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Group Assignment Nr 1



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SOLEMN DECLARATION - GROUP ASSIGNMENT

Solemn declaration by students

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We hereby declare that the assignment which we herewith submit to the North-West University as partial completion of the requirements set for the MBA degree is our own work.

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1 Introduction

The NWU Business School aim to transform the way students think about business, by providing them with the essential tools through their internationally recognised MBA programme. It has three sites of delivery that are situated in Potchefstroom, Vanderbijlpark and Mahikeng. The objective of the Business School is to be innovative and quality-driven, with a strong regional anchor, while pursuing to be a strong dynamic role player in Africa and internationally.

The NWU Business School is committed to high-quality education and research, backed with expertise that conforms to international standards. This commitment is vested in the mission statement where it is stated that the Business School is committed to developing ethical and strategic thought leaders. The mission statement is built on three key pillars:

- To use innovative teaching and quality learning to develop well-versed graduates, that are empowered to serve the country and its people, the continent and the world.
- To use research of a high standard to develop innovative solutions to the challenges that face the academic community, the country, the continent and the world.
- To invite community involvement in an inclusive approach to resolve socio-economic issues to make a fundamental difference with all role-players.

This report aims to provide a holistic view of how the NWU Business School compare to the Top-5 business schools in South Africa and to develop a definitive plan to roll-out their new corporate identity and re-establish the business school's image in the market.

2 Competitor Analysis Top-5 business schools in SA

Competitor analysis can be seen as a process to evaluate competitors with regards to their products and services offered including marketing strategies (Maksimava, 2020). The importance of competitor analysis ensures that adequate information is utilized and therefore reduce the risk of making wrong business decisions. It will be valuable to know the strategy and future goals as well as assumptions about the priorities and capabilities of your competitors (Hatzijordanou, 2019).

To determine the NWU Business School's competitors, the following steps were followed (MEG, 2020):

1. Competitor identification

The first step was to identify the competitors in the South African Business School marketplace. According to Eduniversal (2019), the following Business schools were ranked above the NWU Business School in the 2019 business school analysis:

- 1) University of Cape Town – UCT Graduate School of Business
- 2) University of Stellenbosch Business School
- 3) University of Pretoria – Gordon Institute of Business Science
- 4) University of the Witwatersrand – Wits Business School
- 5) Nelson Mandela University Business School
- 6) Rhodes University – Rhodes Business School
- 7) UNISA – University of South Africa – Graduate School of Business Leadership (UNISA)
- 8) North-West University NWU Business School

The top 1,000 best business schools in the world (in 154 countries) are evaluated and ranked every year (EDUNIVERSAL, 2019). This ranking system compares business schools within 9 geographical zones – which means that a business school is not just ranked against schools within each country, but to the best schools in the world.

2. Selection of the top business schools

Both quantitative and qualitative criteria are used to select the top 1,000 business schools from the 154 countries (EDUNIVERSAL, 2019).

The quantitative criteria include:

- 1) Expenditure on education per capita
- 2) GDP per capita
- 3) Size of population
- 4) Number of students in higher education

The qualitative criteria include:

- 1) The number of graduate academic institutions in the country
- 2) The historical importance of the national educational tradition

With the qualitative and quantitative criteria taken into consideration, the schools are then dividend into five levels of excellence. This is called the “Palmes of Excellence”. The Palmes level is based on accreditations, major rankings, and memberships in academic or professional associations/partnerships. The following leagues are distinguished:

Table 1: Palmes Leagues (EDUNIVERSAL, 2019)

100 schools in the 5 palmes league		Universal Business Schools with strong global influence
200 schools in the 4 palmes league		Top Business Schools with significant international influence
400 schools in the 3 palmes league		Excellent Business Schools with reinforcing international influence
200 schools in the 2 palmes league		Good Business Schools with strong regional influence
100 schools in the 1 palm league		Business Schools with considerable local influence

The business schools within each Palme level is then rated. This rating is based on peer assessment done by a vote from the Deans of other business schools. This is seen as recognition by the peers.

