

International Consulting Practicum

Positioning and the Consumer Journey in Marketing Communications Strategy

May-June 2018--- (Spring Semester course)

Overall Program Description and Summary

This course uses a consulting practicum to teach students how to develop a positioning statement and consumer journey description and implement them into marketing communications strategy. Students will work with Volvo, a global leader in the “luxury” car segment. Volvo wants to establish itself as a consistent car brand throughout the world, so it needs to understand how to do this through an understanding of its consumer journey.

The goal of the client is to establish a positioning and communications strategy for to retain its position as the global market leader as a particular type of luxury brand that is different. It involves new technology and Scandinavian styling. Ultimately, the company wants to save lives through its innovative technology while appealing to a particular segment of the global market.

Topic areas include market research, buying processes, positioning, and communication strategy. Students will meet and have ongoing contact with Volvo marketing and innovations executives in the US and Sweden, including Global Brand Manager. They will be hosted for a full day at Volvo headquarters in Göteborg, Sweden where they will present their projects to a team of six judges and will participate in a panel discussion on global branding strategy. They will also get to tour Volvo’s global headquarters, branding center, and factory in Göteborg.

The GW on---campus part of the course will begin with a lecture and presentation of the course project by Anna Hartelius, Director of the Brand and Consumer Journey Team in Global Marketing. Anna and other Volvo executives will come from Sweden and will be joined by US colleagues.

Students will also attend class lectures/discussions and coaching sessions prior to leaving for Sweden. Throughout the course, students will be able to ask questions and meet either in person or electronically with US and Swedish representatives from Volvo.

In Sweden, students will not only visit Volvo headquarters, but they will meet Göteborg University professors and students working at Volvo. They will also have a tour/lecture at Volvo, and Forsman & Bodenfors Advertising (recently voted the “world’s most creative agency”) and will visit last year’s client, global giant SCA.

Throughout the course, students will learn about Sweden and its business and everyday culture through several lenses. The professor has been an exchange professor and has conducted

consulting practicums in Sweden over the course of her career. She will share her unique insights into conducting business in another culture and the importance of understanding nuances when interacting with the client. Additionally, students will have the unique opportunity of meeting not only the client but also Swedish graduate students and professors at Gothenburg University, one of Sweden's premier business schools.

Ultimately, the course provides the opportunity to learn about the car market that is undergoing dramatic changes throughout the world. While in Sweden, students will visit diverse companies and venues and will meet and present to a team of judges from the client. In general, they will have an insight into Scandinavian thinking, culture, and business practices. Scandinavians are world leaders in health marketing, sustainability, and technology, and students will be exposed to all of these areas.

In addition to the academic opportunities, students will visit Stockholm and Göteborg, Sweden. They will visit Drottningholm Palace, a World Heritage Site, the Vasa Museum, the Ice Bar, and Gamla Stan (old town) in Stockholm. They will then travel via the high-speed train to Göteborg, Sweden's second largest city on the west coast. Here, they will experience west coast culture in Haga (old town), visit Volvo's world headquarters, and Forsman & Bodenfors (winner of a recent Cannes Lion and voted the most creative ad agency in the world in 2015 by the Gunn Report). There are a few days before classes start at GW, so students are free to travel on their own to nearby Copenhagen (3 hour train trip), Oslo, Helsingborg, and/or Malmö.

Deliverables to the Client:

30-Minute Oral Presentation by each Team

15 Minute Q&A Session

Copy of Presentation Slides