**Module 1 - Background**

**STP, Product Management & Situation Analysis**

**The reading list for this first module is quite extensive. However, many of these items will also serve as references for Modules 2-4.**

How to conduct a marketing audit (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.com.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/marketing-audit/>

Introduction to financial statements for marketing (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.com.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/marketing-and-finance/>

Marks, R. E. (1997). Market structure and competition (October 9). Retrieved from [*http://www.agsm.edu.au/bobm/teaching/ECL/lect03.pdf*](http://www.agsm.edu.au/bobm/teaching/ECL/lect03.pdf)

Marketing Research (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/introduction-to-marketing-research/>

**These Web pages explain concepts of the Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning.**

Building Customer Relationships. (2014). Pearson Learning Solutions, New York, NY. Retrieved from [*http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11770*](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11770)

Building Customer Relationships (Audio). (2014). Pearson Learning Solutions, New York, NY. Retrieved from [*http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11448*](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11448)

Segmentation (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/segmentation/>

Targeting (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/targeting/>

Positioning (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.*Retrieved from <http://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/positioning>

Perner, L. (n.d.). Segmentation, targeting, and positioning. *Consumer Psychologist*. Retrieved from [*http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb\_Segmentation.html*](http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb_Segmentation.html)

**Here are some useful links on market segments:**

Nielsen. (n.d.). MyBestSegments ZIP code look-up. Retrieved from [*http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=20&pageName=ZIP%2BCode%2BLookup&menuOption=ziplookup*](http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=20&pageName=ZIP%2BCode%2BLookup&menuOption=ziplookup)

Nielsen. (n.d.). Nielsen PRIZM – Understanding social and lifestage groups. Retrieved from [*http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/tutorials/Nielsen\_PRIZM/engage.html*](http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/tutorials/Nielsen_PRIZM/engage.html)

Nielsen. (n.d.). Segment Explorer. Retrieved from [*http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=30&SubID=&pageName=Segment%2BLook-up*](http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp?ID=30&SubID=&pageName=Segment%2BLook-up)

ESRI. (n.d.). Demographic, consumer, and business data. Retrieved from [*http://www.esri.com/data/esri\_data*](http://www.esri.com/data/esri_data)

TETRAD. (n.d.). Demographics. Retrieved from [*http://www.tetrad.com/category/demographics/*](http://www.tetrad.com/category/demographics/)

**This article explains considerations internal to the firm that affect its financial health:**

Porter, M. (1980). Generic strategies. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/generic-strategies/>

**These Web pages explain the forces external to the firm that affect the financial health of a product or company:**

PEST Analysis (n.d.). *MarketingTeacher.*Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/pest-analysis/>

Managing External Forces (n.d.). *Marketing Tutorials.*KnowThis. Retrieved from [*http://www.knowthis.com/principles-of-marketing-tutorials/managing-external-forces/*](http://www.knowthis.com/principles-of-marketing-tutorials/managing-external-forces/)

**The following readings relate to product management strategy:**

Products and Services. (2014). Pearson Learning Solutions, New York, NY. Retrieved from [*http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=12052*](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=12052)

Products and Services (Audio). (2014). Pearson Learning Solutions, New York, NY. Retrieved from [*http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11699*](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/mct-comprehensive/asset.php?isbn=1269879944&id=11699)

Product decisions (n.d.). KnowThis. Retrieved from [*http://www.knowthis.com/principles-of-marketing-tutorials/product-decisions/*](http://www.knowthis.com/principles-of-marketing-tutorials/product-decisions/)

This series of Web pages explains that product decisions over which firms have control are forces that determine the financial health of a product or company:

Product strategies (n.d.). LearnMarketing. Retrieved from [*http://www.learnmarketing.net/product.htm*](http://www.learnmarketing.net/product.htm)

**The following articles explain and illustrate branding:**

Aisner, J. E. (1999) More than a name: The role of brands in people’s lives. *Working Knowledge for Business Leaders Series*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School. Retrieved from [*http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2598.html*](http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2598.html)

Beyersdorfer, D., *et al.* (2011 January/February). Preserve the luxury or extend the brand? *Harvard Business Review*. 89:1/2(January/February):173-7.