Based on the above, the results for the 2019 evaluation were as follow:

Table 2: Evaluation Results (EDUNIVERSAL, 2019)

 5 PALMES OF EXCELLENCE - UNIVERSAL BUSINESS SCHOOL WITH STRONG GLOBAL INFLUENCE	RANK BY PALMES LEAGUE	DEAN'S RECOMMENDATION RATE 2019
University of Cape Town - UCT Graduate School of Business	1	310 %
University of Stellenbosch Business School	1	310 %

 4 PALMES OF EXCELLENCE - TOP BUSINESS SCHOOL WITH SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE	RANK BY PALMES LEAGUE	DEAN'S RECOMMENDATION RATE 2019
University Of Pretoria - Gordon Institute Of Business Science	1	227 %
University of the Witwatersrand - Wits Business School	2	158 %

 3 PALMES OF EXCELLENCE - EXCELLENT BUSINESS SCHOOL WITH REINFORCING INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE	RANK BY PALMES LEAGUE	DEAN'S RECOMMENDATION RATE 2019
Nelson Mandela University Business School	1	123 %
Rhodes University - Rhodes Business School	1	123 %
UNISA - University of South Africa - Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL)	3	113 %
North-West University NWU Business School	4	94 %

The NWU Business School, according to Eduniversal (2019), is ranked eighth in South Africa, setting it on a Palmes League level 4 and with a Dean's recommendation rating score of 94% - which is much lower compared to the top 5 business schools in South Africa, like UCT, Stellenbosch, Gibbs, Wits and that of Nelson Mandela University.

Also taking into consideration is the opinion of graduates, Table 3 illustrates how graduates rated their own business schools on different divisions within the MBA course.

Table 3: Personal preferences of graduates rating their own business schools (Top Three).

Division	Rank		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Strategy	Henley	Wits	Nelson Mandela
Leadership	Nelson Mandela	Stellenbosch	Henley
Operations	Henley	North West	Gibs
Finance	Free State	Gibs	Henley
Marketing	Nelson Mandela	Henley	North West
Entrepreneurship	North West	Nelson Mandela	Regenesys
People management	Nelson Mandela	Henley	Regenesys
Ethics & governance	Regenesys	Milpark	Unisa
Information technology	Regenesys	Stellenboch	Mancosa

From Table 3, NWU features in three out of the nine divisions such as marketing, operations, and entrepreneurship. The top 5 business schools identified earlier makes their appearance on table 3 but not in a way that one would expect. Graduates of the MBA course at the University of Cape Town which is deemed to be the top business school in South Africa does not feature in table 3 above. This indicates that although NWU is rated at the 8th best business school in South Africa, the graduates experience the lessons learned and experienced gained more/equally valuable to those of the top 5 business schools. NWU can be seen as a competitor for the top 5 business schools based on the graduates' experience and knowledge gained.

3. Pricing comparisons

The most recent price list that could have been traced, dated back to 2017. The prices for the MBA program at the various business schools at that time can be seen in the table below:

Table 4: Cost of MBA per Business School (Writer, 2017)

#	Business School	Cost of MBA
1	Henley Business School	R249 500
2	Milpark Business School	R226 530
3	Stellenbosch Business School	R225 950
4	Wits Business School	R221 000
5	Regenesys Business School	R218 700
6	Gordon Institute of Business Science	R214 000
7	University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business	R210 000
8	North-West School of Business & Governance	R148 690
9	University of the Free State Business School	R125 660
10	Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, University of Limpopo	R107 657
11	Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership	R93 285
12	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Business School in Port Elizabeth	R92 840
13	Management College of Southern Africa	R92 450
14	Tshwane University of Technology Business School	R85 000
15	Regent Business School	R71 200

When one compares the cost of an MBA degree at NWU business school with the top 5 business schools in South Africa, it is illustrated in table 4 that NWU is priced at a very competitive price in comparison to the top 5 business schools. Nelson Mandela University is the only university within the top 5 that has a lower tuition fee than that of NWU and is thus the only University that competes with NWU in providing an MBA degree at a lower cost.

4. Service/product delivery

Currently, due to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations, all business schools make use of online learning. Under normal circumstances, some schools have block released, requiring students to attend class once a month for a period of a week, while others have classes every second week. UNISA make use of only online distance learning with no class contact sessions.

