The Business Research Guide (BRG)

Connect to business resources from off campus by following the directions in the Students link, available in the Connect Boxes listed throughout the Guide.

Assignment

Carefully define an industry and pick two companies in it, in comparable categories. If you pick two large companies, such as IBM and HP, carefully constrain the product class, e.g. laptops, so as to avoid a mega-corporation analysis. Compare the two companies one which is doing well, and one which is not doing as well.

(a) Analyze and compare these two businesses with regard to their marketing practices. In particular, focus on the analysis of marketing issues (e.g., customer, competitor, industry, technology, government, self, product (features), pricing, distribution (incl. sales force), advertising, sales promotion analyses), important in explaining the performance differences. Non-marketing reasons should be briefly mentioned. Clearly outline your assumptions and thought processes.

(b) Suggest actions and strategies (on each issue), which you feel would enable the weaker and stronger company to improve its market position. Clearly outline your assumptions and thinking.

Sample

**Tiffany & Co:** Market Cap 12,205 M * Gross Margin: 58%

**Signet Jewelers** (esp. Jared, the Galleria of Jewelry): Market Cap 2,232 M * Gross Margin: 40%

Key Resources

BRG > COMPANY > Overviews

MarketLine and Passport both have SWOT analyses.

BRG > COMPANY > Public Companies

S&P NetAdvantage is excellent for comparing financials of public companies.

BRG > COMPANY > Strategy

Mergent Online is excellent for searching SEC filings of public companies.

Factiva is excellent for searching Earnings Conference Call Transcripts.
BRG > MARKETING > Brands

**Mintel** analyzes consumer behavior across major consumer product categories, and gives strategic marketing recommendations.

**Encyclopedia of Global Brands:** 270 entries on how a product originated and was first marketed, how it developed commercially and how it fares today compared with its competitors and its own past history.

BRG > MARKETING > Advertising

**Ad$ponder** allows for generating custom reports of advertising spending by company and brand.

- For student help building a report, besides asking Annette, you can also contact:
- **Ad$ponder NY Office** * 8a – pm Est * 1-800-497-8450

**Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Strategies:** 500 campaigns of the 20th century. Looks at historical context, target market, expected outcomes, competition, marketing strategy and development hurdles and the outcome of the campaign– what worked, what didn't and why.

BRG > Academic Articles

**Business Source Complete:** This giant database is like Google for business research!

Databases interpret more literally than Google, so do this:

- Start with 1-2 keywords, and add more words to refine a large list of results.
- Use “quotes” for “an exact phrase”.
- Use * for every ending to a word, e.g. market* returns market-ers, -ing, -ed, etc.

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Use this button in databases like BSC and Google Scholar. It links to the full-text article when we have it elsewhere, OR it directs you to a form to request via InterLibrary Loan.