Christ, P. (2009). Understanding the importance of branding (October 28). Retrieved from [*http://www.knowthis.com/blog/postings/understanding-the-importance-of-branding/*](http://www.knowthis.com/blog/postings/understanding-the-importance-of-branding/)

Clark, D. (2011 March) Reinventing your personal brand. *Harvard Business Review*. 89:5 (March):78-81.

Edelman, D. C. (2010). Branding in the digital age. *Harvard Business Review*. 88:12 (December):62-69.

Introduction to brands (n.d.). Marketing Teacher. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/introduction-to-brands/>

Klein, K. E. (2008). A practical guide to branding. *Bloomberg Businessweek*(June 9).

Tauber, E. W. (1981). Four branding alternatives: A branding strategy based upon brand extension. Marketing Teacher. Retrieved from <http://www.marketingteacher.com/four-banding-alternatives/>

Zax, D. (2010). For Millennials, brands may be as important as religion, ethnicity. *Co-Create*(November 17). Retrieved from [*http://www.fastcocreate.com/1679028/for-millennials-brands-may-be-as-important-as-religion-ethnicity*](http://www.fastcocreate.com/1679028/for-millennials-brands-may-be-as-important-as-religion-ethnicity)

**The following article explains brand personality:**

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 24:4(March):343-372.

**These articles address the question of celebrity endorsements:**

A Teakettle with Star Power? The Upsides and Pitfalls of Celebrity Brands (2011).*Knowledge@Wharton* (April 27). Retrieved from [*http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=2761*](http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=2761)

Star Blight: The Perils of Celebrity Endorsements (2006). *Knowledge@Wharton*(September 6)*.*Retrieved from [*http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1552*](http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1552)

Stone, M. (2012). How Retailers' Love Affair With Celebrities Will Blossom In 2012. *Forbes*(January 4).

**Check the professional market research reports from**[***IBISWorld***](http://clients1.ibisworld.com/processlogin.aspx?u=QJCopxVyodNYJX1ATXgdbg%3d%3d&p=QJCopxVyodNYJX1ATXgdbg%3d%3d)**database to find the industry analysis for your cumulative Session Long Project.**

[IBISWorld Overview](https://tlc.trident.edu/content/enforced/72217-MKT501-MAR2016FT-1/DW4Mod%20-%20Codes/EMPTY%204-MODULE%20HTML%20DOCS/Modules/Module1/IBISWorld%20Overview.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=ZNo8unbaNUBXcK00FYSlSpQ6i&ou=57324&_&d2lSessionVal=w9EKbBfivHkuCrjwK7iEcOgRk&ou=72217) (n.d.). IBISWorld, Inc., New York, NY.

[IBISWorld Forecast](https://tlc.trident.edu/content/enforced/72217-MKT501-MAR2016FT-1/DW4Mod%20-%20Codes/EMPTY%204-MODULE%20HTML%20DOCS/Modules/Module1/IBISWorld%20Forecast.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=ZNo8unbaNUBXcK00FYSlSpQ6i&ou=57324&_&d2lSessionVal=w9EKbBfivHkuCrjwK7iEcOgRk&ou=72217) (n.d.). IBISWorld, Inc., New York, NY.

[IBISWorld Data and Sources](https://tlc.trident.edu/content/enforced/72217-MKT501-MAR2016FT-1/DW4Mod%20-%20Codes/EMPTY%204-MODULE%20HTML%20DOCS/Modules/Module1/IBISWorld%20Data%20and%20Sources.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=ZNo8unbaNUBXcK00FYSlSpQ6i&ou=57324&_&d2lSessionVal=w9EKbBfivHkuCrjwK7iEcOgRk&ou=72217) (n.d.). IBISWorld, Inc., New York, NY.

[IBISWorld Navigation Tips](https://tlc.trident.edu/content/enforced/72217-MKT501-MAR2016FT-1/DW4Mod%20-%20Codes/EMPTY%204-MODULE%20HTML%20DOCS/Modules/Module1/IBISWorld%20Navigation%20Tips.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=ZNo8unbaNUBXcK00FYSlSpQ6i&ou=57324&_&d2lSessionVal=w9EKbBfivHkuCrjwK7iEcOgRk&ou=72217) (n.d.). IBISWorld, Inc., New York, NY.

