# MKTG 890
# Retail Ecosystem Action Learning Projects

Fall 2018 | G92 JMHH

| | |
|---|---|
| **Class Time** | M/W 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. |
| | Typically, class meets on Mondays. On Wednesdays, Teams will meet with Prof. Robertson during class time for individual project updates. |
| **Instructor** | Professor Thomas S. Robertson, 769 JMHH robertson@wharton.upenn.edu |
| **Teaching Assistant** | Ellie Goodman, elgood@wharton.upenn.edu |
| **Course Coordinator** | Michele Anna Klekotka, klekotka@wharton.upenn.edu |
| **Office Hours** | M/W 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. (769 JMHH), and by appointment |
| **Canvas Site** | XXXX |

## Description

This course offers graduate students from Wharton and Penn an opportunity to work on real-world projects for companies in the retail industry and in the wider retail ecosystem. It requires the exploration and analysis of actual business issues or opportunities identified by sponsoring/client companies, as well as the formulation of recommendations. It combines 1) academic study/components, 2) application of prior business knowledge/skills to the project, and 3) a solutions-oriented consulting mentality.

In addition to supervised project work and regular updates to the corporate client/project sponsor, the course involves classroom meetings and discussions on topics pertaining to the projects. While this course focuses on marketing topics, some projects might also touch on topics from related disciplines such as operations, management of innovation & technology, data analytics, and international management.

## Learning Objectives

The real-world oriented nature of this course provides an opportunity to study retail business questions and to apply academic learnings, along with prior experience. The course contributes to enhancing students' preparation for retail- and consulting-related careers, including entrepreneurial ventures.

Specifically, students will study timely retail topics and work on an actual retail project, which will provide an opportunity to learn how to structure a retail business problem, develop a problem-solving project plan, collect and analyze relevant information, and make recommendations of value to management.

## Prerequisites

Students should have completed MKTG 611 (Marketing Management) and ideally MKTG 725 (Principles of Retailing). Students that do not fulfill these prerequisites should contact Prof. Robertson for permission to take the course.

## Overview

MKTG 890 is a 1.0-credit course conducted on a team basis, combining project work with complementary classroom meetings. Working on projects for leading companies in the retail industry and in the wider retail ecosystem, students will analyze real-world business issues and suggest recommendations to the client/sponsoring company. Each student is expected to spend an average of 4-5 hours each week on project work.

Project descriptions will include company contact information, project background, desired deliverables, existing data, and other pertinent information.

## Project Sponsors & Topics

Confirmed project sponsors so far are:

- Barneys New York
- Walmart
- Ascena (owner of brands such as Loft, Ann Taylor, Lane Bryant, and DressBarn)
- Café X (robotic coffee bars)

Project topics may include:

- Developing an omni-channel strategy for a retailer's new brand
- Analyzing existing and potential future target segments and their behaviors, preferences, etc.

- Analyzing Millennials and Gen Z segments' shopping, media consumption, etc. behavior and preferences
- Developing customer loyalty initiatives
- Analyzing pricing & promotions options
- Innovation in retail

## Course Requirements

Regular interaction among team members as well as with Prof. Robertson, Ellie Goodman and corporate partners is expected. Each team will deliver a project outline, midpoint presentation, final presentation, and an executive brief. Due dates can be found in the detailed summary within this syllabus.

This is an action learning course. Project teams are expected to deliver actionable recommendations to their corporate client/sponsor. Formal classes and team meetings with Prof. Robertson are scheduled weekly for course content and project updates (see the course schedule below). Ellie Goodman, Teaching Assistant, is also available to meet with Teams. Sponsors are asked for their input and can have an impact on the final grade for the team.

## Teams

Each team will consist of 4-6 graduate students. The background composition of each team should match the needs of the project. Since projects may require a range of skill sets, diverse project teams are desirable to combine and integrate different backgrounds.

Each team will select a team leader and a liaison to the client. These roles entail the following:

Leader –Manage the process your team chooses to follow. A collaborative approach is encouraged for choosing the process, setting milestones and making decisions.

Liaison – The single point of contact with the sponsor/client. This responsibility includes communicating with the sponsor/client, receiving questions, comments, direction from the sponsor/client, sharing it with the other team members, and arranging meetings and conference calls.

7/23/18

## Assessment

The grade components of the course are:

| | |
|---:|:---|
| Final Output | 50% |
| Progress Presentations | 20% |
| Project Sponsor Interaction<br>*evaluated by Professor Robertson*<br>*with input from project sponsor* | 10% |
| Team Self-Evaluation | 10% |
| Company Evaluation of Project | 10% |

## Program Notes

**Kick-Off Session.** After teams are formed, a kickoff session with the Sponsor will be held in early-September. The Sponsor will provide detailed instructions, project objectives and requirements, followed by Q&A.

