

## TEACHING INTERNATIONAL MARKETING: TIPS AND TRAPS

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### ABSTRACT

There is a considerable need for marketing faculty to teach courses in international marketing at the graduate and undergraduate levels. At some institutions, there may further be a need for the teaching of certain specialty courses addressing specific aspects of international marketing. However, while international marketing is a rewarding course to teach, it is also a very challenging one. Three major problems are that (1) most doctoral programs in marketing offer no direct course work on international issues (although some Ph.D. students may be exposed to specific international issues through their research activities), (2) the rapid rates of change in many parts of the world require that considerable reading and lesson revisions be done frequently, and (3) there is little coherent international marketing theory. It is a reality that an introductory international marketing course curriculum often includes content from other disciplines such as international economics and comparative legal systems. As a result of these factors, faculty members charged with teaching international marketing may approach this challenge with a "patchwork" of knowledge from pre-doctoral coursework along with more recent reading.

In this session, four veteran teachers of international marketing shared "jewels" they have accumulated over the years in teaching international marketing in various settings. It is anticipated that the tips provided will, in particular, help those new to the teaching of international marketing in getting "up to speed" and feeling more comfortable teaching in this area.

Nancy Panos Schmitt discussed the recruitment of guest speakers. David Ackerman shared insights into the teaching of international marketing at the MBA level, an area in which he has considerable experience. Brian Jorgensen and Lars Perner focused more on teaching international marketing at the undergraduate level. Both David Ackerman and Lars Perner discussed examples of in-class projects and assignments they have found useful. In addition,

Brian Jorgensen addressed opportunities for students to learn through international travel and study-abroad programs.

Nancy Panos Schmitt discussed the recruitment of guest speakers for classes. An opportunity for students to hear about the experiences, surprises, and hard lessons learned while working abroad or with foreign firms is an extremely valuable experience for students since this allows them to face the significant implications of what may appear to be subtle differences in culture and the challenges inherent in working in an environment whose economic and political structures and infrastructure differ from that assumed in U.S. business.

David Ackerman discussed issues involved with teaching international marketing to MBA students. These students, some of whom may be mid-level executives, already have extensive working experience. If they are taking international marketing or are enrolled in an international MBA program, they will tend to have specific interests and needs. Also discussed was the use of multiple methods to allow students to be exposed to the breadth of areas within which the international and cross-cultural can impact on marketing decisions of firms. Each of these methods has strengths and weaknesses in illustrating a specific dimension of international marketing.

Lars Perner discussed sources of information on countries, international firms, and consumers across the world, emphasizing periodical databases such as the Business and Industry database which has excellent categorization of articles by country and geographical region of applicability. In view of the rapid rates of change in many parts of the world, explicitly addressing secondary research as part of the international marketing curriculum is important. Efficient access to current information is further essential in updating lessons and identifying current illustrations of phenomena covered. In addition,

current business press articles can be assigned as case studies.

Lars Perner also discussed sources of current audiovisual materials that can be shown to illustrate ideas discussed. Among valuable sources are brief news clips available on the web sites of cable news channels such as CNN, CNN International, and CNBC. News magazine shows such as CBS 60 Minutes and ABC 20/20 often feature longer segments focusing on the dynamics of specific countries. CNBC, in addition, frequently has one hour or two hour special programs on both specific countries (most recently, for example, *The Rise of India*) and on firms operating across the world (e.g., a segment on the operations of Wal-Mart in China).

Brian Jorgensen addressed the teaching of international marketing at the undergraduate level

and also the challenges of bringing international business lessons to life through international travel-study experiences with students. Some students who study international marketing have the opportunity to study abroad for a semester or a year. For students who cannot afford or arrange an experience of that intensity, another option is a shorter-term travel-study experience with faculty from their own institutions. Having led a number of these types of experiences, Jorgensen addressed what he has learned in terms of enhancing the overall learning qualities of the experience and making the experiences an overall success. Given that many undergraduate students will not have the opportunity to travel internationally during their college years, Jorgensen also addressed ways in which the international experience can be somewhat simulated with more local activities and experiences.