

MBA K724 – eBusiness Strategies

Fall 2023 Course Outline

DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course will prepare students to become effective managers and strategists in the area of eBusiness. We will focus on the various elements of eBusiness strategy including identifying and evaluating market opportunities, exploring the various business models that are being used in the networked economy, and gaining an understanding of the guiding principles behind the design and strategy of successful customer interfaces. We will examine strategies for both small and large enterprises.

Much consideration will be given to the area of mobile commerce strategy. The course will also explore issues related to branding in an eBusiness environment as well as exposing students to issues related to effectively implementing online strategies and how to use metrics to assess the health of an eBusiness. Learning in this course is accomplished through a combination of online lectures, case analysis and a student term project.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Monday 7:00 – 10:00pm

Dr. Scott Paquette

Instructor

paquets@mcmaster.ca

Classroom - **RJC 236**

Online Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: Yes	Global view: Yes
Avenue: Yes	Ethics: No	Numeracy: Yes	Written skills: Yes
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: No	Final Exam: No	Guest speaker(s): No

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Classes will utilize a mix of lecture, discussion, exploration, and cases. eBusiness is becoming ubiquitous with business, and we will explore how businesses are adapting and adopting eBusiness strategies to create a better customer experience. The strategy, design and operations of eBusinesses will be examined, whether B2B or B2C. The materials used in the course encompass a wide range of industries, business and issues in order to provide the greatest depth and breadth of experience.

Since the course A2L space is central to our online learning and communication, it is expected that students will check the course space for any news, updates or announcements on a daily basis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Have a fundamental understanding of the environment and strategy of the networked economy and eBusiness in both the B2C and B2B sectors
 - Evaluate and apply the various types of eBusiness models, including mobile commerce models
 - Understand the guiding principles behind the design and strategy of successful customer interfaces and experiences
 - Gain an understanding into the communication, marketing and branding tools for eBusiness
 - Understand the types of metrics that eBusiness firms should use to measure performance, customer experience and financial results
 - Gain an understanding of various public policy issues within which eBusinesses are operating today such as legal issues and consumer privacy
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REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials

➤ <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

\$ FREE

EVALUATION

Learning in this online course results from both individual and group projects. Please note, group members will share the same grade adjusted by peer evaluation. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

Assignment 1 (week 4)	eBusiness Case Report (individual)	25%
Assignment 2 (week 8)	eBusiness Strategic Evaluation Report (group)	20%
Assignment 3 (week 12)	eBusiness Strategy Project (group)	30%
Weekly Online Participation	Online and in class contribution	25%
Total		100%

Individual assignments = 50%, Group Assignments = 50%

Assignment #1 – eBusiness Case Report

This assignment is worth **25%** of your final grade and will be marked individually. You will be given a case study on an eBusiness organization / problem to read and analyze. In a report (7 pages, double spaced, plus appendices) you will present an analysis of the problem considering both internal and external factors, a list of alternatives the organization should consider with an evaluation of each alternative, a recommendation of which alternative (one and only one) they should implement, and the implementation plan (what is to be done, when, by whom, and estimated costs).

The completed assignment is to be emailed to the instructor before the class in week 4 in either Word or PDF format. Please name your assignment (your name) 724 assignment 1.docx (or .pdf depending on the format). Don't forget to have a title page in the document (not counted in the page limit) with your name.

Assignment #2 – Business Strategic Evaluation Report (group)

This assignment is worth **20%** of your final grade and one report submitted by the group will be graded. Find an eBusiness (i.e. website or mobile app) that is familiar to your group, and using the ICDT model introduced in week two of the course, create a report that analyzes the business model and presents recommendations for improvement. The business can be a mobile app (shopping, gaming, etc.), a website or a larger business that's central strategy is built on eBusiness. It is **HIGHLY** recommended your group email the instructor with their choice of organization by week 4 to ensure the organization you chose is suitable for the assignment.

This report should consist of an introduction to the business (be VERY brief), a description of the ICDT model and how it is used in your analysis, an analysis of the four virtual spaces (information, communication, transaction, distribution), and a summary consisting of recommendations for improvement for each of the spaces. The report should not exceed 12 pages, double-spaced, plus appendices. Ensure the report has a title page listing all the group members who contributed to the assignment. The report should be emailed to the instructor before the week 8 class in either Word or PDF format.

Assignment #3 – eBusiness Strategy Project (group)

This assignment is worth **30%** of your final grade and one report submitted by the group will be graded. For this assignment, your group will create an online business and it's eBusiness strategy. Through this course we look at models for creating an online business, and this assignment allows you to put this new knowledge into practice. You can choose to create an online business model for an existing business or start a new business from scratch. In the report you will describe the eBusiness, your target customers, product, main channel to reach your customers, distribution strategy, marketing strategy, and anything else that describes how your business will operate. You will also create a rough design (non-operational) to illustrate what your online (or mobile) presence will look like. As well, your group will do an online presentation to the class during one of the last two weeks of the class.

