

MGT 6325EM Syllabus

Product Planning (3)

Fall, 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

This course is designed for both marketing specialists, generalists, and those interested in brand/product management, entrepreneurship and new product development. It exposes students to the contemporary challenges faced by a broad variety of firms in creating, maintaining, and managing their brand/product lines over both the short and long term. This includes analyzing the market and developing a strategic product offering to leverage consumer opportunities. Product Planning will examine the critical functions performed by product and brand managers in the modern organization to drive value from products and product lines.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze market opportunities and customer needs to identify viable directions for new and existing products.
2. Develop product and brand strategies using segmentation, targeting, positioning, lifecycle, and portfolio management frameworks.
3. Evaluate and recommend key product decisions related to pricing, channels, promotion, line extensions, and go-to-market planning.
4. Apply product planning tools and data to solve real-world business problems through cases, simulations, and team projects.
5. Communicate strategic product recommendations effectively in professional written, visual, and oral formats

Required Course Materials

1. Online software license and manual (1 per person): James, Stuart W., Thomas C. Kinnear and Michael Deighan, *PharmaSim: A Brand Management Simulation*: Interpretive Software Inc.
2. Cases and simulations: Articles at Harvard Case Pack
3. Readings: Available via Canvas Site (Organized by module) and Harvard Case Pack (if not publically available).

Grading Policy:

Assignments

PharmaSim Quiz	Individual	50
PharmaSim Marketing Plan	Team	150
PharmaSim Performance	Team	200
Quiz #1	Individual	125
Case Competition	Team	100
Back to the Future Presentation	Team	150
Quiz #2	Individual	125
Class participation (Case Contribution, In class activities)	Individual	100
TOTAL		1000

Description of Graded Components

PharmaSim - The PharmaSim project is a computer-assisted exercise that offers a unique format to learn about product marketing management decisions. You will learn and make decisions in a dynamic environment over a ten-year period. Thus, you will have the opportunity to learn the results of your decisions. You will benefit from good decisions over time and conversely suffer from the consequences of poor decisions. Your goal is to 1) try to be as successful as possible at achieving your marketing goals and 2) learn about brand and product management and the decisions that make optimal use of available information and integrate these within some logical strategy. Prior to running the simulation, we will review the case in class to ensure that everyone has the proper background.

Before your team makes any decisions each period, it is important that you carefully consider the available information just as you would for any case. The decisions you will make range from an overarching product portfolio strategy, suggested retail price, your

advertising budget, selection of your advertising agency and message, consumer promotions, channel strategy, and sales force. Importantly, you will also can launch new products and line extensions, if you feel it is strategically viable. In subsequent periods, your budget across advertising, promotions, and sales support will be constrained by an overall available budget. This budget will be determined by how well (or poorly) you perform in the prior period (less volume = less money!). Any unspent money will be added to profits.

Marketing Plan - PharmaSim will likewise serve as the foundation for the marketing plan assignment that all teams are required to complete. Using PharmaSim as the platform, your group will develop a marketing plan PowerPoint. (No more than 15 PowerPoint slides) that will outline what your strategy and your rationale for those decisions. You will be conducting a plan moving from period 4 to period 5. This assignment will give you the opportunity to develop an annual marketing/business plan – a key responsibility of product/brand managers. It will also force you to think critically about the case, carefully consider and analyze the available information and committing yourselves to a plan for the rest of the simulation.

At the end of the simulation, the winning teams will present an overview of their PharmaSim journey with other teams expected to contribute to the discussion (presenting teams TBD based on results). During the simulation, we will have “consulting sessions” with each team where we will assess your progress and where you might have opportunities.

Back to the Future: Product Analysis & Evolution Plan - In this project, your team will play the role of product marketing managers traveling through time: This assignment combines strategic analysis with forward-looking creativity — exactly what product marketing managers do in the real world. The project will enable you to

- Apply product planning frameworks (STP, 4Ps, blue ocean, product lifecycle, portfolio strategy, crossing the chasm)
- Identify and evaluate the strategic decisions behind a product’s market performance.
- Develop a forward-looking plan for product line evolution and next steps.
- Communicate complex ideas in a clear, concise, and persuasive presentation

Part I: Looking Backwards – Reverse Engineering the Product

Students will analyze and present:

1. Customer Problem & Job-to-Be-Done – What need is this product solving?
2. Target Segment(s) – Who is the core audience?
3. Value Proposition – What’s the unique benefit and reason to believe?

4. Key Features & Benefits – Product attributes that deliver value.
5. Positioning & Messaging – Taglines, ad themes, and brand personality.
6. Pricing & Channel Strategy – How and where is it sold? At what price?
7. Lifecycle Stage – Where is the product today (intro, growth, maturity, decline)?

Part II: Looking to the Future – Plan for the next 1-3 years.

Students will recommend how the product line should evolve from today forward:

- Lifecycle Strategy – Investment level and role in the portfolio.
- Line Extensions – New SKUs, formats, flavors, or variants.
- Adjacency Moves – New categories or usage occasions.
- Geographic Expansion – Domestic vs. global growth.
- Risk Management – Competitive or market threats to address.
- Next Steps – Clear actions for the next 12–36 months

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

Product Planning is a real world, applied course and many of our sessions will involve case discussions. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared, having read the assigned readings, completed the required calculations (if applicable), developed opinions on the assigned cases, and be prepared to contribute to class discussion. **COLD CALLS WILL HAPPEN.** Not attending class and not participating in class will drastically reduce a student's participation grade.

Tardiness - Just like meetings in the corporate world, this class will start on time. I expect you to be ready to begin discussion at the scheduled class time.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS

[Core IMPACTS](#) is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated [career competencies](#). [This resource](#)

developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

To optimize chances for success, students should have taken MGT 3300 prior to taking this class.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Students will form “product marketing teams” for the PharmaSim simulation. Given the broad range of brand/product management experiences, an ideal team should consist of a range of talents. An anonymous evaluation of team members and their participation will be required at the end of the term. That being said, if a problem does arise, I want to be made known sooner rather than later. You may put in requests for teams. Those that do not make a request will be randomly assigned a team.

You will be operating as product management teams for many of the class deliverables. At the end of the semester, I will ask you to rate your teammates on their contribution to the team. I do place emphasis on these ratings and those who are seen as “free riders” by more than one team member will have grades in group projects severely impacted.

While AI is an important tool that holds a lot of promises, for this class, we will only use AI for designated assignments. AI should not be used for simulations and quizzes. Note that Honorlock will detect AI usage during any quiz/exam.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Assignments are due on the date listed in Canvas. **No EXCEPTIONS!** For any late assignment, you will be assessed a 10% penalty for every day the assignment is late.

Quizzes will occur on the date noted in Canvas. Only medically excused absences will be allowed to be rescheduled. Make up quizzes will be rescheduled at a mutually convenient date and time.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

If weather conditions necessitate Digital Learning Days, we will conduct class via ZOOM on the Canvas site.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Please restrict your use of laptops/smartphone etc. during class – It’s unprofessional to have your laptop up and running during a class, a meeting, or a conversation. Exception to this is a case discussion/ simulation where you may have to consult a spreadsheet, graph, etc.

Campus Resources for Students

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- [Student Resources](#) such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- [Professional Development](#) such as *the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events*

Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))