

The Social Media Battle of the Younger Generation Snapchat vs. Facebook

TEACHING NOTES

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

Teaching Notes

Teaching plan

This corporate brand management and reputation case will in the following chapter present a comprehensive teaching plan to create the best conditions for a successful teaching process. The aim is to provide the case instructor with relevant background information of the case and applicable theory that will excel the case discussion to a higher level. Furthermore, this teaching plan offers guidelines on how to plan, organise and execute the case to reach a good flow throughout the discussion and to help students arrive at a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes. The teaching plan begins with a case synopsis that briefly presents the case, followed by the learning objectives, assisting questions to guide the discussion forward, teaching suggestions and finally a recommended time and board plan.

Case synopsis

Part 1 - To sell or not to sell

In 2013, the social media platform Snapchat received an offer from Facebook Inc. to purchase the company for \$3 billion. At this time, the up and coming app Snapchat saw a big increase in their user base and positive signs of becoming the emerging leader in the younger generation of social media users. Facebook, on the other hand, had realised a negative trend and struggled with the younger consumers. The founders of Snapchat, Spiegel and Murphy, needs to face the decision whether to sell or not to sell the company to Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook. The fact that Snapchat does not generate any profit at the time complicates the decision. However, the brand and user-base alone were believed to be worth much more than the offer. Further, Snapchat were currently only present in North America and had a big potential for an international expansion. Thus, if making the decision not to sell, what would be the next move for Snapchat to be able to deal with the rising competition and to stay relevant?

Part 2 - The decision & Competitors Move

Spiegel and Brown realised their business potential and decided not to sell Snapchat. Spiegel commented the situation with "There are very few people in the world who get to build a business like this, I think trading that for some short-term gain isn't very interesting". Snapchat keeps growing and invests in developing their app to strengthen the brand position as the cool innovator, when three years later Instagram, owned by Facebook, launches "Instagram Stories", which is almost a replication of Snapchat's "My Story" feature. In combination with releasing other similar features as Snapchat, it is evident that Facebook uses Instagram as their platform to compete with Snapchat. According to a survey among Wishbone users, 25% believed their friends would change to use "Instagram Stories" instead of Snapchat's "My Story". Further, in 2016, Snapchat's increase of 15 million new users per quarter suddenly dropped to only 5 million in the fourth quarter. Hence, competition is catching up, and Snapchat needs to consider how they should defend their position in the market to sustain

growth. Additionally, how can they keep their value proposition relevant and differentiated from its competitors?

Learning objectives

Blue Ocean Strategy

One of the main learning objectives from the Snapchat case revolves around positioning and Blue Ocean Strategy. Blue ocean strategy implies that organisations create uncontested market space in which it operates. Instead of fighting for market share in existing markets, firms can find a competitive advantage and higher profits by creating new markets and by that make competition "irrelevant" (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). The case of Snapchat is a unique example of Blue Ocean Strategy, as it challenges some of the underlying assumptions, one of which is the time lag before imitators and competitors arise. According to Kim and Mauborgne (2005), firms crafting new Blue Oceans often have up to ten to fifteen years of uncontested market space through their first mover advantage and competitor's inflexibility to change. However, for the technology industry, as seen with Snapchat, it took Facebook less than two years to release "Poke" as a challenger app. When neither their app nor offer on Snapchat was successful, Facebook within three years copied and incorporated most main features of their competitor into both Instagram and Facebook. This shows that barriers to entry and the catch-up-time for Blue Ocean Strategy in fast-moving industries is much lower than previously expected. Although the pursuit of creating an uncontested Blue Ocean position has given Snapchat the necessary growth to obtain a valuation of \$28 billion, firms need to a greater extent reflect upon how to protect their Blue Oceans. According to Kim and Mauborgne (2005), protecting Blue Oceans is to drive continuous innovation and creation of new Blue Oceans through *renewal*. However, when the cost of innovation is high and the catch-up time is very short, this is less of a viable long-term alternative. As presented by Urde and Koch (2014), Blue Ocean Strategy is one out of five schools of positioning along a continuous market to brand oriented scale. The chapter never written on Blue Ocean Strategy is how to, in reality, defend the Blue Ocean, and this chapter would revolve around the importance of positioning and consequently branding.

Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix

In brand management literature, there is a distinction between product brands and corporate brands. This distinction is manifested in the language, where the former is referred to as "it" by all stakeholders, but corporate brands speak of themselves as "we" and external stakeholders talk about the brand as "they" (Urde, 2013). The component that differs is the organisation's importance as a vital part of the brand. In regards to social media platforms, such as Snapchat and Facebook, the application might be referred to as "it", but when speaking of the brand and company at large, they are very much corporate brands. Although the combination of a product brand model such as Kapferer's (2012) *Brand Identity Prism* together with core values makes a good framework, there are still vital components such as the company culture and competence missing. Especially in the case at hand, the culture is important in creating the atmosphere and nature of relationships on social media platforms. Competence is also a key component as the technology industry is heavily reliant on expertise, which explains the aggressive acquisition phase of Snapchat to secure important technologies

to differentiate the value proposition and the brand in the marketplace. The case of Snapchat and this theoretical reasoning, suggest that social media platforms should be regarded as corporate brands. This allows for management frameworks such as Urde's (2013) *Corporate Brand Identity Matrix* to be applied and extended with reputational dimensions (cf. Urde & Greyser, 2016). Reputation is important at all times, but even more so during times such as Snapchats IPO, where the interest is enormous from a multitude of stakeholders and media.

According to various researchers, brand identity and reputation are strongly interconnected and goes hand in hand with each other (Kapferer, 2012; Balmer, 2010; deChernatony, 1999). This relationship can be viewed as an internal and external perspective of the organisation, where the brand identity stands for the organisation's management and internal perceptions, while the reputation corresponds to external stakeholders' perceptions. When managing the brand identity, one answers questions such as; What do we stand for? What is our intended position? (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Reputation management considers how the organisation is perceived but also its competitive position (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The development of research within the corporate brand identity and corporate reputation literature have evolved into the *Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix* (see Figure 1), by Urde and Greyser (2016), which bridges the two concepts into one framework. The CBIRM includes nine brand identity elements where the brand core is at the center as the structural hub, combined with eight reputational elements. Further, the CBIRM has two diagonals that connect the brand identity elements and displays the relation between them; the strategy diagonal and the competition diagonal. The strategy diagonal links the organisation's vision and mission, the brand core and the position. This diagonal is of great importance as it stresses the internal view with the wanted position externally. The competition diagonal connects the organisation's competences, the brand core and the value proposition, emphasising the ability to create value compared to competitors (Urde & Greyser, 2016).

In the Snapchat case, it is important to consider both internal and external stakeholders when creating a strategy for how to move forward and defend the position. Most of the elements in the CBIRM can be affected by the threat from "Instagram Stories" and needs to be taken into consideration. Thus, it is a suitable framework to apply as it combines managing the corporate brand identity and the corporate reputation. In part 1 of the case, internal perceptions are of high importance when considering whether to sell the company or not. Here, the mission and vision need to be clear to be confident of where the company is going and why. Further, a strong company culture and confidence in the competences is crucial to distinguish what makes Snapchat better than its competitors. Furthermore, to be able to defend the position it needs to be differentiated, the value proposition should be relevant and unique to offer some added value to the consumers, and the trustworthiness of the relationship with consumers can make a difference in the competitive landscape to sustain growth.

