

Submission Template for the 2017 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords

In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words), and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

Title: Learning Outside the Classroom by Launching, Building, and Analyzing an Online Business

Abstract: This highly interactive session guides you through the steps of a group project **that aims to advance the students' understanding of how to drive traffic to an** eCommerce website by adhering to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and social media best practices. Over a three-week period, the teams build a website, use social media to drive traffic to it, and then analyze social media and Google analytics to determine what changes need to be made to their marketing campaigns and their website pages. Through this experiential project, the students learn to appreciate how difficult it is to build an online presence.

Keywords: technology, marketing, website, analytics

2) Teaching Implications:

What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy? Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

The learning objectives for this session are to:

- Appreciate the excitement that experiential projects generate as well as to demonstrate their importance when certain concepts, like the difficulty of driving traffic to a website, must be understood at a visceral level
- Provide an exposure to technology that allows students with no programming experience to easily create a website and gather analytics
- Understand **how easy it is for today's "digital natives" to work outside of the classroom with very little faculty direction**
- Acknowledge the value that analytics bring to all decision making, not just what changes need to be made to an eCommerce website or social media campaign

- Illustrate the success of a cross discipline faculty designed and run project (this project is jointly owned by our Marketing and IT faculty however it does not need to be run as an integrated project)

The theoretical foundations for our student project are grounded primarily in the literature of entrepreneurial thought and action which encompasses experimentation and the notion of taking action, learning from that action, refining earlier steps, and then repeating the action.¹ This literature suggests that the entrepreneurial method be taught to everyone as it is a powerful way facing the unknown and tackling problems.²

In our scenario, the students take action by creating a website with the appropriate content and keywords and developing social media campaigns to drive traffic to the website. The learning occurs by examining the social media and Google analytics they gather weekly and the refinement comes in the form of changes to their website pages and social media campaigns. As indicated above, it is critical that students of all management disciplines understand the importance of taking a step, learning from and refining those actions, and then repeating this process.³

3) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well *the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.*

We are requesting 90 minutes for this activity-based session. Our session outline follows:

¹ Schlesinger, Len. and Charles Kiefer. **Just Start: Take Action, Embrace Uncertainty, Create the Future.** Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

² Sarasvathy, S. D. and S. Venkataraman. "Entrepreneurship as Method: Open Questions for an Entrepreneurial Future. **Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice.**" 35: 113–135, 2011.

³ Greenberg, Danna., Kate McKone-Sweet and James Wilson. **The New Entrepreneurial Leader.** Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2011.

Timing	Description
15 minutes	Session leaders will provide an overview of the session and its learning goals, describe the student project, and place the participants into teams of four individuals.
35 minutes	Two team members will be given a t-shirt design and asked to enter it into Teespring. Simultaneously, two team members will build a one-page website using Weebly, link this website to their t-shirt design in Teespring, and embed the provided Google analytics code into their website.
20 minutes	Session participants will use their social media networks to post content and drive traffic to their website. They will then be given a Google analytics report from a past student project so they can become familiar with the type of data that Google captures. NOTE: It takes Google a few days to update new customer reports. If interested, the participants can examine their Google analytics report when they return home.
20 minutes	Session leaders will share a previous student presentation with the participants in order to demonstrate the learning that occurs and the actions that take place from the weekly analysis of their website and social media analytics.

4) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of **Navigating the Changing Currents?**

Our session addresses several of the objectives expressed by OBTC:

1. **Develop effective classroom experiences for our student in the changing academic environment AND providing unique ideas for utilizing the changing and evolving technology to enhance the learning experience:** Our student project provides an effective experience for the students with the bulk of the work being conducted outside of the classroom. By leveraging today's intuitive website, social media, and data analysis technology, we have flipped the classroom and are able to use precious class time to answer questions, troubleshoot issues, and allow the students to reflect on their activities. In addition, our session will describe how neither the Marketing nor the IT faculty are experts in any of the software we ask the students to use nor do we need to be. The students understand that the technology tools are constantly changing **and that the faculty's** job is to explain the concepts and equip them with frameworks they can apply when they enter the workforce. Faculty should also keep in mind that these digital natives are able to easily navigate the technology

and when they have questions, they are resourceful enough to seek out help either from the platform providers or by searching the web.