**Scope of Work.** A letter that summarizes the team's understanding of the project requirements and the approach. You may write such a letter after the information session;

**Consulting Proposal (by September 15).** The team will develop a proposal to include process, agreed objectives, and deliverables. The team should identify key questions and issues, develop several hypotheses, and propose a set of methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, and library research) to be followed

**Progress Presentations (Oct and Nov).** Each team will give one or two mid-point presentations to their Sponsor. The presentations should reflect accomplishments to date and plans for completion. Specifically,.

**Storyline Memo**. Summarize the preliminary recommendations you have formulated for the project sponsor. Although the recommendations are still subject to change as the final pieces of data are gathered and analyzed, it is important to inform your project sponsor of the directions you are taking.

**Final Presentation and Executive Brief.** Each team will provide a formal final presentation of their project. Sponsors may require the submission of additional files, such as a memo about the key findings. An "Executive Brief" is required as part of the course. This Brief is to be no more than two pages. It must include:

- Statement of the problem;
- Identification of the process/approach followed by the team;
- Solution alternatives
- Key recommendations to client

**Interaction with the Project Sponsor.** Each project will have a client contact at the sponsoring company – a person responsible for providing data and other necessary information. The Team Liaison is expected to interact with the client contact on a weekly basis to ensure that the team's work is addressing the company's proposed issues.

Generally, presentations are expected to take place on campus or be conducted via video conference if an in-person meeting is not feasible. In the case of travel, students will be reimbursed for approved expenses.

**Project Sponsor Evaluations.** Team evaluations will be sought from the sponsors of your project. The sample evaluation form is attached in **Appendix A.**

**Team Peer Evaluations.** Prof. Robertson also will seek evaluations from each team member on his/her contribution and the contributions of all other members of the team. The team average from these member peer evaluations will be a component in determining the individual final grade on the project.

Team success is the responsibility of all members of the team. Participation, conflicts, effort and team dynamics all affect final outcomes. Teams are responsible for identifying and addressing issues that arise and teams are expected to be respectful of their fellow members. If issues remain unresolved, Prof. Robertson reserves the right to make adjustments. The sample evaluation form is attached in **Appendix B.**

**Confidentiality.** All projects are undertaken under Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreements, and all information received by the class is electronically stored on Canvas, a secure and restricted SharePoint site.

**Course & Team Commitment**. <u>**We ask that you not drop the course once you have been assigned to a team.**</u> Teams will be formed at the start of the project. Changes in team membership may not be made by team members. Project swapping is also not permitted among teams. While Prof. Robertson supports and advises each team, the students take ownership and primary responsibility for the successful delivery of the project.

**Instructor Availability.** Prof. Robertson will be available to the teams in class and as needed by email (robertson@wharton.upenn.edu); phone (215-898-9410); or during office hours for consultation (769 JMHH). The teams are expected to keep Prof. Robertson informed of progress or problems on a weekly basis in class and may share issues at any time by phone, text, or email.

7/23/18

## Classroom Commitment

1. You are expected to treat fellow students with respect and are expected to arrive for class on-time.

2. Attendance is of paramount importance. If you will be absent due to illness or a religious holiday, please inform the instructor by email prior to the class that you will miss. These are the only excused absences.

3. Unexcused absence or chronic lateness will decrease your grade for the course.

4. Plagiarized work will result in failure of the course. Please refer to Penn's Plagiarism Policy: http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/PORT/documentation/plagiarism_policy.html

## About the Professor

**THOMAS S. ROBERTSON**. *Joshua J. Harris Professor; Professor of Marketing; Academic Director, Baker Retailing Center; Executive Director, Wharton-INSEAD Alliance*

Dr. Robertson is an expert in marketing strategy and competitive behavior, his recent research has focused on ephemerality in retailing and the forecasting of retail sales. Dr. Robertson is author, co-author or editor of a dozen books and almost 100 scholarly articles and book chapters. He has won numerous awards for his scholarship and has lectured widely in North and Central America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa.

In 2014, Dr. Robertson completed a seven-year term as Dean of the Wharton School. In this role he raised substantial financial resources for the School, while championing global engagement, a strong culture of innovation, and business as a force for good. Under his leadership Wharton implemented a new MBA curriculum, a new initiative in public policy, creation of modular courses which run in ten countries, a research and teaching campus in Beijing, a commitment to lifelong learning for Wharton alumni, and the design of a portfolio of online courses reaching over two million participants worldwide.

