Course Syllabus

Course Title: Management of Ecommerce Operations

Academic Year: 2024

Time: Thursdays 18:00-21:30

Instructor: Pavel Zaslavsky

E –mail: pavelz@technion.ac.il

Telephone: 054-4929272

Meeting time for students: by appointment

Number of credit points: 2

Course Goals and Description

· Understanding the different business models of online retail;

· Understanding the building blocks of the online retail site;

· Understanding the influence of UI and UX design on business performance;

· Learning various types of content and challenges in creation of thereof;

· Understanding the global and social repercussions of content management;

· Understanding the underlying operations behind the online retail;

· Learning the mechanics of user traffic, performance criteria and influence on them;

· Analyzing online retail related marketing and buyer acquisition strategies;

· Understand user conversion funnel and stages;

· Understanding search engine ads and basic principle of ads and keywords;

· Understanding online marketplaces and their search optimization challenges;

Course Content/Topics

Online retail course covers the business models and mode of operation of online retail businesses in various segments. The basic building blocks of an online retail company are analyzed from the operational and business perspectives. The course examines significant examples of successful and less successful online retail enterprises from the last 20 years and gives an outlook onto the current and future trends of the industry.

Along with examination of global online retail, special attention is given to the geographical and cultural perspectives of online retail - customers, managerial practice and operations .These are done through insight into successful and less successful cross cultural implementations of business models.

The theoretical materials combined with practical application of knowledge during execution of the course project. The course is based on a practical and applicable knowledge accumulated from various global and local online retailers, marketplaces and shopping comparison engines. It provides the overview of the business area of online retail with an insight into the day to day challenges and seasonal fluctuations. It provides the practical knowledge in most of the aspects of online retail including marketing, operations, content management, customer support, payments in online and offline world.

The project and the following presentation will be graded based on the following criteria:
- Timely execution of all project stages
- Sound approach to content creation and insertion
- Successful implementation of user tracking
- Clarity of verbal and visual presentation of the project
- Final outcome of the activity – sale closure, selling price (bonus)

Assignments and Grading Procedures

Attendance in lectures is mandatory as the presented materials are unique. Student discussions and interaction cannot be substituted or documented.
(Maximum of **one absence** may be excused).
- Class participation 10% (individual grade)
- Online retail project – selling online 30% (individual grade)
- Final presentation of project process and outcome - 60% (team grade)
The presentations and group discussion will be done at the last session – team attendance is mandatory

Course Requirements & Course Policies

The course consists of 6 sessions presented on various aspects of ecommerce operations. Guest lecturers will be invited to some of the lectures, these will include high ranking managers of global online retail related multinationals. Business cases of successful and failing enterprise moves will be presented and examined in the class.

The course includes readings, competitive, hands on, online retail project and a final presentation of the project process and outcome (group).

For the project (groups of 3-4) the students will embark on a selling process on a major retail platform and conduct sales process in all stages from account setup, product insertion onto platform, content creation, pricing research, product pricing, communications with potential buyers, sale and payment clearance, shipping and potential follow up.

Accommodation for Students with special needs
- The course can be translated live to the special needs students
- Course recording will be uploaded on Moodle post lecture

Text book(s) and/or other materials

- Krug Steve (2014). *Don't Make Me Think. A Commonsense Approach to Web Usability (3rd Edition).* New Rides

- Schwartz Barry (2004). *The Paradox of Choice.* Harper Collins

- Hsieh Tony (2013). *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose.* Business Plus

- Liu Shiying, Avery Martha (2009). *Alibaba - The Inside Story Behind Jack Ma and the Creation of the World's Biggest Online Marketplace.* Harper Collins

- Miller, Donald (2017). *Building a StoryBrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen. HarperCollins Leadership.*

- Handley, Ann (2014). *Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide to Creating Ridiculously Good Content. Wiley.*

- Larsson, Tanner (2016). *Ecommerce Evolved: The Essential Playbook to Build, Grow & Scale a Successful Ecommerce Business.*

- Dib, Allan (2016). *The 1-Page Marketing Plan: Get New Customers, Make More Money, And Stand out From The Crowd. Successwise.*

- Walker, Jeff (2014). *Launch: An Internet Millionaire's Secret Formula to Sell Almost Anything Online, Build a Business You Love, and Live the Life of Your Dreams. Morgan James Publishing.*

- Kagan, Noah (2024). *Million Dollar Weekend: The Surprisingly Simple Way to Launch a 7-Figure Business in 48 Hours. Lioncrest Publishing.*

Academic Integrity

- The students are expected to execute their assignments as a part of the team, "hitch hiking" on the team is considered to be an academic integrity breach.
- The usage of materials – texts, images, social posts etc. created by other teams – current or past can be done only after explicit permission of the said team.
- Any inside bidding, cross team bidding or sales rigging is considered to be breach of conduct

Course Schedule

Session 1: Introduction and Basic Online retail business models – Mar 20th

Lecture

· Course overview

· Course requirements

· Basic online retail business types

· Understanding the online retail economics and conversions

· Online retail and ethics

Business case

·Shopping comparison - The life and death of a pioneer

Session 2: Website design and content – Mar 27th

Lecture

· Ecommerce site and visitor types

· Attention ratio on site

· User conversion types

· AIDA sales funnel model

· Fogg behavioral model

Guest Lecture

Meet an Industry professional: Ori Lahav – Outbrain founder and GM

Session 3: Landing pages design and performance tracking – Apr 3rd

Lecture

· Product vs Service

· Website UI basics

· Information architecture principles

· Landing pages

· Principles of persuasion

Business case

· Alibaba & Taobao – Crocodile on the Yangze river

Session 4: Marketing and sales in online retail – Apr 24th

Lecture

· Search engine principles

· How Google works

· Search engine optimization (SEO)

· Search engine marketing (SEM)

· SEM key performance indicators

Guest Lecture

Meet an Industry Professional: Dan Oron – Ex Fiverr Catalogs GM, ex Etsy, ex Ebay

Session 5: SEM and Google Ads – May 8th

Lecture

· Google ads – how does it work

· Google ads – campaign structure

· Google ads – keywords – types and usage

· Google ads – quality score and its impact

· Google ads – ad auctions

· Google ads – remarketing

Business case

· Silk road – the dark side of ecommerce

Session 6: Online marketplaces – May 15th

Lecture

· Marketplace definitions and types

· Direct commerce vs marketplace commerce

· Specific marketplaces deep dive – Amazon, Ebay, Etsy and more

· Marketplace content tactics

· Marketplace search engine optimization

Guest Lecture

Meet an Industry professional: Yuval Matalon – Ex Live person, GM. Ex Ebay Israel GM

Session 7: Online retail project presentations – May 22nd

Lecture

· Team presentations of the project – setup, process, outcome, learnings

Please note that guest appearance dates may change at a short notice. In case of lack of availability these will be replaced by case studies. The case studies may be changed in case of newer and interesting studies and events.