**Check the following links for proper APA citation and reference format:**

Purdue University Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). In-text citations: The basics. Retrieved from [*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/.*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/)

Cornell University Library. (n.d.). APA citation style. Retrieved from [*http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa*](http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa)

Golden Gate University. (n.d.). University library: Research help. Retrieved from [*http://www.ggu.edu/libraries/university-library/research-help#citation-guide*](http://www.ggu.edu/libraries/university-library/research-help#citation-guide)

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (n.d.). The center for writing studies. Retrieved from [*http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/intextcitation/*](http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/intextcitation/)

**Module 1 - Case**

**STP, PRODUCT MANAGEMENT & SITUATION ANALYSIS**

**Assignment Overview**

This Case Assignment focuses on Volkswagen’s emissions scandal and related brand management and business ethics issues.

**Case Reading**

Boston, W., & Houston-Waesch, M. (2015, Oct 15). Volkswagen suspends another top engineer; berlin orders recall; transport minister says recall of tainted diesel cars is mandatory.*Wall Street Journal (Online)*.

Danny, Hakim, Kessler, A. M., & Ewing, J. (2015, Sep 27). As VW pushed to be no. 1, ambitions fueled a scandal.*New York Times.*

Ewing, J. (2015, Sep 23). Diesel scandal at VW spreads to core market.*New York Times.*

Farrell, S. (2015, Oct. 26). Volkswagen loses sales top spot to Toyota after emissions scandal. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/oct/26/volkswagen-top-spot-toyota-vw-emissions-scandal>.

Fung, B. (2015). *Volkswagen's U.S. CEO apologizes for emissions cheating scandal*. Washington: WP Company LLC d/b/a The Washington Post.

Lane, C. (2015, Oct. 26). Emissions scandal is hurting VW owners trying to Resell. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2015/10/26/450238773/emissions-scandal-is-hurting-vw-owners-trying-to-resell> .

La Monica, P.,R. (2015, Sep 23). Volkswagen has plunged 50%. will it ever recover?*CNN Wire Service.*

Sanger-Katz, M., & Schwartz, J. (2015, Sep 30). Gauging human toll of VW fraud.*International New York Times.*

Here are some articles on brand equity and brand management.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity.*Journal of Marketing, 57*(1), 1-22.

Helm, S., & Tolsdorf, J. (2013). How does corporate reputation affect customer loyalty in a corporate crisis? *Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management*, 21 (3), p144-152.

**Case Assignment**

Develop a report in terms of the following guidelines. A well-written report should have a brief introduction, headings or subheadings, and a brief concluding comment. Note that you should use some keywords as headings or subheadings such as "Brand Equity of VW”, instead of a sentence or a question. Looking at required articles on Volkswagen’s emissions scandal, as well as additional research you have done, address the following issues:

1. *Briefly describe Volkswagen’s emissions scandal and provide background on the company and automobile industry.*
2. *Do you think Volkswagen’s brand reputation was severely damaged by the emissions scandal? How about its brand equity?* *Discuss what brand equity is, and how Volkswagen’s brand equity will be impacted.*
3. *How should Volkswagen handle the emissions scandal in an ethical way? Discuss the related ethical issues from both consumer and brand manager perspectives.*
4. *What can you learn from this case? What suggestions could you offer to Volkswagen’s top management?*

**Assignment Expectations**

**Expectations Regarding Your References and Defense of Your Positions**

Write clearly, simply, and logically. Your paper should be 750–1,500 words long, excluding title pages and references, but quality of writing is more important than length. Use double-spaced, black Verdana or Times Roman font in 12 pt. type size.

Back up your positions or opinions with references to the required readings for this Case and those in the Module Background. In using those references, demonstrate your understanding of the concepts presented. Rather than grading on how much information you find, emphasis will be on the defense of the positions you take on the issues. Also remember that:

1. The “why” is more important than the “what.”
2. The **defense** of your positions on the issues is more important than the positions you take.

