

: Marketing

INTRODUCTION:

“You can be as conscientious as you are competitive” is the message under a diagram of a hydrogen fuel cell bus. A wind turbine is labeled “brain power.” “Slash energy consumption up to 45%,” a statement in a field of green, invites consumers to consider the environment while saving money. One might expect these three advertisements to appear in magazines like *Chief Responsibility Officer* or *Sustainable Business*, but could anyone a generation ago imagine them being full-pagers for UTC, SKF, and Dell, respectively, in the most recent edition of *BusinessWeek*?¹

While advertising is of course only one aspect of marketing, it’s certainly convincing evidence that decision makers in a wide range of mainstream, for-profit firms are using social impact management issues as a way to differentiate themselves in the market.

Business schools, too, are beginning to differentiate themselves in the ways they are integrating these issues into some of their curricula. According to the most recent edition of *Beyond Grey Pinstripes*, 237 marketing courses currently being offered by MBA programs worldwide address social, environmental, and/or ethical concerns in some capacity as they relate to the discipline. Compared to the 120 courses offered in the 2005-2006 survey cycle, it appears that more and more professors are working to incorporate these ideas into the classroom.² A diverse handful of examples can be found below, which augment the findings from the original Marketing *Closer Look* from January 2007 based on an older data set.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

- The number of marketing courses accepted into the 2007-2008 *Beyond Grey Pinstripes* survey, meaning that they were reviewed for inclusion of social, environmental, or ethical content, almost doubled from the 2005-2006 survey.
- Marketing to the “bottom of the pyramid,” a concept pioneered by C.K. Prahalad and Stuart Hart, remains a popular concept amongst BGP-participating schools.
- An increasing number of marketing courses are also taking a more critical look at what it means for companies to market responsibly, with sensitivity to cultural differences, privacy issues and the impacts of marketing activities on all constituencies of the firm.

A FACULTY POINT OF VIEW:

[C.B. Bhattacharya](#) is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Boston University’s School of Management. His expertise is in the area of marketing strategy innovation and stakeholder marketing. Prior to B.U., he received the Emory Williams Distinguished Teaching Award from Emory University. Dr. Bhattacharya is the Faculty Director of the Aspen Institute’s Stakeholder Marketing Consortium, which last convened in Aspen, Colorado in the fall of 2007.

¹ March 24, 2008 edition of *BusinessWeek* magazine

² Furthermore, sixty-six of the courses submitted for this year’s survey *explicitly* tackle the intersection of social and environmental issues in mainstream, for-profit business. Thirteen of these sixty-six courses were mandated in the core curriculum of the school that reported the particular course.

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What is the Stakeholder Marketing Consortium?: “The purpose of the consortium is to encourage both researchers and practitioners to look beyond customers and investors as focal targets of business activity and the firm as the sole intended beneficiary. We want business to consider the welfare of a wider stakeholder group, one that not only includes customers and investors but also – employees, regulators, activists, the environment – while making strategic decisions.”

On the integration of social impact management themes into the discipline: “Most marketing academics don’t even think about research topics in this area. The purpose of the consortium, as well as the upcoming special issue of the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* that I am editing is to raise research consciousness in this area. However, more schools are introducing such content into both their core as well as elective courses.” (See [Call for Papers](#))

On ‘Green Marketing’: “It has gone from fad to fundamental in most businesses’ eyes. Purchasing a product that makes one feel good about the purchase is an important first step to bring about pro-social behavioral change.”



NOTABLE COURSEWORK:

The following course descriptions are drawn exclusively from the 2007-2008 edition of [Beyond Grey Pinstripes](#), a research survey conducted biennially by the Center for Business Education at the Aspen Institute.

■ Columbia University, Columbia Business School

[Marketing Strategy](#) (Core Course)

Instructors: Donald Lehmann, Jonathan Levav, Natalie Mizik, Sunil Gupta

“This course emphasizes the role of marketing in creating value for customers, which in turn leads to value for other stakeholders in a firm. It also covers the value of products, customers and brands, methods for analyzing customers and competitors, customer segmentation, product positioning and the role of new technology. Tradeoffs exist when considering what to sell, how to sell it, who to sell it to and what customers do with it once they have it. Truth in advertising, use of customer information, and pricing and price discrimination are all issues of how to (or not to) sell. Specific social impact topics include: Social responsibility, marketing and customer value: Does marketing create or uncover demand? Are there limits to appropriate marketing of legal but potentially dangerous products? The Harrah’s Entertainment case examines ethical issues that arise from marketing addictive products and impact of marketing on vulnerable consumer groups and society as a whole, and raises privacy and ethical issues about the appropriate use of customer-level data.”

■ IE Business School (Instituto de Empresa)

[Marketing Fundamentals I & II](#) (Core Course)

Instructors: Juan Luis Martinez, Roberto Manzano, Teresa Recio

“The program of Marketing Fundamentals intends to familiarize the student with the basic principles of marketing as well as to transmit the most relevant tools in order to design and implement a coherent marketing strategy. A specific treatment will be given to the social marketing dimension and its applicability in practices traditionally included in corporate responsibility. Besides spending a whole session studying this theme (Unilever in Brazil), the subject will be covered transversely throughout the course, within the line of thought of a specific subject or when analyzing one of the practical cases that give form to the program. Specific Social Impact Management topics in this course include: understanding and evaluating cultural differences which explain different buying and consuming habits; understand how Starbucks uses development projects as a differential driver of its brand; social environment analysis in order to design the attention and customer retention plan; how

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to focus and integrate responsible consumption among youth; ethical advertising; ethical pricing strategies; ethics in commercial negotiations, and; marketing strategies for low income consumers.”

