

## MGP 445 | Product Management | Sacramento

Spring 2025

Class days: **Saturdays, 1:30-5:00 pm**

Location: **Education Building - MC-2204**

Office Hours: prior to class sessions or via zoom (email instructor to set up meeting)

### BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

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### Course Description

Product management careers present MBAs with the earliest career exposure to profit center management and are frequently stepping-stones to broader general management assignments. The product (or brand) manager is accountable for the ultimate success of a product line, whether in high technology, consumer products, services, or online businesses. This course covers essential planning and business management skills for aspiring product and general managers.

Product managers drive the success of their product lines by developing and managing the execution of *integrated plans across functional areas* both inside and outside the enterprise. These activities include (but are not limited to) industry and competitive analysis, marketing research, customer needs assessments, product definition and planning, product life cycle management, and the development of pricing, positioning, promotional, product, and channel strategies intended to achieve multiple preestablished goals and objectives (e.g., targets for revenues and/or profits, market share).

This course is designed to provide an opportunity for students to learn and understand the requirements, issues, and tools of product management through lectures, case studies, and a hands-on, quarter-long competitive simulation. The MarkStrat simulation enables student teams (firms) to compete in the management of multiple products in both mature and emerging product categories. The multiperiod simulation evolves dynamically, where market outcomes are determined by both changing environmental conditions and the interaction among marketing activity and product life cycle decisions made by teams managing competing firms. Teams have full control over resource allocation decisions across multiple functional areas to support implementation of strategies for advertising, channel, sales force, R&D, and manufacturing. Products can be spec'd, developed, and positioned to target specific customer segments with varying requirements and growth rates.

### Course Materials

**MarkStrat Participation Activation Key (PAK).** The “book” for this course is the online Participant’s Handbook for the MarkStrat simulation, which requires a Participation Activation Key. There is assigned reading from the Participant’s Handbook prior to the first two sessions, so you **MUST** purchase your MarkStrat Participation Activation Key prior to the first session. The simulation begins during the first live session. Instructions for how to purchase your Participant Activation Key (PAK) can be found on the course wall.

### Course Assessments

There is no final exam in this course. Assignment and Assessment Information is in a later section. The point breakdown for how students will be graded is as follows:

<b>Assignment/Assessment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Weight on Final Grade</b>
Corporate Goal Setting	200	20%
MarkStrat Marketing Plan	200	20%
Team MarkStrat Postmortem Presentation	100	10%
Team MarkStrat Performance Score	100	10%
Individual Reflection Assignments	250	25%
Class Participation	100	10%
Individual Lessons-Learned Paper	50	5%
Team/Self-Assessment Form	C/NC	Required

### Grading Scale

There are 1,000 total points possible for the quarter. Grades will be assigned based on the following point totals:

A	950 or above
A-	900 to 949
B+	875 to 899
B	825 to 874
B-	800 to 824
C+	<800

## Assignment and Assessment Information

### Team Graded Assignments

The following is a brief description of team assignments and expectations. Additional elaboration may occur subject to the discretion of the instructor. All due dates are at the discretion of your live session instructor and will be posted on the course wall at the beginning of the quarter. **MarkStrat assignments will be due well in advance of the live session so that the simulation can be run, and results made available.**

#### 1. Corporate Goal Setting

A unifying concept in product management is “the marketing planning process,” and (by definition) each period of the MarkStrat simulation requires all teams to execute one full “cycle” of this process. A “marketing plan” fully documents key required elements, including analysis, specification of goals and objectives, and a wide range of strategic and program decisions. This assignment focuses more specifically on a subset of these activities: corporate goal setting, financial objectives, and target segment selection and segment financial objectives.

Each team will submit an Excel planning spreadsheet detailing the team’s process for estimating industry and segment TAM, and selecting target segments and establishing segment market share goals consistent with achieving the team’s overall corporate competitive goals and corporate financial objectives addressing the following key areas:

- **Determine your firm’s competitive goals.**
- Corporate competitive goals: number 1 in stock price and cumulative net contribution
- **Translate your firm’s competitive goal into measurable financial goals.**
- What are the market and segment TAMs? What share of TAM must you garner to achieve your competitive goals?
- **Select target market segments.**
- Which Sonite segments will you target to achieve your firm’s financial objectives?
- Do you need to enter the Vodite market to achieve your firm’s financial goals? When?
- **Set market share and financial objectives for each target segment.**
- Does the sum total of your segment financial objectives meet or exceed your company’s overall financial goals?

Note that the exact timing of this exercise will correspond to one of the early decision periods in the MarkStrat simulation (to be determined by the live session instructor). Each period will (necessarily) require a full set of marketing program decisions for the “short term,” along with decisions that represent aspects of longer-term strategy.