2. **Creating a forum for demonstrating effective tools to be utilized in navigating higher education:** Two things come to mind here. First, with the growing presence of the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), students are looking for online programs and our college for one is requesting that we introduce more online or blended (part online, part offline) courses. The project we describe in this session is well-suited to an online or blended course. Second, in this session we plan to describe how the student teams use technologies like Google Drive and Google Sheets to keep track of their project roles and to share their project activities with the faculty.

5) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?

No, we have not presented this work before. We have, however, presented at OBTC in the past and we are anxious to hear how our ideas will be applied and refined by our colleagues.

Appendix

Below is the handout we provide our students.

Digital Brand Strategy Group Project

Launching and Analyzing an Online Brand

Project Overview

To be effective competitors in the modern marketplace, both startups and Fortune 500 companies must be savvy of their digital presence. Therefore, the objective of this integrated Marketing/IT project is to advance your understanding of social media marketing and website Search Engine Optimization (SEO) so you can make informed and strategic decisions about how best to build your brand presence online. Through the use of target market centric website content, website keywords, and social media best practices, you will experience first-hand how to drive traffic to a website where you will have the choice of marketing t-shirts, sweatshirts, **totes, mugs, or stickers**. **You may choose to target a cause, such as the “environment”, “zero-carbon footprint”, or “breast cancer”.** **Alternatively, you may target a specific niche such as “Greek life”, “dog lovers”, or “female athletes”.** The impact of your inbound marketing activities will be measured using Google as well as social media analytics.

Teespring

Your product will be manufactured and sold through Teespring—a platform that makes it easy for anyone to design and sell t-shirts, sweatshirts, totes, mugs, or stickers. With Teespring, there is no upfront cash outlay. Once you sell between three and five items (the amount varies per Teespring campaign), Teespring will manufacturer and ship the product. You set the selling price; the cost is determined by the design of the item you choose to sell. The maximum length of a Teespring campaign, and the length we ask you to set, is twenty-one days. If your team is successful in selling over the minimum quantity of items, your designated charity will receive a check for the profits.

Online Presence

You will not sell directly through Teespring. Instead, each team will create a website using Weebly.com and your website should contain an image of your product and the Buy or Purchase button should be hyperlinked to your Teespring campaign. The customer will ultimately make their purchase on the Teespring website.

You will promote your website using three social media platforms. Select the social media assets that you believe will be most effective for your target audience. You will use the marketing tools taught to you in Marketing and the analytics/technology tools taught to you in IT to create rich postings that engage your customers and drive traffic to your website. These social media platform might include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+ or

Buzzfeed. We encourage you to blog as it is a great way to create original content and to drive traffic to your website. With BuzzFeed, you can choose between making an article, list, quiz, poll, or checklist and you can use any combination of text, image, gif, video, etc. To sign up for a BuzzFeed community account, go to <http://www.buzzfeed.com/community> and fill in the profile details to your comfort level. Prior to posting to BuzzFeed, review the **How Do I Use BuzzFeed** guide: http://www.buzzfeed.com/help/how_to_use.

You are required to use Hootsuite to effectively manage your social media posts. Hootsuite allows you to post content to multiple social media accounts as well as to schedule the timing of those posts. The Hootsuite dashboard will enable you to effectively keep track of all your social media activity.

Project Components

Each team is required to:

1. Enter a product design into Teespring (www.teespring.com)
2. Create a website using Weebly (www.weebly.com) with at least three pages: Home, About Us, and Contact Us. The Home page should contain an image of your product and the product should link to the Teespring website.
3. Add keywords to your website
4. Embed Google Analytics into your website
5. Develop successful social media campaigns, on three different platforms, by adhering to the 4E framework
6. Use your website and social media assets to showcase original content
7. Leverage Hootsuite to effectively manage your social media activity
8. Measure the visibility of your website and your brand using Google and social media analytics

Standards and Regulations

All website content and social media or BuzzFeed posts must meet Babson's standards, thus, no offensive material – including, but not limited to, alcohol and/or drug references and sexual images – may be posted. The instructors need to be provided administrative access to your website, social media campaigns, and BuzzFeed accounts. The instructors will not use this access to change content unless it is deemed necessary. Your website, social media accounts and BuzzFeed pages must be taken down within two weeks of the last day of class.

