

MSc in Sustainability Management

Marketing fundamentals for sustainable organizations

Professor: Alexandra Theben,
Anna Alaman

Office hours: by appointment

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: Second

1. COURSE PRESENTATION

Course Description

This master's course in Marketing for Sustainable Organizations is designed to address the growing need for sustainable marketing, which seeks to promote environmentally friendly products and services. In an era of increasing environmental challenges and heightened social responsibility, consumers are actively seeking companies that align with their values.

The course places a strong emphasis on the marketing process, with a particular focus on crafting value propositions that encompass both rational and emotional elements, which heavily influence customer purchasing decisions. Today, sustainability is a non-negotiable requirement, especially among younger demographics, influencing every aspect of product and service development, from conception to production, distribution, and marketing.

Our primary objective is to equip students with the skills to analyze markets effectively and employ strategic planning tools while adhering to ethical and sustainability criteria. This approach empowers organizations to identify and capitalize on sustainable business opportunities, effectively achieving their objectives.

Throughout the course, students will gain proficiency in market analysis, guided by sustainability principles, and strategic planning tools to make informed market entry decisions. By conducting comprehensive market analyses, students will be able to identify potential consumer segments aligned with sustainability and ethical considerations, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a foundation.

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Following the opportunity analysis, students will have the capability to develop proposals for products or services that address these identified sustainability needs. This could involve the creation of ecological products, recycling services, circular economy business models, and more. Ultimately, the projects students undertake will align with the SDGs and will leverage the marketing tools acquired during the course to drive successful outcomes.

The course in the study plan

This **compulsory** course belongs to the subject of **Economic Dimension of Sustainability** of the study plan. It takes place in the **second quarter**.

Learning objectives

These learning objectives encompass key aspects of marketing, sustainability, and customer-centric strategies:

- ❖ Develop an extensive understanding of marketing as a strategic function and as the axis of the company's value proposition.
- ❖ Explore the transformation of marketing from a sales-centric approach to a customer-centric one, emphasizing a holistic orientation towards the customer's needs and preferences.
- ❖ Acquire a deep comprehension of customer needs and preferences as fundamental tools for designing effective marketing strategies that resonate with target audiences.
- ❖ Learn how to seamlessly integrate sustainability principles into a company's value proposition, recognizing the evolving demands and opportunities associated with this transition. This knowledge applies to a wide range of industries, including manufacturing, technology, and business services.
- ❖ Design products, services, and communication strategies with a strong sustainability message, ensuring alignment with today's environmentally and socially conscious consumers.
- ❖ Develop the skills to identify, analyze, and capitalize on sustainable business opportunities, leveraging market insights and ethical considerations to drive strategic decision-making.
- ❖ Explore innovative approaches to sustainable marketing, including the incorporation of eco-friendly product design, circular economy models, and environmentally responsible supply chain practices.

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- ❖ Understand the critical role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in guiding sustainable marketing initiatives and how to align business strategies with these global objectives.
- ❖ Cultivate the ability to assess the environmental and social impact of marketing initiatives, fostering a responsible and ethical approach to marketing practices.

Related SDG

The SDGs that are most related to this course are the following:

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

2. COURSE LEARNING PLAN

Methodology

The program combines different teaching methodologies to offer a rigorous and interactive learning experience, involving both individual and group work. Classes are mostly interactive and include continuous assessment.

The teaching method combine:

- **Lectures.** Provide the students the opportunity to share experiences and ideas, as well as debate different points of view.
- **Group based activities:** During the course, the students will work in groups to develop a project, consisting of the design of either a marketing strategy for companies that include sustainability as an element of strategic differentiation, or the marketing strategy of a company specialized in sustainability projects. The projects will be presented and discussed at the end of the term.
- **Discussion of (scientific) articles and case studies:** This approach is an effective way to illustrate real situations of firms facing a specific marketing problem and taking proper strategic and tactic decisions.

Hours devoted by the student (according to ECTS): 75

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Evaluation criteria

- Resolution and delivery of the course final project: 40%
- Oral presentation of the course final project (including preparation of a PowerPoint): 10%
- Written final exam: 35%
- Attendance and class participation (in discussions, assignments, case studies...): 15%

Retakes will be available for students under specific circumstances:

- Failing the final exam but not the course:
 - A remedial exam will be available with the same content covered on the final exam.
- Failing the course:
 - A recovery exam will be available. This exam will consist of ALL the content the subject covered throughout the term.
- A minimum grade of **4 out of 10** in the final exam is necessary for the other evaluation criteria to be taken into account when computing the student's overall grade for the course. Therefore, students who obtain less than a 4 out of 10 in the final exam will fail the course automatically. Those students will have to take a remedial exam
- This course includes group assignments (case studies and projects). At the end of the term, and in order to discourage free-riding behaviors, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the involvement of the rest of their team members in all group assignments that took place within the term. Students who obtain sufficiently poor evaluations from their team members will be penalized. The penalty will involve a reduction in the overall group assignment grade (max penalty: 50% reduction of this grade).
- All the activities that are submitted past the deadline or that do not follow the submission instructions in terms of content, format, etc. will be considered as 'not submitted'.
- Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason will imply a zero grade in the participation/attendance evaluation item and may lead to suspension from the program
- Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation are allowed ONE re-take of the evaluation, in the conditions specified above. If the course is again failed after the retake, the student will have to register again for the course the following year.