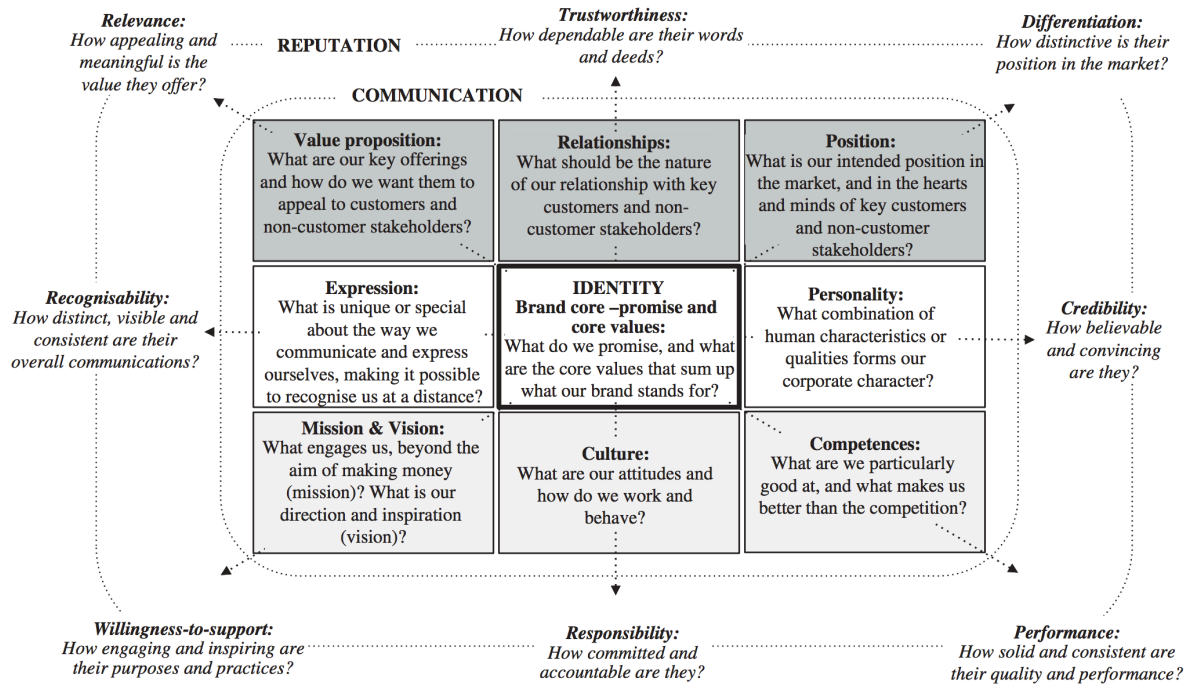


Figure 1. The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (Urde & Greyser, 2016)

Overview of key learnings

The focus of this case revolves around Blue Ocean Strategy and how organisations that have created uncontested market space can protect their position when competition arise. The technological development has accelerated the speed of imitators entering blue oceans, this devaluates the accumulated gains and put resource constraints on the innovations of Blue Oceans, if not protected through anchoring the new position. Therefore, building strong brand identities and managing a corporate brand in the correct way becomes of utmost importance. The key learnings of this case can be seen as the chapter of Blue Ocean Strategy, which was never written, how organisations should manage the positioning situation that arises. Below, in **Table A**, is an overview of the learning objectives of the Snapchat case.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES		
REMEMBERING	...the struggle between differentiation and adapting value proposition to competitor’s offerings	Here: Snapchat's "My Story" and Instagram's "Instagram Stories"
UNDERSTANDING	...the speed of change and the threat of imitators	Here: "The Art of War", understanding competitors' weak points
APPLYING	...managerial decision to defend and strengthen the position in the market	Here: Blue Ocean strategy, positioning, corporate brand management, etc.
EVALUATING	...value proposition and brand strength	Here: Use of theory - Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (Urde & Greyser, 2014)
CREATING	...an action plan for defending a blue ocean strategy when competition arises	Here: Reputational elements of Relevance and Differentiation. Innovation as Blue Ocean Strategy

Table 1. Overview of Key Learnings

Discussion questions

Managerial question Part 1

Main question: Should Snapchat sell, or refuse the offer from Facebook?

- **Why that decision?**

Note: Always ask for follow-up explanation to why students reason either way. The answer lies in how students perceive the situation and why. For example, a student wishing to sell might reason that the financial and competence strength of the competitor is superior if they go head-to-head. While another student fills in, that the brand position and the user base protects the company from customer's willingness to change social media platform. There is a clear difference between the value proposition and user-interaction between Instagram Stories and Snapchat Stories, for example, Snapchat is about being cool, fun and spontaneous while using the same feature on Instagram is more about providing a 'nice image'. As users have their different platform to complement and express their personal identity on many levels.

END WITH VOTE – How Many Prefer to Sell? And how many prefer to refuse the offer?

Managerial Questions Part 2

Main Question

- What are the issues/threats & how do we move forward to defend our position?

Assisting questions

NOTE: Suggestions to help support and guide the direction of the case discussion if needed, not necessarily use all of them

- Where and how is the threat affecting the Snapchat brand?
- How should a brand like Snapchat, that created their blue ocean in image-messaging, defend their position from larger players such as Instagram copying their functionality? (*Positioning: The chapter of blue ocean strategy that was never written*)
- What role would the brand and the relation to customers play?
- What should be Snapchats response to the threat of Instagram stories?
- Could their mission, vision and core values protect them from having their unique value proposition becoming 'an industry standard' as Facebook expressed and justified their actions.
- How should Snapchat continue, work proactive? For example, if Instagram Stories would include face recognition filters, how would the brand be affected?

- As reported, Instagram's larger customer base enables them to better capitalise on ad-revenues compared to Snapchat. Should Snapchat consider another revenue/business model to generate sustainable income?