Do not repeat or quote definitions. Your use of the required reading to support your opinions (that is, contentions or positions) should demonstrate that you understand the concepts presented. Do not include definitions or summaries of the readings or simply describe what the company did. Instead, your responses to the questions should be analytical and should demonstrate that (a) you understand the principles from the background reading and (b) you can apply them to this particular case. Vague, general answers will not earn a good grade.

Avoid redundancy and general statements such as “All organizations exist to make a profit.” Make every sentence count.

Paraphrase the facts using your own words and ideas, employing quotes sparingly. Quotes, if absolutely necessary, should rarely exceed five words.

When writing an academically oriented paper, you will uncover many facts about the company and the scandal. If you paraphrase the facts, cite the sources in your text and link those citations to references at the end of the paper.

Here are some guidelines on how to conduct information search and build critical thinking skills.

Emerald Group Publishing. (n.d.). *Searching for Information*. Retrieved from [*http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study\_skills/skills/searching.htm*](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study_skills/skills/searching.htm)

Emerald Group Publishing. (n.d.). *Developing Critical Thinking*. Retrieved from [*http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study\_skills/skills/critical\_thinking.htm*](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study_skills/skills/critical_thinking.htm)

Guidelines for handling quoted and paraphrased material are found at:

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Academic Writing*. Retrieved from [*https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/*](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/)

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing*. Retrieved from [*https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/*](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/)

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Avoiding Plagiarism*. Retrieved from [*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/)

Your paper consists of arguments in favor of your opinions or positions on the issues addressed by the guidelines; therefore, avoid the following logical fallacies:

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Logic in Argumentative Writing*. Retrieved from [*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/)

**Module 1 - SLP**

**STP, PRODUCT MANAGEMENT & SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Here is the brief overview of this cumulative Session Long Project (SLP).  In this research project, you would work as a marketing consultant to develop a feasible marketing plan for your client. You would conduct secondary research in SLP1 and SLP2 to glean the necessary information for your marketing plan in SLP3 and SLP4.

It is important to conduct quality market research on your focal product/company in order to develop realistic and workable marketing plans. Generally speaking, there are two types of research. One is secondary research, which refers to data collection using existing sources, and the other is primary research, which is your own data collection for the specific study at hand. The purpose of market research is to collect usable information to make more informed decisions on the business problem, thus increasing the chance of business success in the marketplace.

Please check the *outline of the* [*marketing plan*](https://tlc.trident.edu/content/enforced/72217-MKT501-MAR2016FT-1/Marketing%20Plan%20Outline.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=w9EKbBfivHkuCrjwK7iEcOgRk&ou=72217), which provides information on:

1. The final format for this cumulative Session Long Project;
2. A list of topics for the whole project;
3. The continuity and connections among SLPs 1-4.

**In this module SLP1, identify a company and a charge (or task) for this marketing research project and conduct situation analysis related to your charge. This is the first step of this cumulative research project. You need to review all four SLPs first in order to better understand the requirements for this project.**

**Product Statement**

In this section, describe the company and the product that is going to be the focus of interest for your marketing plan. For example, if your client is Apple, provide background information on the organization (e.g., what it is, what it does, history, success in what it is doing, etc.). If the charge is to market a new product (such as iPad 6), describe what iPad is, how long it has been around, how successful it has been, and who the target audience is. Be specific and detail-oriented, and do not assume that the reader is familiar with the company and product.

**Identify a company and a charge for your research project at the very beginning, based on the detailed requirements for this cumulative Session Long Project. The new charge is a hypothetical task, which should be based on one of the company’s existing brands or products. It is also better to identify a new product charge for existing public firms so that you can find enough information for your task. For example, you may pick one of the following companies and charges.**

1. Apple needs to increase its market share for iPhone 7.
2. Samsung wants to introduce a tablet called Galaxy MiniS.
3. New Balance needs to market its Men’s 611 running shoes.
4. Ford needs to have a successful introduction of the 2016 Fusion.
5. Lexus wants to increase the brand awareness of its 2016 Lexus GX466.

