

DEVIANT MARKETING

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Second Year Elective
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de·vi·ant mar·ket·ing
/'dēvēənt mārkedɪŋ/

1. The process of finding novel and creative business solutions that depart from traditional approaches.

Synonyms: unconventional, untraditional, atypical, nonstandard, unexpected

2. A Deviant Marketer is one who is deeply interested in understanding the human condition with the goal of improving consumer behavior and decisions.

Synonyms: nonconformist, creative, out-of-the-box thinker, risk-taker

► OVERVIEW

Can eating avocado toast set you back financially? What is one question you can ask on a first date to figure out if they are the one for you? Could rain on Election Day change your vote? Can betting against yourself help you keep your resolutions? Can trusting your gut improve your health?

If questions like these about human behavior keep you up at night or if you would like acquire a savvy about how asking such questions can help you develop and evaluate marketing strategies, join me in Deviant Marketing. This course is designed for those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of new trends in the marketplace and aspiring to change consumer behavior in order to help customers lead healthier, happier and more productive lives. Bring your intuitions to meet the latest paradigms, tools and strategies from consumer behavior, behavioral economics, sociology and social psychology.

My ultimate goal is to move, motivate and mobilize you through a rich, pragmatic, thoughtful, and humane course. Course prerequisites include risk appetite, curiosity in the human condition and willingness to believe in magic.

▶ PATH TO DEVIANCE

In this course, we will focus on understanding the *new* consumer to shift their focus from self to others and incentivize their behaviors towards decisions and behaviors that will benefit both the individual as well as the society at large.

We will take a customer-centric approach and start with learning and communicating *with* the customers, who are well-informed about their preferences, needs and wants (or they think they are). In the first module, we dive into the mind of different consumers, examine why they behave the way they do and explore the forces impacting their decisions. We will then explore how to leverage these insights to design novel customer experiences that increase well-being and happiness. In our role as a professional behavioral scientist, we will develop interventions that interrupt or change the way consumers interact with brands and products. This might involve creating a new product for an old habit or a new habit for an existing product. We will explore how to effectively start new conversations with existing customers or manage familiar conversations with new customers.

Finally, we will hone in on designing experiments with customers and their experiences to figure out what, when, and how to design and implement these interventions, how to measure their success and how to ensure their sustainability. Our data-driven approach aims to motivate consumers towards improved decisions and behaviors that will make them happier, healthier and more productive. To this end, we will bring together insights and learnings from the rest of the course to offer creative marketing solutions.

▶ THROUGHOUT THIS COURSE

We will:

- Practice what it means to be a behavioral scientist in business.
- Identify new trends and paradigms and explore novel tools and strategies to tackle different marketing issues.
- Experiment with a range of levers that can influence consumer behavior in unexpected ways and at efficient cost.
- Design field experiments and evaluate their results to develop effective and novel business strategies.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the human condition and a livelier curiosity about how its irrationalities, sensitivities and deviations can inform your actions.
- Establish a competitive advantage: the ability to predict customer responses and create value by making more insightful marketing decisions across different industries.

If you find yourself frequently analyzing your own behaviors and others' and asking "why do we act this way?" or "how can I change and improve these behaviors?" don't be alarmed. It is a sign that everything is going as planned.

▶ AT YOUR FIFTH YEAR REUNION

Five years after this course is over, after you may have forgotten the technical terms or frameworks, I hope that the course will have left you with a sharper eye for and confidence in leveraging psychological insights to change human behavior; that you have the ability to integrate experimentation into the organizations and businesses you may be a part of; that you feel inspired to shift your focus from self (e.g., “how can I use my resources to improve my life?”) to others (e.g., “how can I use my resources to improve life for others?”).

▶ COURSE OVERVIEW

Session #	Questions	Assignments
1	What is Deviant Marketing? Introduction to Deviance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete: Pre-Deviant Marketing Poll
MODULE 1: LEVERAGING EXISTING INSIGHTS		
2	Where is your customer coming from, where is she going? Mapping Customer Journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Case: “RKS Guitars” Read: “Branding in the Digital Age” <p><u>In Class:</u> Announcement of group assignments and available topics</p>
3	Why are consumers so irrational? A Toolkit for Behavioral Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 5pm the night before, email me your preference for topics Complete: Behavioral Economics Survey <p><u>In Class:</u> Announcement of topic assignments</p>
4	Is creativity an art or science? Constructing Innovative Experiences in the Restaurant Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Case: "El Bulli" Email me your "Report: Project Overview".