Prior to his Wharton deanship, Dr. Robertson held posts at Emory University. From 1998 to 2004 he was Dean of Emory's Goizueta Business School and is widely credited with positioning the school to compete as an international leader in business education. He served as founding Executive Faculty Director of the Institute for Developing Nations, a joint-venture research initiative with The Carter Center.

Dr. Robertson is an active board member in the university and corporate domains. He serves on the Advisory Boards of the Sorbonne and Indian School of Business, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Carlyle Group. Formerly, he was a director of CRA International, a trustee of Singapore Management University, and served on the Advisory Boards of Tsinghua University and Guanghua School of Management (Peking University).

## About the Teaching Assistant

**ELLIE GOODMAN.** *2nd year MBA student at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.*

Ellie began her career at Jefferies LLC in investment banking coverage, focusing on consumer, retail, and foodservice companies. Key transactions included the IPO and successive follow-on offerings for Zoës Kitchen and sale of Varsity Brands to Charlesbank Capital Partners. Prior to Wharton, Ellie worked for Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media. Her projects focused on identifying and quantifying new product extension and business model opportunities. This past summer, she interned at Tim Horton's, the Canada-based coffee shop chain and subsidiary of Restaurant Brands International. Ellie graduated from the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia in 2013.

## About the Guest Lecturers

Guest speakers may present lectures that complement our discussions and the course projects. They will be chosen for their expertise in particular aspects of this retail course. They will add their own unique perspective on select course topics.

## Draft Schedule

| Session Title | Day | Date | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| Introduction | Wednesday | 8/29/18 | Course Overview<br><br>Preparation: Complete the Qualtrics form to describe your background, preferences for projects, etc. (data are used for the forming of project teams)<br><br>Introduction:<br>• Course overview<br>• Useful frameworks, concepts and resources<br>• Logistics and expectations<br>• How to conduct a consulting project<br><br>**Readings**: |
| | Monday | 9/3/18 | *No Class. Have a safe and happy Labor Day!* |
| Forming of project teams | Wednesday | 9/5/18 | Discussions of projects, and assignments of students to project teams |
| Project Kick-Off | Monday | 9/10/18 | Each project team meets with the professor and project client for the kick-off meeting (time TBD)<br><br>Schedule times for the two update presentations and final presentation with the professor and client as soon as possible |
| | Wednesday | 9/12/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| Guest speaker | Monday | 9/17/18 | **Guest Lecturer: TBD** |
| | Wednesday | 9/19/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| <mark>Retail in General</mark> | Monday | 9/24/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects |
| | Wednesday | 9/26/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| <mark>Project Management</mark> | Monday | 10/1/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects |
| | Wednesday | 10/3/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| | | | *Fall Break Oct 4-7* |
| <mark>Consumers</mark> | Monday | 10/8/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects<br>**Due: Slides for update presentation 1** |
| Update Presentation #1 | Wednesday | 10/10/18 | **Project update presentation 1**: Each project team meets with the professor and client for an update presentation (time TBD) |
| <mark>Technology in Retail</mark> | Monday | 10/15/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects |
| | Wednesday | 10/17/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| Guest speaker (or) <mark>Luxury</mark> | Monday | 10/22/18 | **Guest Lecturer: TBD** |
| | Wednesday | 10/24/18 | Team meetings with Ellie Goodman |
| Guest speaker | Monday | 10/29/18 | **Guest Lecturer: TBD** |
| | Wednesday | 10/31/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman<br>**Due: Slides for update presentation 2** |
| Update Presentation #2 | Monday | 11/5/18 | **Project update presentation 2**: Each project team meets with the professor and client for an update presentation (time TBD) |

7/23/18

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| | Wednesday | 11/7/18 | Team meetings with Ellie Goodman |
| Innovation | Monday | 11/12/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects |
| | Wednesday | 11/14/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| Guest speaker | Monday | 11/19/18 | **Guest Lecturer: TBD** |
| | Wednesday | 11/21/18 | *No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!* |
| Omnichannel | Monday | 11/26/18 | Discussion on content relevant to projects |
| | Wednesday | 11/28/18 | Team meetings with Prof. Robertson and Ellie Goodman |
| | Monday | 12/3/18 | **Due:** Final project documentations (slides; executive brief) |
| Final Project Presentations | Wednesday | 12/5/18 | **Final project presentation**: Each project team meets with the professor and client for the final presentation (time to be scheduled by each team for some time between Dec 5-10) |
| Final Project Presentations | Monday | 12/10/18 | **Final project presentation**: Each project team meets with the professor and client for the final presentation (time to be scheduled by each team for some time between Dec 5-Dec 10) |

## Potentially Relevant Readings

**Retail in General**

1. Fisher, Marshall and Ananth Raman (2010), *The New Science of Retailing*, Harvard Business Press
2. Kahn, Barbara (2018). *The Shopping Revolution.* Wharton Digital Press.
3. Howard, Charlotte (2017), "The New Bazaar," *The Economist*, Special Report, October 26.
4. Dart, Michael and Robin Lewis (2017), *Retail's Seismic Shift*, St. Martin's Press.

