

# teaching note

## Case Study Structure

The case study provides a unique opportunity for students to better develop their understanding of the Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage. Students combine knowledge and skills gained from upper level (junior and senior level) marketing classes, personal experience with social media networking sites (specifically Facebook, Twitter, and FourSquare), and information provided in the case study; they then use the various pieces of information and combine their own creativity to provide a unique solution for Harold Hoagie and The Sandwich Solution. For the purpose of this case study, students should not only focus on their targeted market that must opt-in to receive its messages, but also ask what the added value is of this social media marketing technique to the customer. In other words, how will this selected marketing technique add value to The Sandwich Solution customers?

This case study has a flexible structure so that students at various levels in their education can use it to better develop their knowledge and skills. Additionally, the focus of the case study is to learn about marketing through social media networking sites. Students should spend the majority of their time researching and selecting their marketing style (promotions-based, communication-based, and mixed method approach) and planning their marketing message according to the target audience they identify, and learning how to build a competitive advantage. It is not intended that students spend a great amount of time learning about social media networking site; however, if this case study is used for a more advanced class, the instructor may want the students to learn about less familiar social media sites and construct a marketing plan that utilizes two or more of those sites.

## Objectives and Use of Case

### Objectives

The following objectives are offered to facilitate the students' learning:



## Suggestions for Using the Case Study

Ideally, students should be introduced to the Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage through assigned readings and/or in-class lectures/activities prior to assigning the case study.

Although an in-depth introduction to the various marketing styles (promotions-based, communication-based, and mixed method approach) is provided in the student case study, instructors may want to spend some time for in-class discussion to make sure students un-

derstand the unique characteristics, benefits, and time-comments for each of the different marketing styles.

Students can utilize other social media sites, such as Zagat, Yelp, Urbanspoon, and Gayot. This case study suggests using Facebook, Twitter, and FourSquare since these are the most popular social media networking sites amongst college students. This allows the students to focus on better developing their knowledge of the Building Blocks

1. Students will be able to differentiate between the various marketing styles that make up the communication–promotions continuum and determine which style is most suitable for marketing fast-casual restaurants.
2. Students should identify at least three advantages and disadvantages for each of the three most popular social media networking sites in regard to their ability to be used for communication and promotional marketing.
3. Students will conduct a competitive advantage analysis for their selected marketing style and social media networking style (there are nine possible combinations).

	Communication	Mixed Approach	Promotions
Facebook (Fb)	Communication Fb	Mixed Approach Fb	Promotions Fb
Twitter (T)	Communication T	Mixed Approach T	Promotions T
Foursquare (Fsq)	Communication Fsq	Mixed Approach Fsq	Promotions Fsq

4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage and the various marketing styles by developing a plan that focuses primarily on communication, promotions, or a mixed approach. The students will need to discuss how they will utilize one of the three most popular social media networking sites to carry out their marketing plan rather than spending valuable time learning more about the various social media sites available to marketers. For a more advanced class, it is suggested that the instructor open the case study up to using any social media site commonly employed by the food and beverage industry. The instructor can determine whether or not to take a local, regional, or national marketing approach or have the students determine their ideal target customer.

Although example solutions are provided below, the instructor should allow the students to use their creativity when planning their marketing approach. The idea is to better understand the Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage and the various marketing styles available. There is not an ultimate solution that each student should aspire to achieve.

## Synthesis and Evaluation

## ***Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage***

### ***Efficiency***

- Commitment to using the social media products and maintaining the site
- Cooperation between staff and customers
- Can produce “hard selling” and aggressive marketing techniques
- Can limit deflections to other companies because of stimulated conversation and loyalty
- Can easily train new employees for use that may already be skilled in the use of social networking sites

### ***Quality***

- Can design products according to customer needs (voiced via social networking site)
- Stimulated leadership commitment to excellence
- Set goals and create incentives
- Input from employees on how the social networking site is being used
- Trace deficiencies via online customer complaints

### ***Innovation***

- Can gain new insight from customers via social media feedback
- Use customers for research and development with little or no cost.- recruit online
- On-going contact with customers, even when they move to new locations

### ***Customer Responsiveness***

- Initially, understanding the target market and providing a product or service they want at a price they are willing to pay for it without compromising profitability
- Customizable service
- Meet unanticipated customer demands
- Bring customers into the developing and marketing process of your company
- Timely responses to customer complaints and feedback

## **Analysis of Building Blocks of Competitive Advantage for Facebook, Twitter & Foursquare**

### ***Communication-Focused Marketing***

#### ***Facebook***

Efficiency—Facebook provides different means for different sources of communication. Posts and messages can be received from remote locations using mobile applications which increase the efficiency of this Social Networking Site (SNS). Communication can be used for regional, national, and global. Facebook also allows for chatting, which provides consumers with immediate feedback and customer service support.

