

**Bournemouth University**  
**Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL)**

**CEL Theme:**

**Employability, Work Based Learning and Professional Practice**

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **Mahara portfolios as an employability tool**

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**Key Words:**

Mahara; employability; skill sets

#### **Case study synopsis:**

The e-portfolio enhances the employability of students' beyond the traditional CV in a format that fosters creativity and individuality. This approach meets the blended learning agenda by placing an emphasis of online teaching content readily available to students within a transferable format – i.e. the students can then show interested third parties a variety of media showcasing their work under one umbrella. Whilst there is still a face-to-face element to the teaching in this unit, much of the work undertaken is by the students in their own time to build up the portfolio of ideas as an extension of their CV. The work undertaken is not just to satisfy the ILO's of the unit, but also to offer some real life examples of the sort of campaign material and ideas they can generate.

From the outset of the unit the students are introduced to the basic components of Mahara and then left to explore and develop the other tools to keep adding content. They are then given a finite word count in which to decide the most suitable materials to place into a collection that is then 'submitted' to the tutor for assessment. Likewise, depending on the job application and the potential employers then can look at the work within their portfolio and share examples most relevant to the job application, as opposed to having to share the entire content.

## Background/Context/Problem being addressed:

Nowadays, particularly in relation to students being able to show their core competences in a professional manner, the traditional CV is not enough to display some of the more practical elements of University studies. Potential employers do not have a lot of time to trawl through attachments, CDs, videos etc. To have a resource that students can provide direct links to, that is interactive and contains all the above, is a way to enhance their employability.

We are looking at alternatives to academic content delivery and recently online learning is becoming more prevalent in academia. This case study shows how the online content produced by the students in conjunction with the academic team as part of their studies, offers real employability showcasing in a way that has not been available before.

Students are very aware of what they can do online in the various online platforms that are available, yet unfortunately sometimes the content they display therein is not suitable content for a future employer to see. This example shows them how online media and online storage of ideas and concepts can help them with their future employability.

These are young people who engage far more with online content and instant media and so being able to capture these

formats within their work allows them to demonstrate in a format they are familiar with, yet also allows them to attract potential employers.

The problems in the past with this particular unit centred on both its title and content; we were teaching 'marketing for events' without recognising that the vast majority of events students working in marketing roles were more involved in experiential marketing, so using events to help market products/services/ideas. We radically needed to review what we were teaching and in so doing had the opportunity to readdress how we delivered the content and more importantly how to assess the students. The traditional assessment was a dry business plan which did not fit in well with the refocussing of the unit itself. Therefore, we needed a more contemporary medium to explore whilst recognising the large numbers of students taking the unit and at the same time thinking of a piece of assessed work that they could use to show their individuality and flair.



Dashboard Content Portfolio Groups

Welcome to Mahara - Bournemouth University

### Student Activity:

As part of their assessment they had to set up a portfolio to meet the assessed requirements of the marketing unit but were encouraged to express their creativity and critique around contemporary marketing ideas in general. Furthermore, they were also encouraged to develop their own concepts within the portfolio. Whilst these additional elements were not formally assessed, in reality the students could see the advantage of being able to portray to potential employers examples of their work.

For the first seven weeks of the unit, the students followed a key traditional marketing text book but had to submit into their portfolios material relating to each chapter from the book. Sometimes it would be online tests, other times it would be answering questions around case studies, other times it would be commenting on a marketing campaign of their choice but to critique the campaign in light of the material covered that week. Each chapter represented one week of the course (sometimes combined) and then a corresponding page was completed. (These pages were later combined when the students merged together ideas and concepts).

The second half of the delivered content comprised material for experiential campaign building and this is where the students

began to show their individual flair and creativity. Each student was tasked with creating a new experiential idea for a product/brand of their choice but also incorporating as many of the ideas and material from the first part of the course. The material to be included was varied and very much at their discretion; all that was required was a list of the top 10 components they felt a good campaign needed and an explanation, with evidence, for each entry. The material included:- videos, both online and user generated, industry specifications and campaigns; pictures from library sources and students own; as well as written content from each student underpinned by academic referencing and theoretical underpinning. Examples also included diagrams, mapping information, news feeds, etc. – any media that Mahara supports.

