

USING SIMULATOR MARKSTRAT IN MARKETING PLANNING COURSES IN BRAZIL

Ana Akemi Ikeda, University of São Paulo, Brazil
Marcelo Barbieri Campomar, University of São Paulo, Brazil
Marcos Cortez Campomar, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Latin America – Research and Teaching in Marketing

Objective: This work has the objective to discuss the utility of using the Markstrat scenario (a popular marketing strategy simulation game) in marketing planning courses. *Argument:* Many students like to learn by doing (empirical approach), thus simulations and the development of marketing plan are good ways to exercise and apply marketing concepts. Both demand personal engagement into a team to reach goals and achieve good results. Competition, dynamism and group activities are the norm. The development of marketing plan and Markstrat allow students to develop strategies and take marketing decision just as in real life. Participants take a series of marketing decisions implementing concepts such as segmentation and positioning, consumer behavior, marketing mix (4 P's), and marketing research. Moreover students have to analyze and interpret data in order to acquire more and better market knowledge about customers and competitors. Students use Markstrat information and scenario to develop a Marketing plan. After presenting the plan for one year they start the simulation and take decisions for a long term result (commonly, 7 or 8 rounds). Instructors therefore can overcome the barrier of organizations that are reluctant to release strategic information (common in Brazil) for students to develop marketing plans. Furthermore, computer-based simulations are a well established educational tool and have a great acceptance among young students. *Implications:* Using Markstrat scenario save time and facilitate the acquisition of information of an industry and their companies. *Conclusions:* The use of Markstrat for marketing planning course is very convenient for bringing an array of information difficult to obtain from a real company. Complementary, (i) gives the whole scenario of an industry; (ii) shows the importance of marketing organization structure to achieve goals; (iii) emphasizes the segmentation and positioning as the strategic element of marketing to orientate others marketing decisions (4 P's); (iv) shows the importance of information to decision making, and not only by researches that portrait the past but by projection to foresee the future; (iii) allow students to think with long range horizon and about innovativeness. *Value:* Besides learning marketing practices, instructors can analyze group performance, as well as individuals' behaviors of working in group in a very competitive and innovative environment. In parallel they can observe behavior and attitudes of students as marketing managers especially in turbulent situation when the organization is not going well. Therefore, students can be observed technically, as an employee, manager, and as a member of a team.

References Available on Request.