Quality—Facebook is rarely under construction and is routinely

updated. Facebook also allows for increased quality of service via the ability to chat instantly with an online representative. Additionally, restaurants can communicate their unique features and restaurant accolades.

Innovation—A Facebook page can contain almost anything an individual or business would want to build into the page allowing for creative communication.

Customer responsiveness—Facebook has a large user base that is constantly growing (both young and older users). Facebook allows customers to reach out to a company representative via its chatting application. Additionally, a company can receive feedback from a large number of customers in a very short amount of time. Customers can connect with the company, with other consumers, and receive/respond to information posted on a business’ Facebook page.

#### ***Twitter***

Efficiency—Twitter sends out brief messages that can be received immediately by users without them having to be “logged in.” Messages are also quickly spread to third party affiliates.

Quality—Twitter can be used to share a wide variety of communication allowing consumers to connect, businesses to promote their products/specials, and both consumers and businesses to provide updates and feedback. Unlike Facebook, Twitter can become over populated making it hard for users to gain access to the site.

Innovation—Since users can use “tweet” just about anything, it allows businesses to get creative in communicating and promoting its products as well as communicating with its consumers.

Customer responsiveness—Despite a smaller user base than Facebook, Twitter customers can read and respond immediately to Tweets, and businesses can receive or trace consumer feedback and respond appropriately.

#### ***Foursquare***

Efficiency—Foursquare rolls all social media into one. By having a Foursquare account, you can also link your “check-ins” to other forms of social networking. Friends and colleagues can now know where you are, why you are there, what is great about that particular location, and how often you visit it.

Quality—Although it is still considered to be a new social networking site, Foursquare does not stimulate conversation between employees and clients.

Innovation—Foursquare enhances “chance meeting” opportunities. If you check into a site and mention that you are alone, it is easy for friends to come and join you. This is particularly good for organizations that will bring in more consumers via social media at no marketing cost to them.

Customer Responsiveness—Foursquare is a social networking site that focuses on rewarding customers for frequency of visits. Consumers are encouraged to “check-in” to locations. If a customer checks in more than anyone else, they are considered to be the “mayor” of that location. Some companies reward check-ins with promotional items or discounts. Customers like the notoriety of being the one who most frequently visits this location. Also, customers can leave notes to others suggesting to try particular items on the menu (or how to build the “best” sandwich)

### ***Promotion/Sales-Focused Marketing*** ***Facebook***

Efficiency—Facebook promotions are sent to the “ideal customer” (meaning promoters have to know the target market they are trying to reach). Companies that utilize Facebook to promote their business save time trying to get their message to the right consumer.

Quality—Facebook is rarely under construction and is routinely updated with improved formats and new “gadgets” such as third party applications. Additionally, Facebook allows products to be purchased directly from its site.

Innovation—Facebook promotions are more guided, but companies can also sell their items through the site. Additionally, a company can create a unique application to promote its business.

Customer responsiveness—Facebook has a large user base, and individuals of all ages are using Facebook not only to connect, but to search for information. Companies can use Facebook to promote their product and to see what consumers are wanting. This information allows companies to respond to consumer posts regarding purchased products/services.

### ***Twitter***

Efficiency—Twitter sends out brief messages that can be received immediately. Tweets are then quickly spread to third party affiliates. In the same way that communication can be spread quickly, new promotions, sales, or specials can be communicated instantly to followers.

Quality—Consumers can receive messages from remote locations using mobile applications. They do not have to be “logged in” to receive updates.

Innovation—Because Twitter messages are limited in size, companies have to get creative in order to create Tweets that communicate the right message and reach the ideal customer.

Customer responsiveness—Despite a smaller user base than Facebook, Twitter customers can read and respond immediately to Tweets, and businesses can receive or trace

consumer feedback and respond appropriately.

### ***Foursquare***

Efficiency—Foursquare keeps track of customer visit frequency and can reward clients based on how often they visit and purchase products.

Quality—This is not the best technique for quality. Check-ins does not always mean consumption. Customers can visit a location but not actually buy something,

Innovation—Foursquare offers a virtual version of the punch card. It is something that is readily available and not as susceptible to cheating.

Customer responsiveness—Foursquare offers great customer responsiveness. Clients are immediately rewarded with status for becoming a “mayor” of a location and then promotional items given by the company.