**Project Management**

1. Lock, Dennis (2013), *Naked Project Management: The Bare Facts*, Taylor and Francis
2. Kendrick, Tom (2004), *Project Management Tool Kit: 100 Tips and Techniques for Getting the Job Done Right,* AMACOM.
3. Marks, Tony (2012), *20:20 Project Management: How to Deliver on Time, on Budget and on Spec,* Kogan Page Limited
4. Cooke-Davies, Terry (2002), The "Real" Success Factors on Projects, *International Journal of Project Management,* Volume 20, Issue 3, April 185-190

**Consumers**

1. Fader, Pete (2011). *Customer Centricity*. Wharton Digital Press.
2. Deloitte (2017), Global Powers of Retailing 2017: The Art and Science of Customers

3. Edelman, David. C and Marc Singer (2015). "Competing on Customer Journeys," *Harvard Business Review,* November.
4. Weinswig, Deborah (2016). "Gen Z: Get ready for the most self-conscious, demanding consumer segment," Fung Global Retail & Technology, August 29.

## Technology in Retail

1. Newman, Jared (2017), <u>For Amazon, the Future of Alexa Is About the End of the Smartphone Era</u>, *Fast Company*, Nov 8
2. Porter, Michael E. and James E. Heppelmann (2014). "How smart connected products are transforming competition," *Harvard Business Review*.
3. Christensen, Clayton and Michael Overdorf (2000). "Meeting the challenge of disruptive change," *Harvard Business Review*, March-April.
4. "An interactive inventory of retail technologies," www.retail-tech.org.

## Innovation

1. Christensen, Clayton M. (2016). *The Innovators Dilemma*. Harvard Business Review Press.
2. Osterwalder, Alexander and Yves Pigneur ((2010). *Business Model Generation*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc
3. Kuester, Sabine and Thomas Robertson (2005). "Winning the take-off battle" *European Business Forum*, Winter, Issue 20. 46.

## Omnichannel

1. Bell, David R., Santiago Gallino, and Antonio Moreno (2014), <u>How to Win in an Omnichannel World</u>, *MIT Sloan Management Review,* Sept 16
2. Robertson, Thomas S., Gatignon, Hubert, and Ludovica Cesareo (2017), Pop-Ups, Buzz, Ephemerality and Consumer Experience: Research Propositions, Working Paper.

## Luxury

1. Kapferer, Jean-Noel, and Vincent Bastien (2012). "Anti-laws of marketing," *The Luxury Strategy.*

Tapscott, Don and Alex Tapscott (2016). *Blockchain Revolution*: New York: Portfolio Penguin ??

7/23/18

**Appendix A: Project Sponsor Evaluation Form**

This short survey provides us with valuable feedback on the student team. Please select a number to rate our team's performance on a scale from **5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).** We thank you for your input.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The student team developed a good understanding of our business and needs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. The scope of the project and deliverables were clearly communicated. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. The team members were responsive and accessible. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. The students exhibited the industry knowledge, technical competencies, and consulting skills to fulfill the project responsibilities. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. The students demonstrated professionalism in their behavior, attitude, and appearance. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. The student team kept us informed of progress and (if applicable) any changes with project scope and deliverables. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. The student team provided us with deliverables that met or exceeded our expectations. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. The student team presented their deliverables in an effective manner. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. Overall, we were very satisfied with the performance of the team. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. I would recommend the use of a Wharton -Baker Center Team to other organizations. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Additional Comments:

**Appendix B: Peer Feedback Form**

Your name: _____

Your role: _____

Please provide a reason for your choice in the expectation box you select for each member – including for yourself.

| ROLE | 1. BELOW YOUR EXPECTATIONS | 3. MET YOUR EXPECTATIONS | 5. EXCEEDED YOUR EXPECTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| LEADER | | | |
| SCRIBE | | | |
| LIAISON | | | |
| ANALYST | | | |
| OTHER | | | |