Do not choose the product that is the basis of Case 1.**It is best to check with your instructor regarding the company and the charge you choose to analyze for this project.** In choosing your company and the charge, keep in mind that in order to effectively conduct your market research, you must have access to relevant information. Also note that your charge or task for this research project is what you are going to do with a brand, rather than just the brand. In other words, your charge or task is to solve a business problem faced by your client. **So you need to state the business problem and your charge clearly at the beginning since it would guide the following steps of this research project.**

**Situation Analysis**

A situation analysis may also be known as an environmental analysis. Conduct an environmental analysis including the external environment, customer environment, and internal organizational environment.

**A. External Environment Analysis**

In this section, identify/describe all external forces for change that might affect the company, its future, and the future of its industry. Identify the external realities upon which your plan will be based. What are the competitive, technological, economic, political/legal/regulatory, societal/lifestyle/cultural, market, buyer behavior, channel of distribution, and other industry trends that translate into external opportunities and threats? Explicitly state how each of these forces can impact your company, your charge, and the outcomes you wish to accomplish. That is, do not just list these forces; relate them to the task at hand.

Keep in mind that tables and figures cannot stand alone in any marketing plan. In other words, if you want to use tables and figures, use them as support tools to illustrate the points you are trying to make in your written text.

***1. Industry Analysis:*** What is the current situation in the industry? This description includes the size of the particular industry, trends in the industry, the industry outlook (expanding, stagnant, or contracting), success factors and failures of the industry, and so forth. Are these trends and developments likely to affect your charge? How?

***2. Competitive Analysis:***There are three major types of **competitive forces**. **Brand** competitors offer similar products with similar benefits and prices (e.g., monetary cost, time, effort, etc.), and serve/target the same customers. **Product**competitors offer products that compete in the same product class but have different features, benefits and price. **Generic**competitors offer products that satisfy the same need or solve the problem, but in a different way.

For example, assume that the brand in question is Apple iPad 4 and your charge is to come up with a marketing plan of how to promote the iPad 4. In your Product Statement you will have already talked about the **iPad**. **Brand** competitors in this case would be Samsung Galaxy, Motorola Xoom, Toshiba Excite, Lenovo IdeaPad, and so on. **Product**competitors could include Hewlett-Packard*,*Sony, and Dell computers. **Generic** competitors of iPad could include Regal Theatres, Cox Cable and so on, which satisfy consumers’ entertainment needs.

When discussing the competitive forces, focus on the brand and product competitors and describe these competitors in more detail. How big are they? What is their market share (in comparison to that of your company)? What is their income? How is the income derived? How do they spend their moneys? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How do they pose a threat to your company? What attracts consumers to their products? A detailed description of these competitors will aid your future SWOT and Issues analyses, and will give you ideas about target market and implementation.

***3. Technology*** not only refers to the new types of products such as computers and digital products but also means the processes by which tasks are accomplished. This section examines how changes in technology impact customers’ lives and needs and how marketers respond to their needs. Are these trends and developments likely to affect your charge? How?

***4.*** The ***Economic Situation*** looks at the stability and growth of the market in which the firm operates—for example, country, region, state, or local area. This section may examine inflation, employment, and income levels; taxes; and consumer confidence as they impact the company and the charge of the marketing plan. Are these trends and developments likely to affect your charge? How?

***5. Political Trends, Legal Trends, and Regulatory Forces:*** This section examines how governmental regulations may affect the company and its charge. It also looks at the company’s relationships with elected officials. Is the current administration, Congress, state legislature, county or city government likely to sponsor laws or regulatory changes that will affect the company and the charge, either favorably or negatively? Do recent court decisions have an impact on the operating environment? Do they impact how you will have to carry out your charge?

***6. Cultural Trends*** may have a profound impact on how customers respond to the company’s offering. Examples of **lifestyle trends** include less leisure time; cocooning; focus on health, exercise, and nutrition; and less concern with cleanliness. **Demographic trends** include aging baby boomers, new boomers (Generation Y), a rise in single-person and single-parent households, more women who work, and increasing population diversity. Some **changes in cultural values** include less conspicuous consumption, value orientation (quality/price), environmental concern, less tolerance of public smoking, more tolerance of varying lifestyles, and giving back to the community. Are these trends and developments likely to affect your charge? How?