USE WHITE BOARD FOR THIS SECTION

Teaching suggestions

Case-based education is a powerful form of education, integrating cases of real-life events of rich empirical value and connecting it to theory. This represents an interactive approach that challenges students and professors alike, to build reasoning and critical thinking as well as understanding business at large. A case represents a roleplay, where the class is taking on the role as managers or in this case the decision-making process of Snapchats CEO. It is important to point out before starting this case that the roleplay follows strict chronologic time order, as the part one of the case is taking place in 2013 and as the company is well-known, pre-existing information or knowledge of outcomes should not be part of class reasoning at this stage.

During the presentation of the case and discussion, the instructor's role is to lead participation and comments of the class. It is highly recommended to structure the collective discussion into bullet points on either white or black boards, to make the information visible for the class to be able to build on each other's comments. For this, more complex case solving processes are not recommended, but rather a simple three-step process with management "issues", "alternatives" and "actions". Issues are the internal and external aspects that need to be addressed by class as managers, for example, "Facebook's launch of Stories to Instagram". An alternative, using brand management theory is to "strengthen the brand position as the innovator and the original stories app". Connecting an action to this might be a marketing campaign promoting the concept as being created by the brand or continued innovation of features to Stories in line with the mission and vision that created Stories in the first place. Importance should be placed on the connection between one issue, where there might be one or more alternatives to approach it and a clear management action for each alternative.

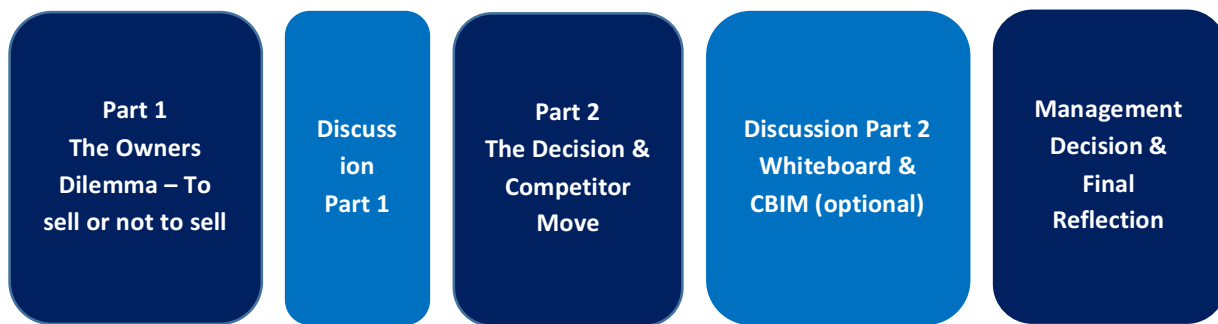
The case is a two-step case, where the first part similarly to the written case is a story with industry and background information that leads up to the management decision in question for Spiegel, CEO of Snapchat. This part can both be presented in class, or to extend the amount of time for discussions be pre-read by students to make the discussion richer with students more thought-through reflection. The main objective of the first part is for students to discuss and engage in the reasoning behind either selling a company, balancing the future potential versus short-term gains, or keeping the company and go deeper into strategy, positioning and brand management necessary to compete in the marketplace as competitors enter a Blue Ocean. To engage the class, it is important to ask the right questions and pick up on chain-of-thoughts asking for a deeper explanation to the answer whether students would either sell or refuse the offer. The discussion for part one should be ended with a vote, whether the class would sell or not to sell, making sure all students take a decision in their role as managers.

The second part of the case, the decision and outcomes, is less of a story and more in the form of additional information, extending the complexity of the case. This part is more informative about the official decision not to sell, what actions competitors have done through introducing main features of Snapchat on both Instagram and later Facebook. The attached video clip in the case material is excellent to illustrate and briefly show the replication and customers reactions. Video also help make the case more alive and visual. The second part also gives hints to Snapchat's many acquisitions, securing important technologies and the connection to anchoring the positioning and brands value proposition. Students have the ability to apply theoretical corporate brand management frameworks such as Urde's (2013) *Corporate Brand Identity Matrix* and its extension with reputational elements as presented by Urde & Greyser (2016). This allows for the understanding and application of strategic brand management, to manage both competition using positioning and to manage multiple stakeholders and reputation.

After both parts of the case have been used to generate class discussions with management issues and actions, the instructor can "close the case" discussion using the "management decisions". This explains the real decisions and actions taken by Snapchat when Instagram launched Stories and will end the case with introducing the information that Snapchat started to trade publicly after their IPO. Valued more than nine times more than Facebook offered three years earlier, validating the decision not to sell and work with business development, positioning and the brand as the right way to go in this case.

