Brand and Communications Management (BCM)

Purpose and academic profile

The purpose of the BCM-concentration is to expose students through the different phases of branding and understanding its implications for companies, including analysing, applying, assessing this knowledge both theoretically and practically. Broadly speaking, students gain knowledge of the general principles and theories of strategic brand management and marketing and corporate communications. This is done thru exposure to neurological, socio-cultural, psychological, and traditional brand models/theories/methods related to the brand management area. Via hands-on projects, cases, simulation, and advanced project work students will get the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding to branding and communication challenges. This will bring the students to a deeper, yet also more holistic understanding of what is demanded of a brand to be optimally positioned and communicated. All in all, the aim is to provide the BCM-students with the necessary competencies to become professional brand team managers or key account managers.

The competency goals for BCM-graduates can be divided into 3 sub-goals: 1) intellectual competency goals, 2) professional/academic competency goals and 3) practical competency goals:

Ad 1) Intellectual competency goals:

- Ability to think strategically, using analytical skills to transform strategies into concrete actions.
- Ability to analyse complex problems by using both qualitative and quantitative analytical tools and decision support systems within the brand management and marketing communication disciplines.
- Ability to apply information and knowledge to support brand and communication decisions.
- Ability to identify and apply relevant qualitative and quantitative methods to address and solve brand challenges.
- Ability to think through the whole Brand Value Chain process, thru a holistic (i.e., multiple stakeholder, touch points) integration of relevant concepts and competencies gained through the course work.
- Ability to participate and be involved as an individual as well as collaborate in teams.
- Ability to communicate clearly and convincingly with both professionals and people with no special knowledge of marketing.

Ad 2) Professional/academic competency goals:

Based on the knowledge gained, the goal is to provide the BCM-graduates with the knowledge, understanding and ability to apply different marketing-related theories and methods, specifically theories within Strategic Brand Management, Corporate and Marketing Communications, and Brand Governance and Performance Reporting.

A BCM-graduate should be capable of exploring, analysing, and understanding consumers’ conscious, subconscious, and neurological mindset, know how to build and sustain meaningful brand equity, measure brand equity and value, manage brand value and develop and use marketing communications that contribute to building strong brands, both at strategic and tactical levels. Finally, the
graduate will also gain an understanding of the complex relationship that exists between an organisation’s internal and external communications and the relation to the corporate brand. These skills will be practised through:

- Cases, academic articles, and textbooks.
- Applied work in groups
- Brand simulation game
- Industry presentations
- An advanced project course

Ad 3) Practical competency goals:

Using her/his strategic, analytical and quantitative competencies, a BCM-graduate will understand how to build and manage brands with the aim of improving brand equity for the company. At a tactical level, the BCM-graduate will be able to identify initiatives that optimize the positioning of a brand, which would enhance its equity communication initiatives. The BCM-graduate will also be able to develop a marketing plan, including evaluating 5 x Cs, SWOT, develop strategic positioning, and implement tactical decisions. These skills will be practised through:

- A brand simulation game
- Field work
- An advanced project course

Based on the above-mentioned competencies, the BCM-graduate will be able to fill specialist positions within the areas of Brand Management and Key Account Management.

(2) These competencies are achieved through a variety of activities that include exposure to:

- The latest theories, methods and analytical tools within strategic brand management and marketing and corporate communication.
- Different brand strategies, integrated marketing communications plans, creative advertising strategies and advertising plans and their application.
- Methods of searching for and analysing information and knowledge for the use of the company’s brand and communication strategies and decisions.
- Financial controlling, coordination and evaluation of brand activities.

The building of brand portfolios, measuring brand equity, managing and communicating brand meaning are not only a strategy employed by Fast-Moving Consumer Goods companies; these activities are increasingly being applied by companies in such different sectors as the service, the retailing, the industrial manufacturing, and the telecom and IT industries, and also in many areas of the government-to-consumer sector. In short, branding is no longer only a business-to-consumer matter but is also relevant within business-to-business, government-to-business and government-to-consumer, and consumer-to-consumer interactions.

With its emphasis on analytical and strategic concepts, frameworks and models, the concentration offers a management-oriented approach to the building and managing of brands in a contemporary competitive environment. Upon graduation, the students will be well-prepared become assistant brand or communication manager in marketing companies, in consulting agencies, advertising agencies, market research companies, branding consultancies, NGOs, governmental agencies, and business consulting...
companies. In more concrete terms, the concentration aims at qualifying the graduates to fill positions with a management and/or specialist perspective, e.g. as:

- Brand managers and brand team managers in companies and organisations.
- Key account managers or similar functions in branded goods companies on the B-to-C or B-to-B markets.
- Communication specialists within brand management, key account management and similar functions in branded goods companies as well as consultancy agencies.
- Analysts and advisors in consultancy agencies, marketing research companies, media companies, advertising agencies, media agencies, NGOs, Government agencies, as well as in companies’ internal consultancy departments with similar functions.

Due to the concentration’s strong managerial and international approach graduates will be able to focus their career paths so they relatively quickly lead to more senior and international management positions.