**B. Customer Environment Analysis**

This section should examine the**current situation** in respect to the needs of the target market, expected changes in those needs, and how the firm presently meets those needs. Make sure you answer all of the following questions. Keep in mind that this section focuses on the **current target market of the company, not the market you propose to target with this marketing plan.**At this point, you are still examining the status quo, which should aid your decision making in the remainder of the marketing plan. For example, if the company in question is Apple, and the charge is to promote the iPad 4, the focus in this section of the marketing plan would be on the existing target markets served by Apple and what can be learned from those targets. Consider the following issues for your analysis:

1. Who? Who are current and potential customers of the same customer group? What are the demographics, psychographics, and geographics? Is the buyer the user? Who influences the purchasing decision?
2. How many? How many customers does the company serve? How many does it have the capacity to serve?
3. Where? Where are products purchased? Where do customers buy the products? What are the types of intermediaries? What is the influence of electronic commerce? Where are customers doing non-store buying—Home Shopping Network, catalogs, Internet?
4. When? When are the products bought? What is the frequency of purchasing? Do promotional events affect purchase? How do differences in physical or social environment, time demands, or purchase task affect buying?
5. How and What? What are the basic need-satisfying benefits? Does a competitor’s product fit a need this product/service does not provide? What are changes in customers’ needs? How do the customers pay—cash, credit?
6. Why Are There Non-Customers? Needs not met? Bad fit for lifestyle/image? Price? High switching costs? Competition’s product is better? Poor distribution? They do not know about the product?

**C. Internal Environment Analysis**

This section should identify/describe relevant internal aspects of the company that will help identify strengths and weaknesses in your SWOT analysis in the Module 2 SLP. This requires the identification and analysis of the organization’s past financial performance (sales, market share, profitability, etc.); marketing strategies (target market and positioning/image); marketing goals, objectives, and past performance; and marketing programs (advertising/promotion effectiveness, product/service offers, distribution effectiveness and channel programs, pricing, sales force effectiveness, sales strategy and programs, public relations/publicity, marketing research/intelligence gathering efforts, etc.). Additionally, the report may need to examine items such as production capacity, technical capabilities, management/leadership, organizational structure and culture, level of available resources and skills, financial stability, the product life cycle (i.e., is the product in introduction, growth, maturity, or decline stage?), and other relevant characteristics of the company that help develop a complete list of strengths and weaknesses in your SWOT analysis. It is important to focus on how the company is perceived by the market and its own customers as the main determinant of market-relevant strengths.

You are required to create a table to show the company’s financial performance such as its sales revenues, the profits, profit margin, market share, stock price, market cap, return on assets, operating cash flow, and so on. Also generate a histogram or a chart to show these financial numbers. Your written analysis in this subsection should be consistent with the table and histogram/chart.

**SLP Assignment Expectations**

Use the following outline to organize your paper. Note that the letters “a, b, c…” and the numbers “i, ii, iii, iv…” and “1, 2, 3, 4…” below are used to show the major issues you need to include in your paper, but should not be used to format your paper.

1. **Product Statement (2 pages maximum)**
   1. Describe the company/organization.
   2. Provide brief background of the organization.
   3. Describe the business problem and charge you have for this marketing plan.
   4. Provide a brief overview of what issue you are studying, and how a marketing perspective can help address the issue.
2. **Situation Analysis (3-6 pages)  
   Note: Only include sections that are relevant to your charge. The relevance of each section of analysis should be clear to the reader.**
   1. External Environment Analysis
      1. Context Analysis
         * Industry forces that might impact success of any actions taken
      2. Competitor Analysis
         * Any organization or message that may prevent any actions taken from being successful
      3. Technological and Economical Situation Analysis
      4. Political, Legal, and Cultural Analysis
   2. Customer Environment Analysis
      1. Customer Analysis
      2. Collaborator Analysis
   3. Internal Environment Analysis
      1. Company Analysis (include the table and histogram/chart in the appendix)

**Note:** Use double-spaced, black Verdana or Times Roman font in 12 pt. type size. Include a title page and references.

Explain clearly and logically the facts about your company and charge, and use the required reading to support your positions on the issues. Do not repeat or quote definitions. Your use of the required reading to support your opinions (that is, contentions or positions) should demonstrate that you understand the concepts presented. Paraphrase the facts using your own words and ideas, employing quotes sparingly. Quotes, if absolutely necessary, should rarely exceed five words.