Information and material was collated into pages, some of which were submitted for assessment within the agreed word count and other pages were made available to potential employers as examples of work undertaken.

## Notes on Chapter 1 & 2

### Contents:

Name	Description
Page01.JPG	The Nature of Marketing
Page02.JPG	The Nature of Marketing
Page03.JPG	The Nature of Marketing
Page04.JPG	The Global Marketing Environment
Page05.JPG	The Global Marketing Environment
Page06.JPG	The Global Marketing Environment
Page07.JPG	The Global Marketing Environment
Page08.JPG	The Global Marketing Environment

### Chapter 1 - The Nature of Marketing

Score: 100 out of 100 points (100%)

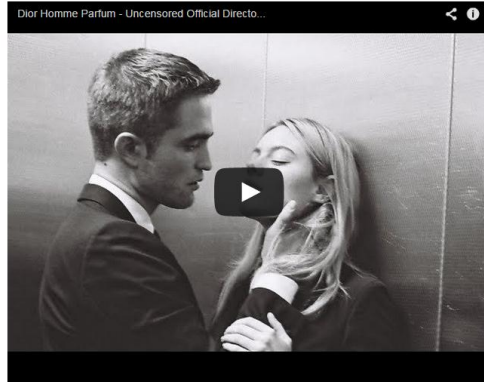
### Chapter 1 - The Nature of Marketing

Score: 140 out of 150 points (93.33%)

### Chapter 2 - The Global Marketing Environment

Score: 9 out of 10 points (90%)

## Dior Homme - 'The film' - 'One fragrance, 1000 lives'



### Analyses of Dior Homme advert

Robert Pattinson is the new face of Dior Homme fragrance advertising campaign 2013. The campaign, which is known as '1000 lives' or 'The Film', premiered on September so far has gained nearly 15 million views on YouTube. It is an elegant, passionate and edgy black and white advert, appealing for both women and men.

Dior Homme is displaying a type of man who would wear the fragrance, which is why I believe it is targeted for young males in between the age groups 20 - 30 years, who are living (or seeking to live) a wealthy, extravagant and breezy life. Having a fragrance like this can as well be a matter of prestige and social status, because the brand is known for its luxury products and superior prices.

## Innocent video

1. The goal is to create healthy and diverse products that could make people live longer and healthier lives. Initially, Innocent was mostly concerned about the taste of their products (which still takes a massively important role), but now the main principle is that all Innocent products have to be made from natural ingredients fulfilling consumer need for a better, healthier, longer life.

2. Social media helps Innocent to engage with the audience that is out there. It is a key way to make conversation with people. The firm has learnt that simple talks and chats to consumers help to promote product. Relationship between the firm and their clients is not all about selling their products, it is about casual and honest conversations that people like, and mass media is there to deliver the message and to help maintain ties with the firm and clients.

3. Innocent is concentrating on geographical strategy by expanding its products to more and more places. They are not just talking about spreading the brand around England, but abroad as well to achieve a worldwide recognition.

Besides that, the company's goal is to make Innocent products a part of everyone's lifestyle. If they could make buying their products as an everyday habit they will grow the brand's sales.

4. Innocent business has grown since the Coca Cola investment. They got great access to Coke's wisdom about making products and selling them. The company was able to improve their logistics, the way the company engaged with people and strategies to satisfy their needs. Never the less partnership with Coke helped to release new products by Innocent.

The main cons are that this investment upset some of the consumers as they were not sure where this

As with any cohort there were those who did not engage well with the use of Mahara and just submitted pages with links to word produced documents (see below). Unfortunately, the old saying of leading a horse to water but it not drinking applies here. The terms of the assessment were for so many words to be submitted for assessment around a new campaign and even through submitting word documents, enough credit could still be gained to just pass the unit. However, these students have little to show as examples of experiential campaigns if they so wish, to future employers.

Similarly some struggled at first and lacked confidence in this new format, but with help and support they realised what a useful tool Mahara can be for storing work from other units too. In addition, they also realise they can use it over successive years study to build up a portfolio of their work to show to an outside audience.

