

## **BUILDING MARKETING STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN ACCOUNTING FOR MARKETING**

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Marketing educators are responsible for providing their students with the knowledge and skills required in future business life (Dacko 2006, Jaskari 2013). However, from my experience the marketing knowledge and skills do not emphasize enough the economical side of marketing. Even though there are students that are fond of accounting, there are students that find accounting difficult. They can be afraid of accounting, they don't understand its' importance and may avoid all exercises where they need to count (Tarasi et al. 2012).

Even more, teaching accounting within marketing seems to be a sidetrack and sometimes avoided also by marketing teachers. Even though some topics such as pricing and customer value are researched well in marketing, there are not many articles discussing monetary matters within marketing education literature. There are exceptions, such as Beall (1979), Schibrowsky (1995), Stearns and Shaheen (2005), Haytko (2006) and Pilling, Rigdon & Brightman (2012), but in overall, is accounting just some non-interesting topic, we rather leave to accounting and finance department to teach?

However, money is the language of business and the marketers need to speak that language. They need to propose and motivate their ideas to engineers, business controllers, and top management. Thus the students need to learn to motivate their decisions in terms of money (revenue, profit, return on investment), not only with image factors or top-of-mind figures. Furthermore, in real life the marketers face for example the challenges of information overload, the understanding of what is relevant information, or how different assumptions affect the calculations, or when the calculation is good enough for management decision making. This is why to accounting for marketing is important. It is not only about the calculations. It is about understanding the relevancy and relativity of marketing knowledge.

The aim of this study is to understand, how to build confidence in accounting for marketing students. I have developed a web-based course called "*Accounting for marketers*", where students individually solve marketing related cases using accounting tools. The cases are real life based in order to imitate situations that the students face after graduation. My earlier experience as a controller in an international candy company has given ideas to most important topic areas.

The web-based cases focus on three topic areas: 1) budgeting, 2) pricing and 3) profitability. Each topic area includes a video lecture to remind about the accounting tools to be used and one or more cases that the student can choose from. The fourth assignment includes student reflection on their learning throughout the course. The pedagogical background for the course is experiential learning (Kolb 1984).

So far the course has run two times. At both times the student feedback was collected and analyzed for this study. The course itself was greeted with satisfaction as the students clearly indicated that they appreciate this kind of hands-on accounting course. Also, each year there were students that wanted to take part, but were not allowed due to their phase of the study or choice of study program.

In my presentation I describe in the sense of constructive alignment (Biggs 1996, Biggs & Tang 2007) the objectives, teaching and learning activities (content and structure) and assessment (based on SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collins 1982)) of the case course "*Accounting for marketers*". I present the student feedback, discuss the challenges and lay preliminary

foundations to understand how the course builds confidence in accounting. I would like to discuss the findings with fellow teacher-researchers in the context of accounting for marketers.

References Available upon Request