### ***Mixed Approach Marketing*** ***Facebook***

Efficiency—Companies can use both Facebook pages and Facebook promotions to provide a mixed approach to marketing. Posts, messages, and chatting can be used to communicate with consumers. Additionally, promotions and actually selling products through Facebook helps get the product to the consumer.

Quality—Facebook is rarely under construction and is routinely updated with improved formats and new “gadgets” such as third party applications. Facebook allows for increased quality of service and the ability to promote items via an online salesman utilizing the chatting application.

Innovation—Facebook pages can contain almost anything an individual or business would want to build into the page allowing for creative communication of products and services. Additionally, promotions can be creatively designed to generate interest from the target market.

Customer responsiveness—Facebook has a large user base that is constantly growing (both young and older users). Facebook allows customers to reach out to a company representative via its chatting application. Additionally, a company can receive feedback from a large number of customers in a very short amount of time. Customers can connect with the company, with other consumers, and receive/respond to information posted on a business’ Facebook page. In addition to adequately communicating with consumers, companies can use Facebook to see what consumers are wanting and to respond to consumer posts regarding purchased products/services.

## Twitter

**Efficiency**—Twitter can be used to communicate and promote. Both types of Tweets are brief pieces of information that quickly spread to followers and on to third party affiliates. New promotions, sales, or specials can be communicated instantly.

**Quality**—Consumers can receive messages from remote locations using mobile applications. They do not have to be “logged in” to receive updates. This allows for companies to share information and promote their products, services, and specials instantly to a large group of followers. Additionally, companies can receive up-to-date information regarding their products/services by monitoring Tweets.

**Innovation**—Twitter messages are limited in size, which almost forces companies to get creative in order to create Tweets that communicate the right message and reach the ideal customer.

**Customer responsiveness**—Twitter customers can read and respond immediately to Tweets, and businesses can receive or trace consumer feedback and respond appropriately.

## Foursquare

**Efficiency**—While the counting system is efficient, a mixed approach may not be efficient because it does not immediately stimulate conversation with the company. Consumers can talk to each other, but the company cannot immediately respond to complaints.

**Quality**—Although this social media technique is accurate, it is not the best use of quality assurance. Customers can check in but may not receive superior products or service.

**Innovation**—since the customers frequency cards are readily available, customers can be instantly rewarded.

**Customer responsiveness**—Foursquare customers can interact with employees and gain recognition or status for their frequency of visits. They can also receive promotional items. However, this medium does not offer “back and forth” communication between management and guests. They can simply offer promotions or recognition.

- Jack in the Box: <http://www.jackinthebox.com/>
- Molinas: <http://www.molinasrestaurants.com/>
- Bellagio: <http://www.bellagio.com/>
- Aria Hotel: <http://www.ariasvegas.com/>
- Hotel Icon: <http://www.hotelicon.com/>
- Pappasitos: <http://www.pappasitos.com/home/>
- Pappadeaux: <http://www.pappadeaux.com/home/>
- Continental Airlines: <http://www.continental.com/web/en-US/default.aspx>
- Panera Bread: <http://www.panerabread.com/>
- Bullritos: <http://www.bullritos.com/>
- Which wich: <http://www.whichwich.com/>
- CoTweet: <http://cotweet.com/about/>
- FlyerTalk: <http://www.flyertalk.com/>

## Suggestions to Take This Case Further

1. Class exercise: have students create and manage a “fake” facebook fanpage
2. Have students work with a business on or near campus and follow the case study to develop a strategic plan to help that business create a competitive advantage. Then work with the restaurant to implement the plan. A close relationship with the business is crucial, because the students do not want to offer promotions that the business does not approve.
3. Have students look at other businesses similar to The Sandwich Solution to see how they have used social networking sites to create a competitive advantage. This would help stimulate ideas for developing their own marketing plan or could be used in place of creating a marketing plan. If the professor decided not to have the students develop their own marketing plan, they could do an analysis of other business and talk about the building blocks, marketing strategies, and various social networking sites used.

## Social Media in Hospitality Links that Can Be Used as Examples

- Southwest Airlines: <http://www.southwest.com/>
- Burger King: <http://www.bk.com/>
- Dominos: <http://www.dominos.com/>
- Starbucks: <http://www.starbucks.com/>
- Luby's: <http://www.lubys.com/en/>
- Travelocity: <http://www.travelocity.com/>
- Expedia: <http://www.expedia.com/>
- Chilis: <http://www.chilis.com/EN/Pages/home.aspx>
- Taco Bell: <http://www.tacobell.com/>