- **University of South Carolina, Moore School of Business**

[Global Marketing Management](#) (Core Course)

Instructors: Martin Roth, Thomas Madden

“Marketing strategy and implementation is vital to all types of organizations. The strategies developed and implemented are contingent upon the marketing environment. The international arena is one of the most complex environmental contexts for firms to understand and master. We explore international social, economic, political, regulatory and cultural environments, and how they interface with industry and competitive structures. We analyze how managers can develop and implement effective strategies that achieve economic, social, and community objectives. Case studies with social and environmental issues help students understand the management of these processes. Examples include (1) Gillette’s introduction of men’s shaving products into an emerging market (Indonesia), the socio-cultural forces affecting product adoption, and the socio-cultural impact that the diffusion of such innovations might have...”

- **Dartmouth College, Tuck School of Business**

[Transformative Marketing](#) (Elective Course)

Instructor: Punam Keller

“The object of this course is to show how marketing and consumer research, frameworks, and processes can be applied to social issues. Three social issues are selected to serve as illustrations: retirement savings, museum management, and health. The choice was based on the importance of the issue and the potential for marketing to have an impact. The class will apply what they have learned from the three examples to meeting the marketing challenges of various social service or governmental agencies. Transformative marketing and consumer research is a new field designed to apply concepts developed for use in business to changes in consumer behavior essential for common and personal good (topical issues like healthy lifestyle, obesity, and financial decision making) or challenges or problems faced by subgroups (such as elderly persons, endangered species, or impoverished people).”

- **Oxford University, Saïd Business School**

[Marketing, Culture & Society](#) (Elective Course)

Instructor: Linda Scott

“The purpose of this course is to prepare students to act from a sophisticated cultural perspective when confronting issues involving markets and media. Readings, lectures, and discussions will show students how the circulation of goods (and the messages about them) interact with social groupings, political agendas, other institutional imperatives, cultural tensions, and historical events. Recent research demonstrates quite clearly that such interactions have consistently been more determinative of both market failures and successes than the correct practice of traditional marketing techniques or the faithful application of conventional marketing wisdom. Given the rapid rate of change in today’s markets for goods and services, along with new channels for distribution and communication, this perspective should provide the basis for a more innovative way of practicing marketing, as well as a more globally responsible one. To these ends, a variety of texts have been assigned. These selections are designed to reorient the student toward more lasting, socially grounded, and culturally portable ideas about marketing, as well as to help each reader look at both the context of exchange and at markets themselves in a more holistic way.”

For additional courses on related subjects, or to download select syllabi, search thousands of descriptions at [Beyond Grey Pinstripes](#).

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NOTABLE TEACHING MATERIALS:

Materials referenced are meant to represent the diversity of related teaching resources available at Caseplace.org. Most are available as free downloads to registered faculty members.

- **Case Study:** [Hips Feel Good: Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty](#)

Source: Richard Ivey School of Business

Dove is one of Unilever's better-known “personal care” brands. It has significant top-of-mind awareness among women in many countries. In an attempt to increase sales volume by 80 per cent, Unilever re-launched Dove in 2004. The campaign asks the question “What is real beauty?” and attempts to redefine it in ways that challenge commonly portrayed stereotypes. This case examines the re-launch of Dove, Unilever's well-known international personal care brand, and the marketing issues behind its phenomenal success.

- **Magazine Article:** [Marketers, Meet the Millennial Generation](#)

Source: Strategy + Business

Even with decades of practice communicating with young consumers, marketers may not know what they are in for with Generation Y. Most companies have had little exposure to this cohort.

- **Case Study:** [World Wildlife Fund for Nature](#)

Source: Harvard Business School Publishing

Nearly all environmental organizations have a similar aim; to stop the degradation of the natural environment. However, the strategies which environmental organizations choose to employ are sometimes starkly different. This case study compares the models of two dissimilar environmental powerhouses: Greenpeace and World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

ONGOING QUESTIONS:

- What would collaboration between academia and business look like that creates comprehensive metrics that measure the impact of social and environmental marketing to be developed and widely used?
- Consumers have been exposed to a plethora of environmentally-focused advertising in the past year. In what ways, if any, are their expectations of corporate performance changing in light of this development?
- As social and green marketing become part of mainstream practice, are company expectations evolving with regard to the demand for business school graduates who have a command of these issues?

RESOURCES:

[BeyondGreyPinstripes.org](#) – World’s biggest MBA database, including detailed records on thousands of courses and information on extracurriculars, university centers, and more, for 128 schools on six continents.

[CasePlace.org](#) – A free and practical on-line resource for up-to-date case studies, syllabi, and innovative teaching materials on business and sustainability. Created for the educators who will shape our next generation of business leaders!

A Closer Look is a regular series of briefing papers on topical issues in MBA education, based on the research and programs of the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Institute's [Center for Business Education](#) encourages future business leaders to innovate at the intersection of corporate profits and social impacts.

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