5	How do you nudge behavior?	TBD (Healthcare or Fashion)
6	Can you design “cool”? A Theory of Coolness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Case: “From Heineken with Love: James Bond Product Promotion” • Read: “General Theory of Coolness” • Follow the link on Canvas for “Consumer Pushback” to submit your responses
7	Is thirst enough for change? Social Marketing and Customer Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Case: “Pepsi Refresh Project”
8	When does nudge come to shove? Ethics of Nudges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the link on Canvas for “Reflections: Ethics of Nudges” to submit your responses
MODULE 2: CREATING NEW INSIGHTS		
9	Isn’t it time to experiment? A Toolkit for Field Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: “Behavioral Science in the Marketplace”
10	What is the experiment telling you? Consumer Philanthropy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Case: “Global Giving” • Upload your “Report: Podcast” to Canvas
11	So you think you can experiment? A Potpourri of Field Experiments	TBD
12	Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email me your final presentations
13	Presentations	
14	Now what? Deviant Marketing 2.0	

► HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE REACHED DEVIANCE

Class Contribution (40%)

I look forward to an ongoing conversation with you where our comments significantly advance the discussion, contribute to your own learning, help others see the world differently and (above all) are kind. In this class, I expect us to work as a team and help each other recognize connections in the world. Where there exists none, we will work together to create those connections.

I often get asked how I evaluate class contribution. Here is my thinking:

- In Deviant Marketing, we value and recognize insightful comments that are clear and concise, that get us to think and dig deeper, that help you and your classmates learn and that move the class forward.
- Asking interesting and insightful questions will count toward your class contribution as they are core to being a great behavioral scientist.
- Positive dialogues with other students that enrich the discussion and efforts to help others get in the conversation receive extra credit.
- Class presence and simply getting airtime are not sufficient to count as contribution.
- How you listen is a part of your class contribution as simply by the way you listen, you can create a transformative experience for all of us.
- If you are not in class, not only are you missing out on your own learning experience, others are missing out on being able to learn from you. Each student is essential to making contributions to others. All unexcused absences count as a negative point for the day. Please let me know in advance if you are going to miss a session. If you are hesitant to participate, please come and see me. In both situations, I will work with you to find a solution.
- Late arrivals are highly discouraged. They are considered as unexcused absences.

* If you have any prior knowledge of, relevant experience and expertise in a specific area, please let me know in advance as I would like to make sure that I find you throughout the course.

** If a classmate makes a comment that gets you thinking in a novel way or teaches you something new, stimulates your heart, please let me and let them know.

***By Session 7 (mid-point in the quarter), I will give you feedback on how you are doing in the course.

Company Field Project (60%)

Overview of the Project: Practicing the role of a behavioral scientist involves a range of skills including understanding and integrating consumer insights, asking creative and critical questions, experimenting with and executing interventions, communicating effectively with laypeople as well as

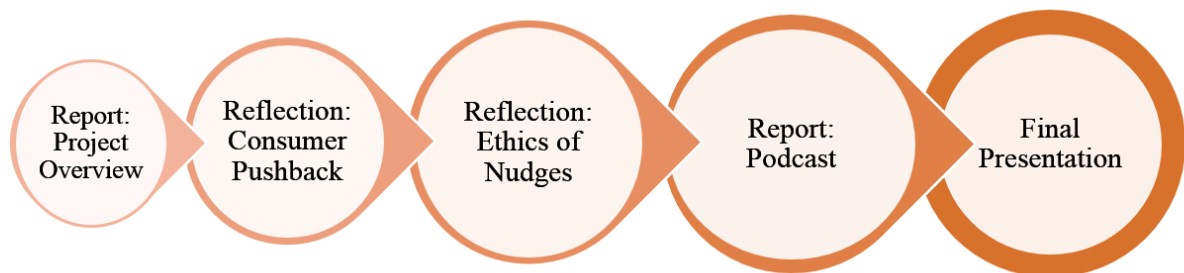
across your organization. I designed this project to provide you with opportunities to take on these different skills.

Our work in Deviant Marketing will culminate with a group project where you will tackle an outstanding business problem concerning consumers that are of particular interest to an existing company. Your mission is to develop a creative, impactful and viable solution that will make a transformative difference in the lives of consumers.

Actual projects tend to incorporate the messiness and murkiness of real life requiring creativity and judgment. Your work throughout this course will mirror the fast pace of business. From personal experience, it can be frustrating and difficult to not have the resources and time need to do the work well. This course teaches you how to work within these constraints with a group of your peers – using an 80/20 way of getting to the answer while cultivating greater interior business judgment as time progresses. Even if you have all the time in the world, this research approach generally allows you to effectively and efficiently navigate complex problems designing practical solutions. The course does not stop at the end of the term – it is the beginning of your adventure in developing good hypothesis driven solutions in real life through a creative approach and awareness of others.