Time Plan

A good case lecturer requires time to both present and allow the class to absorb a great deal of information, this case in question is preferably conducted during a two-hour session although shorter time frames are possible either by pre-reading of the written case (recommended) or by increasing the pace of the overall process. The suggested time plan (see figure below) suggest the two discussion parts to take little over half of the time, the main reason for this is that students analysis and practice of reasoning should be in focus. Another 10 % of the time is given to present and compare class outcomes to how the company proceeded forward. The initial presentation is given 24 minutes, but might be extended with about 5 minutes on the expense of part 2 as this is briefer and has a buffer time added to it. Should the case be presented in much shorter time frames, less than 80 minutes, it is suggested that discussion one is shortened to a mere voting situation of whether to sell, to allow the part 2 discussion enough time to generate a good discussion. For this reason, the two-step case model is both very flexible and allow for both practising management decisions in the first place but also for students to reflect on their decision and reevaluate decisions they have made.



CASE YEAR	2013	2016	2017		
Time	20 %	15 %	15 %	40 %	10 %
MIN	24	18	18	48	12

Board Plan

For instructors to leverage and assist the student discussion in right directions, this case has a prepared board plan. This should rather be a guide than applied in a strict sense. From the author's experience from international case competitions, there are more refined and detailed case solution processes, but the focus of using a whiteboard during class discussions is to *capture the essence* of what is being said into a simple and actionable model. Leveraging the whiteboard effectively will allow all students to increase the depth of the discussion and learning by collectively moving forward with stated issues, alternatives and actions – all of which can be argued both for and against, and most often later insights and realisations will lead to changing stance on what end-action is most suitable.

Issues	Alternatives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Revenue • Threat from Facebook who now owns Instagram • Will customers be willing to change platform? • New players, low barriers to entry • FB big player – large resources • Influencers have a much broader reach on Instagram than Snapchat • Trend sensitive target group • Imitation arrive quick - unique functions not as unique anymore • Fast-moving tech industry • Loyalty among user base • Revenue model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell & Do nothing <p>Or...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend the market position • ...by Continues innovation (As recommended by Blue Ocean Strategy) • Communicate mission & vision to anchor the position of the brand (CBIRM) • Drive innovation and app technology • Challenge Instagram with "Snap Flows" (public) • Snaps My Story "the original" • Blue Ocean --> new/innovative marketing • Niche even further --> clear value proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D new features • New products – brand extensions • Marketing – the original, communicate • Stay "user-unfriendly" to exclude older generations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snap – how to gain publicity • Lifecycle – short, trends • Value proposition? What is the added value? • Positioning - threatened by Instagram Stories • Instagram has other features - more attractive value proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand extensions • Approach Facebook – legal actions? 	
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Table 2. Example Board Plan for Whiteboard or Blackboard during case discussion

Epilogue

Being able to understand Blue Ocean strategy and how organisations that have created uncontested market space can protect their position when competition arises is of utmost importance in this case. Hence, key learnings of this case can be seen as the chapter of Blue Ocean strategy, which was never written, how organisations should manage positioning and the corporate brand. This case integrates various perspectives of an organisation, which can be seen by implementing the CBIRM where most of the brand elements are of importance. Hence, both internal and external stakeholders are affected, and management decisions need to cover a broad range of questions. Further, the case does to a great extent include management of competitors and the competitive landscape. One hands-on example of this is when Spiegel gives his employees a copy of "The Art of War", which clearly communicates how they will manage the situation. Further, Snapchat's approach to the threat from competition has been to continuously invest in innovations and technologies to remain their position and to offer a relevant and differentiated value proposition. Also, management has anchored the brand as an innovator in the market as well to strengthen its position further. Lastly, Snapchat has filed for an IPO at the stock exchange with the ambition to proceed with their general corporate purposes, emphasising the mission and vision of the company.

Reflection

This case was written as an assignment in the course in Corporate Brand Management and Reputation, as part of the Master's program in International Marketing & Brand Management at Lund University, School of Economics and Management. Education is a powerful way of learning, through both real-life examples and applying theory, a methodology used by leading business schools such as Harvard University, MA. This assignment requested us, three students, to act as authors and write our first case ever, to gain an understanding of the methodology and get a professor's point of view of leading case discussions. This is a very valuable lesson, both getting hands on with creating brand management scenarios and take ownership in leading a discussion with a group of people, as will be part of any business and management students future work tasks.