Final Deliverable

The culmination of your project will be a 15-minute joint Marketing/IT presentation. Plan on approximately 10 minutes for your presentation followed by 5 minutes of Q&A. Your PPT should adhere to the following outline:

1. **Cover Page:** Include your team number and the first and last name of each member.
2. **Inspiration and Target Market:** What was your topic and inspiration for this topic? Describe your target market. Be specific.
3. **Product:** Describe your product. Be sure to include a photo.

4. **Website:** Show all pages of your website. Describe how your website adheres to the UI/UX principles outlined in class.
5. **Keywords:** List the keywords you placed on your website pages and indicate where on the pages you included them.
6. **Social Media:** What was your strategy for reaching your target market? Was it effective? Why or why not. Describe your social media campaigns. Mention the alignment with your target market. Show examples of the rich, original, content you created to ensure customer **engagement and describe how you adhered to the 4E's frameworks.** Comment on your use of Hootsuite.
7. **Google analytics:** How much website traffic were you able to generate? Show, explain, and comment on your Google analytics data at checkpoints #1, #2, and #3 explained on the next page. Describe the changes you made to your website and your social media activities after analyzing your Google analytics.
8. **Social media analytics:** How much social media traffic were you able to generate. What type of content did your customers find most engaging? Support your statements with social media analytics. Describe the changes you made to your social media activities after analyzing this data.
9. **Lessons Learned:** Describe your key takeaways? What would you do differently in the future?
10. **Appendices:** Include your Google and social media analytics data in appendices. Also, include EVERY social media and Buzz Feed post including likes, comments, date/time, and overall engagement.

Suggestions for Success

- Create a content calendar of when you are going to post (adjust based on analytics).
- Have ALL social media accounts built BEFORE you launch the project on March 29th.
- Assign roles to each member of the team. Hold members accountable when they are not adhering to their roles.
- Pick a topic that is exciting and interesting for the entire team.

Upload your PPT with your appendices by 9:00PM on April 23 to both your Marketing and IT Blackboard sites. In addition, please bring TWO copies of your PPT to class on your presentation day.

Project Due Dates

The project interim and final due dates are shown below.

	Dates	Deliverables
Introduce Project	Wednesday March 8 (M/W) Thursday March 9 (T/R)	Discuss your target market, product choice, and product design.
Finalize Product Design	Wednesday March 15 (M/W) Thursday March 16 (T/R)	Update the Google project sheet with a description of your target market and product design.
Finalize Website and Post to Social Media Accounts	Monday March 27 (M/W) Tuesday March 28 (T/R)	Finalize your website, embed Google analytics, and paste the website URL into the Google project sheet. Create your social media accounts. Add the URLs to the Google project sheet. Post daily to these accounts.
Project Launch	Wednesday March 29 (everyone)	Go live with your Teespring campaign by this date . (One day earlier is fine if you have everything in place). Begin marketing your product.
Checkpoint #1 Day 5 (M/W) Day 6 (T/R)	Wednesday April 5 (M/W) Thursday April 6 (T/R)	Take a snapshot of your Google analytics for inclusion in your end-of-project report. Based on your analytics, make changes to your website content, keyword placement, or social media activities. For your final presentation, be sure to document these changes and the reasons for them.
Checkpoint #2 Day 12 (M/W) Day 13 (T/R)	Wednesday April 12 (M/W) Thursday April 13 (T/R)	Take a snapshot of your Google analytics for inclusion in your end-of-project report. Record the changes in the analytics from the previous snapshot. Based on your analytics, make changes to your website content, keyword placement, or social media activities. For your final presentation, be sure to document these changes and the reasons for them.
Checkpoint #3 & Project End Day 21	Wednesday April 19 (everyone)	Take a snapshot of your Google analytics for inclusion in your end-of-project report. Record the changes in the analytics from the previous snapshot. Record your lessons learned
Upload PPT and appendices	Sunday, April 23rd at 9:00 PM	Upload your PPT and appendices by 9:00PM to your both your IT & Marketing Blackboard sites.
Joint Marketing/IT presentation	April 24 and 26 (M/W) April 25 and 27 (T/R)	In Class Presentations.