Logistics of the Project: At the beginning of Session 2, I will share with you the projects submitted by various client companies for you to choose from. You will be assigned to a group of six, and as a group indicate your preference for the projects by Session 3. Soon after, I will share with you the project you will be working on based on (a) each group’s expressed preference and (b) the need to balance client projects across groups.

You will have several steps for the completion of this project, which are meant to help guide your efforts.



Report: Project Overview 5% (Group) – Due by Session #4

This initial report is aimed at getting the ball rolling. As a group, email me an initial report (one-pager) briefly outlining the following:

- *Who is your target customer?* Describe your ideal customers (e.g., demographics), their wants and needs, likes and dislikes. How do they make decisions? What are their buying strategies? The

more clearly that you can describe the consumers that you are trying to influence, the more easily you can design interventions to encourage desired behavior.

- *What is their ideal behavior?* Identify and describe one specific behavior that you want your target customers to perform. Be sure to be specific and describe a behavior and not an outcome or feeling. One way you can approach this is to assume that you are a team of geniuses and everything goes perfectly according to your plan; your customers behave in the exact way that you want them to. Describe what that ideal customer behavior would look like.
- *What are the barriers to behavior change?* Briefly describe the barriers that might prevent these customers from accomplishing the desired behavior. You might not know the exact psychological terms but feel free to describe them in laymen's terms. Do their barriers stem from resource constraints (e.g., not enough time, money, effort)? Do they have emotional, social, contextual barriers (e.g., fatigue, errors in future predictions)? Are they unaware or unwilling?

Reflection: Consumer Pushback 15% (Individual) – Due by Session #6

This is your midterm assignment that I will provide individual feedback on along with your class contributions.

For this assignment, I would like you to wear the shoes of your target customer. Imagine that your customer is skeptical and not motivated to make a change in their life. What would they say about their situation? How would they react to your potential solution? What excuses could they give?

In 250 words or less, write a short piece from their point of view and submit it using the link provided on Canvas.

Reflection: Ethics of Nudges 10% (Individual) – Due by Session #8

In preparation for discussion on the ethics of nudges that firms and governments are using as regulatory tools, reflect on the ethicality of your group's proposed solutions. Do you think it is ethical? Could it be perceived as unethical or as a manipulation? What do you think you would need to do to eschew any criticism? Or can you? In 250 words or less, submit a reflection using the link provided on Canvas.

Report: Podcast (10%) (Group) – Due by Session #10

Part of being a behavioral scientist is to be able to communicate your hot, new idea with others in a simple way with the hopes of invigorating them and getting them to think. To this end, as a group, produce a short, intriguing podcast (less than 3 minutes) to excite us about your project. Prepare this podcast for an audience who are interested in behavioral sciences but who might not have deep knowledge of the field.

During your podcast, as you reflect on your project, specifically focus on the following:

- Discuss the customer insights you are thinking of leveraging in order to design an intervention to test in a field experiment

- You might also mention the questions or worries that keep you up at night.

To get inspiration, you might want to check out podcasts such as The Hidden Brain, Freakonomics, and Invisibilia.

The goal of this step is to prepare you for the final presentation that is approaching in less than two weeks. After this podcast, you will design a field experiment, think about your potential results, reflect on how you will make your results sustainable and put it all together in a presentation.

Final Presentation (20%) (Group) – Sessions #12 & 13

In the last two sessions of the quarter, we will have in-class presentation where you will be asked to share your investigation, findings and marketing solutions with me, your classmates as well as with a panel from your client.

Instructions for the Presentation: We will have 11 groups present during two classes. You will each get 7 minutes for your presentation and 5 minutes for questions. All the groups will submit their presentations by Session 12 and your presentation order will be dependent on the availability of your clients.

In your presentation, please make sure to answer the following questions:

- Who is your target customer? What are their unmet needs, wants?
- What are their barriers to behavior change?
- What consumer insights will you leverage with your solution?
- What is your solution? How did you develop it? Why do you expect it to work?
- Assume that you are a team of geniuses and everything goes perfectly according to your plan; your customers behave in the exact way that you want them to. What would their ideal customer behavior look like?
- What are your worries?
- How will you make it sustainable?

Field projects will be evaluated based on

- The depth, breadth and consistency of your plan (15 points)
- Appropriate application of consumer behavior tools and concepts (15 points)
- The design, the proposed execution and evaluation of the field experiment (20 points)
- Logical development and viability of conclusions and implications (10 points)
- Sustainability of your solutions (10 points)
- Originality, creativity and novelty of consumer insights and suggestions (20 points)
- Quality of the oral presentation (10 points)

Input from the client company will be incorporated into these evaluations. More details on the project will be provided later in the term.

▶ **LAPTOP/MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

I kindly ask you to avoid using laptops and your phones during class. If there is any need for a laptop, I will make sure to inform you ahead of time.