The process began with identifying three different cases, which was presented at a meeting with our professor and tutor, Mats Urde. We discussed key learnings that

could be derived from the alternatives and identified which case that had the highest potential. The case of Snapchat, which ended up being selected, posed as an interesting, highly relevant and contemporary perspective of brand management. The high-tech industry demonstrates key characteristics that differ from many other industries, e.g. its complexity, the speed of innovations and customers quick adaptation to change. It also ties together two fundamental aspects, positioning in the market and brand management, both identity and reputation. Ries & Trout (1972) wrote their article on Positioning Cuts through Chaos in Marketplace, and through the years positioning has become an integrated part of many brand management frameworks (Kapferer, 2012; Urde, 2016). Urde & Kosch (2014) wrote an interesting article about Market and brand-oriented schools of positioning, which has great value in explaining the variety of approaches to positioning from a brand perspective. The article also ties Blue Ocean Strategy into this scale between brand and market approaches to positioning. Given the new empirical findings constituted by the case of Snapchat, assumptions of how long Blue Oceans stand as uncontested is challenged and further importance is placed on protecting the position. This is where strategic brand management comes in as a key, in anchoring the position and tie the value of it to the brand, which is a trademark the only intellectual property that can be an asset forever, compared to patents for example that come with expiration dates.

During the research phase, the information was to some extent overwhelming, and many sources had their view in the matter, as the case is in present time much talked about in media giving their recent (about a week ago) IPO. The main challenge when putting together the written case was balancing the information load to keep a focus on the key learning outcomes as the case of Snapchat could equally be built as a finance focused case about venture capital and mergers & acquisitions. The first part of the case was very much focused on setting the contextual setting for students, giving it the CEO perspective as they would be put into the position as management taking decisions. From the feedback of our pre-readings by other students, this has gained great feedback. The second part, being more focused on adding information to stimulate further depth of the discussion, was consciously written more direct and event-based following the clear chronological order of how this case progresses. Snapchat is a rare case, about a tech-company having such enormous growth and fascinating chain of events, that it at the same time from an author perspective makes it a challenge to write about.



As a student, writing a case for the first time, we had to take a totally different approach and change perspective from a student to a teacher's perspective. The course in Corporate Brand Management & Reputation, being case based has with a series of real cases presented CEOs, brand managers and HR Directors of large corporations given us great training in how to think and discuss cases from the student perspective. One of the key learnings, both from assembling the case to conducting the pre-trials of presenting and discussing it, is the difference, multitude of things to bear in mind and complexity being a professor and instructor on cases. The main thing is to keep a flow going on in the room, presenting the case and easing into a discussion where the class has a clearly defined role as managers of Snapchat and empowering students to reason as the company were their own. However, there is also a strong need besides keeping the flow, on on-the-go incorporate empirical case information into a structured process that allows students to identify connections to theory, which requires the instructor to give clues, however, without being overly obvious or leading. The instructor role, compared to student role is primarily concerned with tying it all together and indifference to being a student, push deeper with follow-up questions and asking students to elaborate, as their reasoning is the goal not solely their answer or opinion.

We as authors have especially learned what rich empirical value there is in using real business cases. It demonstrates not only important connections to theory regarding strategic brand management and reputation but shows the strategic value and importance of understanding how other business areas interact and are interdependent on each other. Any field in business and management is not an area that can be dealt with in isolation, as much often is in the world of academia, but the interplay needs to be understood to leverage on and find synergy between the inside of the organisation (internal) and the outside (external). For the case of Snapchat, their research and development have created uncontested market space, and their brand identity suddenly becomes the last competitive advantage as their technology becomes "an industry standard" and copied by the market leader.

Rounding of this reflection, we as authors of this case highly recommend others to use the existing material we have created but also try on their own to create a case at some point. The process to create a case, is challenging both academically and

personally, on both developing insights regarding oneself in interaction with others and presentation technique. One constructive learning from this case is that it is *extra demanding* to work with cases where students have a multitude of pre-existing information and even more personal opinions. Such preceding knowledge leads to more subjectivity that needs to be managed by the instructor, to give students, the best opportunity to consider business information objectively.

We would like to thank Professor Mats Urde for the opportunity and push (as this mandatory assignment represents) to write our case, and the support given. Furthermore, we want to bring our gratitude to our fellow co-students who have both read our case and provided mutual feedback, as well as participating in our pre-test and main presentation of this case.

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