Your report should have the following sections:

1. Title page with all group members' names
2. Executive summary
3. Introduction to the business – brief overview
4. Business model – how does the business operate, and how does it make money?
5. Design of business – include rough designs of what the website or app would look like – they don't need to be operational or fancy (even sketches are fine), but should convey what the customer / user would see – your group should use design thinking to create these
6. Payments – how does money flow to and from the business
7. Marketing plan
8. Metrics – how you measure the performance of the business
9. Any other information your group feels is important

The report should be 20 pages or less, double spaced, plus appendices in either Word or PDF format. It is to be emailed to your instructor before the start of class 11.

As well, your group will present the business plan in an online forum. Slides must be sent ahead of time to the instructor. The presentation is worth 5% of the 30% allocated to this assignment.

Participation

For the weeks we meet in person in a classroom on campus, participation will be recorded based on your attendance in the class and your contribution to the class discussions.

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage.

This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.
For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Where students miss a regularly scheduled mid-term or class participation for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office, the weight for that test/participation will be distributed across other evaluative components of the course at the discretion of the instructor. Documentation explaining such an absence must be provided to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within five (5) working days upon returning to school.

To document absences for health related reasons, please provide to Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate which can be found on the DeGroote website at <http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-applications/>. Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form as this is for Undergraduate students only. University policy states

that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) medical certificates per year after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

To document absences for reasons other than health related, please provide Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and documentation supporting the reason for the absence.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA K724 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your**

responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

Communication and Feedback

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Method of Delivery	Deliverables
<i>Part I: eBusiness Strategy Overview</i>				
1	Sept 11	Course Overview Introduction to eBusiness & Strategy	In Class	
2	Sept 18	eBusiness Models and Frameworks	In Class	
3	Sept 25	Mobile Commerce	In Class	
4	Oct 2	Mobile Commerce Part 2	Online Asynchronous	Assignment #1 – eBusiness Case report Email with choice of eBusiness for Assignment #2.
<i>Part II: Designing the Online Customer Experience</i>				
5	Oct 16	The Science of Shopping (Digitally)	In Class	
6	Oct 23	Design of eBusiness – A Human Centric Approach	In Class	
7	Oct 30	Web Usability and the Online Customer Interface / Experience	In Class	
<i>Part III: Building Online Commerce Strategies</i>				
8	Nov 6	eBusiness Metrics and Performance	Online Asynchronous	Assignment #2 – eBusiness Evaluation Report
9	Nov 13	e-Marketing – Communications and Branding – Social Media	In Class	
10	Nov 20	Payment and Security Supply Chain Strategies	Online Asynchronous	
11	Nov 28	Project Presentations	In Class	Assignment #3 – eBusiness Strategy Plan Report

12	Dec 5	Project Presentations Course Wrap Up	In Class	
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This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.

CLASS READING LIST

Week 2 – eBusiness Models and Frameworks

Read - <https://skywell.software/blog/types-of-ecommerce-business-models/>
Read - <https://www.ecommerceceo.com/types-of-ecommerce-business-models/>

Week 3 – Mobile Commerce

Read - https://squareup.com/ca/en/townsquare/what-is-mobile-commerce?country_redirection=true
Read - <https://www.simicart.com/blog/mobile-commerce-guide/>

Week 4 – Mobile Commerce Part 2

Read - <https://buildfire.com/mobile-commerce-trends/>

Week 5 – The Science of Shopping

Read - <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=98184836>
Read - <https://www.theukdomain.uk/understanding-psychology-online-shopping/>
Read - <https://www.cbc.ca/life/work-money/the-psychology-of-sale-shopping-how-to-spot-and-avoid-the-tricks-used-to-get-you-spending-1.5418136>

Week 6 – Design of eBusiness – a Human Centric Approach

Read - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2019/12/12/the-secret-to-a-successful-e-commerce-app-design-thinking/#39918fb93662>
Read - <https://uxplanet.org/ux-design-for-e-commerce-principles-and-strategies-9df7d81e59d8>
Take a look at the many resources found here - <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/>

Week 7 – Web Usability and the Online Customer Interface / Experience

- Read - <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/10/15-common-mistakes-in-e-commerce-design-and-how-to-avoid-them/>
- Read - <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/best-ecommerce-website-design/#best-overall-ecommerce-website-design>
- Read - <https://speckyboy.com/mobile-commerce-design/>
- Read - <https://www.toptal.com/designers/ux/ecommerce-ux-mobile-experience>

Week 8 – Payment, Security, Supply Chain

- Read - <https://extension.psu.edu/e-commerce-payment-methods>
- Read - <https://www.loop54.com/blog/top-5-security-threats-facing-e-commerce-today>
- Read - <https://www.fcbco.com/blog/bid/156247/10-supply-chain-strategies-for-ecommerce-businesses>

Week 9 – e-Marketing

- Read - <https://www.visiture.com/blog/use-social-media-marketing-ecommerce/>
- Read - <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-ecommerce/>

Week 10 – eBusiness Metrics

- Read - <https://www.shopify.ca/blog/basic-ecommerce-metrics>