## 2. MarkStrat Marketing Plan

This is a complete marketing plan covering strategies and tactics for the last portion of the MarkStrat simulation. The plan is due during Week 7 of the course and will correspond to MarkStrat decision periods determined by your instructor. Your firm's position relative to competitors may have changed dramatically (e.g., since the early period corresponding to the Corporate Goal Setting assignment), forcing a reevaluation of your business and competitive goals.

This document will (in some fashion) address all elements of a marketing plan as discussed in class and may include a revision of your firm's corporate goals and financial objectives. To constrain the scope of the deliverable, it will take the form of a five- to seven-page executive summary (up to seven pages maximum—five pages desirable).

While the required content of your marketing plan will be informed by material covered in class, we note here that it should include:

- a) A statement or restatement of your firm's business goals and business objectives for the existing and planned product lines that support the achievement of your firm's business goals, including target segments, market share, volume goals, revenue, and margin goals. These goals must be quantitative where applicable and reflect the evolution over the time horizon of the simulation.
- b) Analysis of the customer and competitive environment, selection of target customer segments, and an evaluation of customer needs, preferences, and requirements.
- c) Key decisions for product strategy, product development, pricing, promotion and advertising, and channel selection, as well as programs consistent with achievement of product line business objectives and ultimately your firm's business goals.
- d) Planned resource allocations for product development, pricing strategy, promotional and advertising budgets, and channel selection and programs consistent with key strategies.
- e) Planned tactics to be implemented in support of the key strategies (product, price, promotion, place) for the remainder of the simulation.

### **3. Team MarkStrat Postmortem Presentation**

(Due Week 10 Live Session | 12 minutes per team)

Each team is required to give a concise 12-minute presentation summarizing their team's postmortem of the MarkStrat simulation. Use effective communication means to convey your message. The goal of the presentation is to highlight *lessons learned* from the MarkStrat simulation based on the team's original corporate setting, marketing plan, and simulation results. Presentation will include a summary of performance versus goals at the outset of the simulation, and the highlights and lowlights of key strategic decisions and outcomes throughout the course of the simulation. Please upload your presentation materials to the digital campus.

### **4. Team MarkStrat Performance Score**

Instructor-assigned score based on team performance over the course of the quarter, including final outcome on MarkStrat performance measures (Period 10 SPI and Cumulative Net Contribution).

## **Individual Graded Assignments**

### **1. Individual Reflection Assignments**

Markstrat simulation situational analysis and discussion is an important aspect of this course, reinforcing the student's ability to identify and address key issues and decisions, perform relevant analyses, and to take a stand and make recommendations. More details to be discussed in the beginning of class.

### **2. Class Participation**

Students are expected to fully participate in all live session activities, and will be evaluated on their participation. (Also, see attendance policy below.) In addition, your grade may be affected by information provided on a required Team/Self-Assessment Form (found in the Course Resources section of the Toolbox) to be turned in during week 10.

### **3. Individual Lessons-Learned Paper**

Each student is responsible for submitting a 3-5 page paper summarizing their personal learnings from the course and simulation throughout the quarter. This includes a clear description of the role played by the student, and their contribution to the MarkStrat team effort during the quarter.

## Attendance Policy

Attendance for the full class period is expected. One class meeting absence is allowed without penalty. Additional absences will penalize your grade.

## Program Mission

The mission of the UC Davis Graduate School of Management is to be a global leader in management research and education. As part of the world's premier public university system, we pursue significance, excellence, and scholarly rigor in our research, teaching, and service to the people of California. We emphasize curiosity, creativity, and high standards in the generation and transmission of theoretical and practical knowledge relevant for business.

## Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity exists when students and faculty seek knowledge honestly, fairly, with mutual respect and trust, and accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of those actions. Without academic integrity, there can be no trust or reliance on the effectiveness, accuracy, or value of a University's teaching, learning, research, or public service activities. It is therefore key that we understand what academic integrity is, why it is important, and how to help it flourish on college campuses.

1. It is expected that all class members will treat each other with respect and dignity.
2. It is not acceptable behavior to insult, harass, or demean any member of the class.
3. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including the use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.

**In general, students should adhere to the [UC Davis Principles of Community](#), copied below.**

The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds, and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society carries within it historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.

We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place, and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity, and respect.

We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding,

dissension, or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences.

We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.

For more information, please review the Academic Conduct Booklet:

[https://gsm.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/2020-10/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_booklet\\_2020.pdf](https://gsm.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/2020-10/code_of_conduct_booklet_2020.pdf).