Considering the four criteria analysis above, it is clear that the NWU Business School is not currently amongst the top 5 business schools in South Africa, but with the current competitive pricing, value-adding perception of graduates and a relatively good Palms rating trading only 29% on the deans' recommendation rating from the top 5 South African business schools, NWU business school had an opportunity to be re-established within the top five business schools in South Africa.

3 Developing an advertising tagline

Taglines, or also known as slogans, should become ingrained in the consumer's mind, in that, when the consumer hears or sees the tagline, he/she immediately conjure up images associated with that product. In order to create a tagline that sticks, the following secrets/rules can be followed (C. Lamb, 2020):

1. Keep it simple – keep it short, simple, and straight to the point
2. Avoid the marketing meeting effect – ensure the tagline is hitting the target and not just another sentence just because there is a need for it.
3. Tell a story – try to make an emotional connection.
4. Explain your offering – the functionality of the product should be apparent.
5. Communicate with clarity – do not confuse the customer
6. Describe who you are – try to capture the business in totality, in a few words
7. Require a double-take – the ideal is to have a slogan that also has a hidden message, without confusing the customer
8. Keep it sort and simple – say the most, with as little words possible.

9. Say just enough – try not to overdo it.
10. Be scenario-driven – focus on the product at hand and not too broad.

An effective tagline also creates a link between the product and the logo of the company.

With the above kept in mind, the following tagline is suggested:



NWU Business School – “Hands-on business education for Africa”

This tagline and logo link nicely with each other as the “fingerprint” motive show the “hands-on” approach of the business school. Further, the “Africa” in the tagline is visualised by the “African fingerprint”.

4 Degree of differentiation and Unique Selling Proposition

The differentiation evaluation was done evaluating the different business schools on the following grounds:

- Accreditations:
 - AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)
 - AMBA (Association of MBA's)
 - EQUIS (EMFD Quality Improvement System)
 - EMFD (European Foundation for Management Development)
 - ABIS (Academy of Business in Society)
 - AABS (Association of African Business Schools)
 - SABSA (South African Business Schools)
- Eduniversal Rankings for 2019
- The World University Rankings for 2020

- Pricing

The table below was created to show all the differentiation criteria at once (GIBS, 2020; GSB, 2020; NMBU, 2020; NWU, 2020; Rhodes-University, 2020; UNISA, 2020; USB, 2020; WITS, 2020; WUR, 2020).

Table 5: Differentiation of top SA Business Schools

Item Evaluated	UCT	Stellenbosch	Gibs	Wits	NMB	Rhodes	UNISA	NWU
AACSB accredited	YES	YES	YES					
AMBA-accredited	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
EQUIS accredited	YES	YES					YES	
ABIS accredited			YES					
AABS accredited	YES		YES	YES	YES		YES	YES
SABSA accredited	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Count of accreditations	5	4	5	3	3	2	4	3
Eduniversal Top 100	YES	YES			YES			
The world university rankings 2020	136 th	251 - 300	601 - 800	194 th	Not ranked	Not ranked	1000 th +	501 - 600
Pricing (as per 2017)	R210k	R226k	R214k	R221k	R93k	Not available	R93k	R149k

Most business schools try to differentiate themselves from the rest by boasting about their accreditation status. Most business schools are accredited by at least three to five accredited bodies. Only one business school in South Africa is only accredited by two accreditation body.

Differentiation is also done on the different ranking systems, of which there is quite a few. The two ranking systems that stood out during the investigation was the Eduniversal Top 100 ranking system and The World University Ranking System. There are three South African universities in the Eduniversal Top 100 and the best rank on The World University Ranking System was a 136th place in the world.

The costs for an MBA (based on 2017 prices) ranges from ±R93,000 to ±R226,000, which is quite a significant difference. One can argue that the universities with a higher number of accreditations and higher rankings should be expected to have higher fees, as this is mostly the case as illustrated by Table 5 above..

With 4 accreditations, a top 100 Eduniversal ranking and a 136th ranking by The *Times* University Ranking System, the UCT Business School is deservedly ranked number one in South Africa.

The unique selling proposition (USP) for the business schools, is mainly based on their accreditation achievements, ranking positions and level of alumni involvement.

5 USP for NWU Business School

A USP can be seen as an exclusive, desirable and believable advertising appeal, which is selected as the theme for a marketing campaign; something that the customer can say “What is in it for me?” (C. Lamb, 2020).