Academic papers at the master’s level should include citations and references. Look at different sources, especially credible and reputable ones such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Businessweek, and The Economist, to find the information for your paper. Also use Trident University’s online library databases such as ProQuest and EBSCO to find information for your project. Your discussion on each topic should be a synthesis of the different sources. Taking shortcuts on the number and quality of your sources will result in a poor-quality marketing plan that will be of no use to your client.

It is also important that you reference your sources throughout the text of your marketing plan. Take the following paragraph as an example:

“As a result, telephone interviewers often do not even get a chance to explain that they are conducting a survey (Council for Marketing and Opinion Research, 2003), and response rates have steadily declined (Keeter et al., 2000) to reported lows of 7% (Council for Marketing and Opinion Research, 2003). This decrease presents a problem because not only does it increase the cost of conducting telephone surveys, but it also leads to questions concerning the generalizability of the results (Struebbe, Kernan & Grogan, 1986; Tuckel & O’Neill, 2002).”

There are different citation and reference formats such as APA, MLA, or Chicago. No matter which format you adopt for your marketing plan, make it consistent throughout the plan.

The marketing plan should use third person business writing. Avoid “we,” “our,” and “you.” Do not use contractions in business writing.

Here are some guidelines on how to conduct information search and build critical thinking skills.

Emerald Group Publishing. (n.d.). *Searching for Information*. Retrieved from [*http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study\_skills/skills/searching.htm*](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study_skills/skills/searching.htm)

Emerald Group Publishing. (n.d.). *Developing Critical Thinking*. Retrieved from [*http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study\_skills/skills/critical\_thinking.htm*](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/learning/study_skills/skills/critical_thinking.htm)

Guidelines for handling quoted and paraphrased material are found at:

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Academic Writing*. Retrieved from [*https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/*](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/)

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing*. Retrieved from [*https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/*](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/)

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Avoiding Plagiarism*. Retrieved from [*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/)

Your paper consists of arguments in favor of your opinions or positions on the issues addressed by the guidelines; therefore, avoid the following logical fallacies:

*Purdue Online Writing Lab*. (n.d.). *Logic in Argumentative Writing*. Retrieved from  
[*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/)

Your SLP should not simply be a list of facts. Take the facts you find about the company, the charge, and the environments that the company faces, and explain how you think those facts will affect the financial future of the product or brand in your charge. The emphasis in grading your paper will be on the breadth and depth of your discussion of each topic, critical thinking, the clarity of your discussion, and the proper organization of the paper.

**Branding in the Digital Age**

[[https://tlc.trident.edu/d2l/img/lp/pixel.gif](javascript:void(0);)Actions for 'Branding in the Digital Age'](javascript:void(0);)

[[https://tlc.trident.edu/d2l/img/lp/pixel.gif](javascript:void(0);)Hide Description](javascript:void(0);)

Branding strategies are changing due to the popularity of the Internet and changing consumer behavior. There are various functions of branding. Branding is not only utilized to differentiate the focal brand from the competing ones, but also to increase brand/product awareness, change consumer attitudes, and encourage purchases. On the other hand, consumer brand experience and online consumer reviews are increasingly influencing branding strategies in the digital age.

Read the following articles:

Edelman, D. C. (2010). Branding in the digital age: You’re spending your money in all the wrong places. Harvard Business Review, December, retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2010/12/branding-in-the-digital-age-youre-spending-your-money-in-all-the-wrong-places>

Anderson, M. (2014, July 7). 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendation. Retrieved from <http://searchengineland.com/88-consumers-trust-online-reviews-much-personal-recommendations-195803>

Please address the following issues regarding online consumer reviews and brand management in the digital age.

1. Evaluate the pros and cons of online consumer reviews from the consumer’s perspective.
2. Discuss the use of online consumer reviews from the brand manager’s perspective.