company’s economic goal. Marketing managers use consumer-
behavior knowledge to segment markets and to formulate marketing strategy. Class materials
include a text, readings, video, and case materials. Prerequisite: Marketing Management course

Instructional Contact Hours: 30 hours

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to provide knowledge of:

1) the psychological, social, and cultural foundations of consumer behavior

2) the mechanisms of influence that are most likely to lead consumers to change their attitudes,
their beliefs, and, most importantly their actions

3) how to engage these mechanisms in building persuasive communications.
Instructional Materials and References:


Additional readings offered when class begins. Video segments will be used also.

Teaching Strategies: Course materials will be presented through lectures, cases, class exercises, and discussion. Students will write small papers on the topics covered in the class. At the end of the classroom portion of the course, students will be tested on the material covered in the book, lectures, and discussion.

Requirements for successful completion: Given the seminar format of the class, students should plan on attending each class prepared to contribute to the discussion. Each week, students take turns leading a roundtable discussion. Any homework should be completed and handed in on time for complete credit.

Method of evaluating students: Students will be evaluated on class attendance and participation in the discussion, written work, and final exam.

Outline of the Course: Additional reading may be assigned later.

Session 1: Course Introduction to consumer behavior;
   Readings: Chapter 1 “Consumer Rule”, Chapter 2 “Perception”
   Case Class Discussion: “The Brave New World of Subway Advertising”, p.84.

Session 2: What do we know as consumers?
   Readings: Chapter 3 “Learning and Memory”

Session 3: I need, I want, I gotta have it!
   Readings: Chapter 4, Motivation and Values
   Chapter 5, The Self

Session 4: I gotta be me!
Readings: Chapter 6, Personality and Lifestyles

Chapter 7, Attitudes


Session 5: Emotional versus rational decision-making

Readings: Chapter 8, Attitude Change and Interactive Communications

Chapter 9, Individual Decision Making

Case Class Discussion: “The Tablet PC: Revolutionizing the PC Landscape?”, p.358.

Session 6: Social signaling and movements

Readings: Chapter 10 “Buying and Disposing”

Chapter 11 “Group Influence and Opinion Leadership”


Session 7: Crowdsourcing, Webkinz, Cell Phone Envy?

Readings: Chapter 12 “Organizational and Household Decision Making”

Chapter 13 “Income and Social Class”


Session 8: Influences from Shared Identities

Readings: Chapter 14 “Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Subcultures”

Case Class Discussion: “Rollin’ in a Scade”, p. 542.

Session 9: Talk to me, my friends, my tribe! Or better yet, let me talk!

Readings: Chapter 15 “Age Subculture”, Chapter 16 “Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior”

Case Class Discussion: “Camera Phones Invade the Middle East”, p.603.

Session 10: Culture--static or evolving? In what direction?

Readings: Chapter 17 “Global Consumer Culture”

Case Class Discussion: “Starbucks: Purveyor of Coffee—or Culture, p. 651.
Final Exam time and location to be announced during the course.

Instructor Background: Bill Rhyne has face to face experience with consumer decision processes and attitudes from his days of selling books door-to-door in Indiana and Virginia; performing music for audiences in Hawaii, Kansas, California, Japan, China, and France; and marketing music software and award winning Rhyne Cyder (sparkling hard cider) throughout the United States. In addition to these business experiences, he was in sales and marketing for medical device manufacturers for 13 years. In 1986, he was awarded “National Sales Representative of the Year” (no. 1 out of 62) for Professional Medical Products, a $200 million year medical device manufacturer. Since 1998, he has been teaching in undergraduate and graduate business programs in Northern California and in China. He has a BA in Music from the University of Hawaii-Manoa, an MBA from UC-Davis, a Diploma in International Business from Erasmus University in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, and a DBA from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California.