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- In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.
- Plagiarism is to use another’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.

Calendar and contents

LECTURE	TOPIC	ACTIVITY/READINGS
1: 17/01/25 Alexandra Theben	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to marketing - Linking marketing with corporate strategies: Sustainable marketing - Marketing as a strategic process (Value creation, value proposition) Market segmentation / STP process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Segmentation - Targeting - Positioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles • Group activity • Instructions for the final project
2: 24/01/25 Anna Alaman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market research in the selection of market opportunities / niches - Define the consumer - Types of marketing research, data collection methods and practical applications (i.e., consumer insights, customer profile, buyer persona) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles
3: 31/0/25 Alexandra Theben	The marketing plan of sustainable companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - G-STIC framework - The Marketing Plan: definition of objectives - The Marketing Mix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles • Group activity (Market size calculation) • Group activity (Case studies)

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	(sustainability elements 4Ps/7Ts)	
4: 7/02/25 Anna Alaman	Business model for organizations oriented towards sustainability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze four main areas of an impact business model for sustainability - How to choose strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles Business model for impact organizations. Knode. • Work on group activity (final project)
5: 21/02/25 Anna Alaman	Sustainable product design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing consumer mindset by product design. - Steps for transformative product / service design. - Reasons for designing responsible and sustainable products. - Product cycles. - Product-market growth models - Ecolabelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles • Work on group activity (final project) • Group activity (Case study)
6: 28/02/25 Alexandra Theben	The product: rational and emotional arguments for choice (Consumer psychology). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability as an emotional argument. - Communicating sustainability arguments: positioning, selection of advertising media, promotional actions and communication - Influencer marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles • Work on group activity (final project) • Group activities (Case study) (Guest speaker)
7: 07/03/25 Alexandra Theben	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problematic practices: Greenwashing /Green claims - Building Strong Brands: branding, brand equity and brand power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected readings /articles • Work on group activity (final project) (Guest Speaker)
8: 14/03/25 Alexandra Theben	Presentations Final Project in Groups	

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9: 21/03/25 Alexandra Theben	EXAM	
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3. PROFESSOR

Dr. Alexandra Theben is a Tenure Track professor at the UPF-Barcelona School of Management in the Department of Management, Law, Society and Humanities and Co-Director of the Master of Marketing (Spanish). Her current lines of research focus on the sociotechnical implications of digitization and the use of new technologies, including artificial intelligence. She received her PhD in the Information and Knowledge Society at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, studying the impact of online marketing on children's behaviour. Before her position at the UPF-Barcelona School of Management, Alexandra worked as a consultant for European public institutions. She participated in more than 15 research projects funded by European public institutions, including the "Behavioral Study on Advertising and Marketing Practices on Travel Booking Websites and Apps" (European Commission) and the "Study on the impact of Marketing through Social Media, online games and mobile applications on children's behaviour" (European Commission). Alexandra also teaches Marketing in the MBA (English) and the Master of Marketing (Spanish), as well as project management in the Master of Social and Public Policies (Spanish).

Anna Alaman

Anna Alaman has over 18 years' experience working in management and product development for medium and large-sized worldwide companies focused in Asian countries. She studied Marketing and Sales Management, deepening its postgraduate in EAE, in Management and Business Administration. In 2011, she decided to swift her professional career and founded a social enterprise in responsible tourism in India with the aim to create touristic products promoting social inclusion in the country. She has worked her entire life implementing new paradigms of connecting businesses and the planet, and being catalysers for an inclusive and regenerative economy. She has been in the core of sustainability, organization development and tour product design in conventional markets, since 2011. She gives keynotes and is a teacher and educator in Barcelona bringing new holistic worldview concepts like Social Business frameworks, Resilient Leadership, Transformative Experience Design, Responsible Tourism and a new paradigm of Regenerative Tourism. In 2021, she founded Open Eyes Academy to support entrepreneurs to implement their positive impact projects. So far, more than 500 students and entrepreneurs have taken part in her programmes in educational and business centres in Spain and Latin America.

4. READING MATERIALS/ BIBLIOGRAPHY/RESOURCES

There is no required textbook. All readings and additional material will be shared in "Aula Global" according to the needs of each session.

Basic bibliography

- Sustainable Marketing: How to Drive Profits with Purpose / Michelle Carvill. Ed. Bloomsworth 2021.

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- Greener Marketing. John Grant. 1st Edition. Ed. Wiley 2021.
- Kotler, P.; Keller, K.L. Marketing management, 16^a edition 2019. Pearson/Prentice Hall, Madrid.
- Selected readings published in eCampus