## Critical Reflections:

Getting students to engage initially with the portfolio was challenging as it can be time consuming to begin with but once started it is easy to add and arrange material. Some elements are still a bit clunky but a student can have as much material in

their portfolio (subject to size limitations) yet they only need to submit certain sections for assessment.

They can manage access to whichever sections they wish to share.

Starting this with a new cohort of students who are fresh to the university and still getting use to myBU and other online platforms, is a big uphill journey but the sooner they engage the more they gain from using it.

It is still a trial and error to learn what can and cannot be submitted (which is very little by exclusion); however, we must also be mindful of the different document formats and media formats with which the students are themselves familiar. For example, any documents created in Mac formats cannot be read on the university windows based computers, however, on offsite computers, they can. There are also other examples of this so either we limit the formats we are going to allow the students to use, or assessors need to accept that Mahara submitted portfolios need to be marked on computers that are not locked to limited formats.

It was hard to try and sell the benefits when we didn't have an example of actual work from the unit to show, as this was the first cohort to use this. Whilst there are many training videos and online examples, including YouTube videos, none were

specific to this unit. Luckily I now have permission from last years' students to show their examples.

**Market Research**  
**Marketing Segmentation , Targeting and Positioning**  
Words = 335

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**Perceptual map of soft drinks**

The perceptual map plots soft drink brands on two axes: Price (High at top, Low at bottom) and Perception (Unhealthy on the left, Healthy on the right). Brands in the top-left quadrant (High Price, Unhealthy Perception) include Red Bull, Coca-Cola, and Diet Coke. Brands in the top-right quadrant (High Price, Healthy Perception) include Sprite, 10, and Diet Coke Zero. Brands in the bottom-left quadrant (Low Price, Unhealthy Perception) include Pepsi Next and Fanta. Brands in the bottom-right quadrant (Low Price, Healthy Perception) include Vittel and vitaminwater.

**Target Audience of Soft Drinks**

For companies to adequately offer their products to a diverse market they need to use Market Segmentation to identify similar customer characteristics. Soft drink companies, such as Coca-Cola have used differentiated marketing for their different products. When they launched the Diet Coke and Coke Zero drinks respectively they had identified that the healthy lifestyle consumers wanted a Coke tasting drink but without all of the sugar. They had identified this target market and delivered them a product to fulfil this need. Coke generally is aimed at young people, as Coke is seen as a 'hip' brand. Coke is aimed at both male and female; this is shown in the use of neutral colours such as white and red.

**Target Audience of UK Music Festivals**

The UK music festival industry has grown significantly in the last decade. Last year there were over 120 up and down the country. This enables the festivals to target certain audience's dependant on their favourite genre of music. The target audience for the Southern Cathedrals Festival would be significantly different to the audience of DeathFest heavy metal festival. However, some super events such as Glastonbury transcend age, time, genre and social classes. By offering numerous acts over the course of several days they offer their customers a unique blend of music, arts and atmosphere.

**Captain Morgan Advert**

penPortrait-1.pdf  
252.1KB | Friday, 25 October 2013 | Details

### What worked well, what didn't:

We will continue unchanged, and now we have permission from students who already use the portfolio to show examples to the new student intake. Last year we had no examples to show and we had to mock one up (see comments above). Also we operate a PAL system in our school whereby each seminar group has a Peer Assisted Learning rep from the year above, assigned just to their group. They have all experienced the assessment themselves and so will be on hand to assist with guidance on assignments and general coursework. They will all have been

through using Mahara themselves and so will have not only the wisdom of engaging with it for the first time, but also be able to share their portfolios with their seminar groups.

All tutors on the unit will be on hand to offer drop-in workshops to ensure ALL students engage with Mahara from the outset and have plenty of time to devote to populating their portfolios with content. We shall also be working alongside our colleagues from the other units in the first semester to encourage our students to consider using the portfolio for storing their notes and work from these other units too.

**Recommendations:**

Engage with Mahara to try it out and see the flexibility of the portfolio tool. Try to build your own pages around whatever topic you have an interest in and you will be amazed at what can be included.



This is an example of a student not understanding the capability of using Mahara to its full potential