Based on the differentiation done in question 3 above, the following can be seen as a USP for the NWU Business School: Cost vs Ranking vs Accreditation is well balanced. Another unique attribute of the NUW Business School is the delivery of

classes on three campuses at different time slots, which can accommodate more students, as the time fit them.

An important factor of a business school's USP is the perceived value of the degree obtained. If the perceived value is high, then the students and business school alumni are more likely to proactively promote the business school. Brand-imaging is playing a crucial role in this, as schools who neglect this, are the schools who are found less appealing for prospect students (Kavuri *et al.*, 2019).

According to Kavuri *et al.* (2019), the brand image formed by the alumni's conduct and the university ranking, are playing the most important roles for a business school's USP and the perceived standard.

For the NWU Business School to create a USP, it is recommended that more focus must be put on the alumni and the ranking of the school. None of these will be achieved overnight but will take time to build and maintain.

6 Market Segments for the new corporate identity

As defined by Lamb *et al.* (2020), a market segment is "A subgroup of people or organizations sharing one or more characteristics that cause them to have similar product needs".

The characteristics of people that undertake an MBA degree, are: they would like to improve their education, seek career advancement, improve promotion opportunities and increase their financial position.

With that said, it is recommended that the NWU Business School focus on the following market segments:

1. Postgraduate students
2. Private Banking customers – all South African banks
3. Professional associations
 - Accountant associations (numerous different ones)
 - Law associations (numerous different ones)
 - Business advisors' associations (numerous different ones)

- Engineering associations (numerous different ones)
- Medical associations (numerous different ones)
- Scientific associations (numerous different ones)

7 Roll-out plan for the new corporate identity

As established from the above, the two main focus areas should be the alumni and the business school's ranking.

Business school ranking is to a large degree driven by the factors listed in point number 1 above. Multiple accreditations play a significant roll in this ranking and therefore requires improved focus.

The alumni are the ambassadors of the image of the business school. It is thus important to instil a positive image and pride in the eyes and hearts of the alumni that will be visible and demonstrated in their daily business interactions. A positive image is consciously developed over time but can very quickly be deteriorated through bad publicity and experiences, during study or thereafter. The conduct of the business school personnel towards the students and alumni thus play a crucial role in this.

Table 6: Roll-out plan for new corporate identity

Items	Priority	Who is responsible	Timeline	Cost to the business school
Obtain AACSB accreditation	HIGH	Business School Management	January - December 2020	±\$34,950 = ±R604,635
Obtain EQUIS accreditation	Too expensive	Business School Management	January - December 2020	±€55,200 = ±R1,127,184
Obtain ABIS accreditation	HIGH	Business School Management	January - December 2020	±€8,500 = ±R173,230

Promotional sponsorship association golf days	MEDIUM	Business School Management	From January 2020 onwards	10 x R10,000 = R100,000
Promotional material given to Private banking customers	HIGH	Business School Management	From January 2020 onwards	1,000 x R50 = R50,000
Promotional material given to Postgraduate students	LOW	Business School Management	From January 2020 onwards	500 x R50 = R50,000
Promotional material given to alumni members	HIGH	Business School Management	From January 2020 onwards	2,100 x R195 = R409,500
Rebranding on documentation	HIGH	Business School Management	December 2019	R10,000
Rebranding on boards and signs	HIGH	Business School Management	December 2019	R100,000
Total Spend				R1,497,365

8 Conclusion

There is an opportunity for the NWU Business school to improve its corporate image nationally and internationally. By enrolling in more business school accreditation programs and uplifting the alumni ambassadorship this will be a rewarding process. The re-connection with the alumni will play a significant role in

the process. This does not necessarily have to cost money, as keeping in touch with alumni via email and social media can be done at a minimal cost.

The alumni need to be made proud of where they studied in order for them to actively promote the business school. This process starts before the student are enrolled for the course. From the first correspondence to the classes, to the communication from lecturers to the students, to reaction time on emails and even WhatsApp, all need to be included and all need to send the message that this business school, means business.

The MBA program is an elite course. This status should be treasured and should not be “watered-down”. There are certain minimum criteria set for selection, like minimum years in a managerial role, qualifications, and work experience. These should not be neglected in the selection process in order to keep the MBA program as elite as it should be.

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