**Chair of Sales & Services Marketing –
Prof. Dr. Florian Kraus**

**Themenveröffentlichung zur Seminararbeit MKT 740
HWS 2017**

Liebe Studierende,

untenstehend finden Sie die angebotenen Seminarthemen des Lehrstuhls für Sales & Services Marketing für das Herbst-/Wintersemester 2017. Die Bearbeitung der Themen ist grds. sowohl in deutscher als auch in englischer Sprache möglich, falls nicht anders gekennzeichnet.

Nr.	Thema
1	**Cross-Selling im B2B-Markt – Erkenntnisse aus der aktuellen Forschung für die Praxis** Insbesondere im Rahmen langfristiger Geschäftsbeziehungen zwischen Unternehmen gewinnt der Verkauf zusätzlicher Produkte und Dienstleistungen für den Lieferanten strategische wie umsatzrelevante Bedeutung. Die Seminararbeit soll vor diesem Hintergrund einen Überblick über den Status Quo der Marketingforschung geben, und praxisrelevante Implikationen aus der Erhebung ableiten und systematisieren.
2	**Kundenorientierung im B2B-Vertrieb – Ein überbewerteter Vertriebsansatz?** Kundenorientierung galt lange Zeit als Schlüsselbegriff, wenn es um Erfolg im B2B Vertrieb ging. Im Rahmen jüngerer Studien wurde jedoch gezeigt, dass zu viel Kundenorientierung auch einen negativen Einfluss auf Erfolgsgrößen haben kann. Die Seminararbeit soll vor diesem Hintergrund zentrale Einflussfaktoren auf Basis aktueller Studien identifizieren und klassifizieren.
3	**Theoretische Bezugspunkte der B2B Vertriebsforschung – Ein klassifizierender Überblick** Die empirische Forschung im B2B Vertrieb lässt sich im Rahmen zahlreicher theoretischer Grundlagen verordnen und motivieren. Die Seminararbeit soll auf Basis aktueller Vertriebsstudien einen klassifizierenden Überblick über diese theoretischen Bezugspunkte geben.
4	**To bundle or not to bundle: On the strategic use of bundling for reducing consumer guilt** The main purpose of this seminar thesis is to summarize the existing research about self-regulation and consumer guilt. Furthermore, the impact of product bundling of multiple hedonic products on consumers' feelings of pre- as well as post-purchase guilt should be discussed. Preferably, at least one of the on this review developed hypotheses is tested empirically.
5	**The role of reputational concerns in Pay-What-You-Want pricing schemes** Recently, "Pay-What-You-Want" (PWYW) pricing schemes have become popular in various industries. Moreover, research has highlighted that consumers are increasingly aimed at maintaining their reputation in a retail context. Hence, the goal of this seminar thesis is to illustrate how influential reputational concerns can be in the context of participative pricing mechanisms.
6	**"It's all about the timing": The role of anticipated versus reactive consumer guilt** Based on an extensive literature review, the purpose of this seminar thesis is to compare the strength and role of potential influences of experiences of guilt prior to or post purchase decisions on consumer decision making. Furthermore, hypotheses regarding the influence of anticipated guilt on reactive guilt (and vice versa) should be derived.

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7	**What makes people think a review is manipulated? (English only)** As online reviews become an important informational source for customers, some companies attempt to manipulate reviews in favor of their interest (Dellarocas, 2006). In the fields of computer science and linguistics, fake review detection has been extensively researched and recently it has been studied by marketing scholars (Anderson et al., 2014). The techniques to detect deceptive reviews have been developed. However, not much research has been done with regard to the factors that make people think a review is manipulated. Therefore, this study attempts to explore those factors with the method of survey. The potential managerial implication lies in the strategic management of online reviews.
8	**Review helpfulness under multi-lingual online review settings (English only)** As online review platforms are getting international, online reviews are more and more written in various languages. The following hypotheses will be tested based on surveys and language proficiency and translation quality will be included in the analysis as moderators. Hypothesis 1: Language familiarity has effect on evaluating review helpfulness. Hypothesis 2: Translated texts are regarded more helpful than the original texts. This work provides implications for the search engines and online review platforms (e.g. Tripadvisor, Booking.com).
9	**Social network channel strategies for small businesses (English only)** Social network strategies have received attentions for years, but not much research has been done in terms of the strategies for small businesses. Given budget constraints, the social network activities of small business holders would be restrictive. This paper tries to suggest social network strategies for small businesses based on the status quo analysis of small business (restaurants, hotels, hospitals) in Mannheim area.
10	**Theory of Perceived Risk – Its Application in the B2B Acquisition Sphere** When organizational customers undertake complex acquisitions on B2B markets, they will perceive varying levels of risk. To reduce risk effectively, suppliers generally share a substantial interest in the correct identification of risk reduction mechanisms that prove effective for the type of purchase under consideration. This thesis shall uncover the status quo of research on these risk mitigation approaches specifically, and the application of the Theory of Perceived Risk in the B2B arena in general.
11	**On the Role of Attitudes in B2B Customer Acquisitions** When organizational customers make purchase decisions, a variety of factors such as price, quality, total-cost-of-ownership, or supplier experience are taken into account. Also, a positive attitude towards the supplier may play a role. This thesis shall uncover the status quo of research whether a positive attitude does influence purchasing decisions, or whether it is an overrated, yet unimportant component in the decision process. In short: Shall suppliers invest in investing in a buyer's favorable attitude?
12	**When Cross-Buying Customers Turn Out Unprofitable – Recent Perspectives and Emerging Strategies** Though cross-selling represents a key strategic objective for many suppliers, research to date has provided evidence that cross-buying customers indeed may influence a supplier's profitability with that given customer in a negative way. Against this background, the thesis shall provide a structured overview on current empirical findings on the profitability of cross-buying customers in the B2B arena.

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13	**Similarities and differences in the usage of hashtags: Twitter vs. Instagram (English only)** The thesis examines if the usage of hashtags on the two platform is significantly different, and if so, why it happens. It would be also meaningful to derive managerial implications out of the analysis. The analysis could be conducted either qualitatively or quantitatively. The contribution of this paper lies in that it helps to understand customers and it provides guidance of how to process textual data properly.
14	**Deep Learning: Business solution based on the technology of Tensorflow (English only)** *Prerequisite: Computer programming skills (Python), Understanding of machine learning Deep learning technology is actively used in the field of computer science and its accuracy is known to be higher than the traditional machine learning algorithms. This thesis attempts to solve business problems with the deep learning method. Tensorflow, the open source library provided by google, will be used to analyze data. The major contribution of this paper is that the state-of-art technology is incorporated to solve marketing problems, which has not been done yet.
15	**The role of website structure on social influences from previous reviews (English only)** Online social influence phenomena have been documented in many papers (Moe and Trusov 2011; Lee, Hosanagar, and Tan 2015; Lee and Youn 2015; Dubois et al 2016). The following hypotheses will be tested through big data analysis or an experiment. Hypothesis 1: Previous reviews have effect on the valence of the later reviews. Hypothesis 2: The website structure, namely, the number of reviews shown on the first page, has effect on the valence of the reviews. This work provides managerial implications for online platforms. Further, as social influence is one of the actively researched topics in marketing, it provides theoretical implication as well.
16	**First Day Effect for the New Product Possession (English only)** When someone own a product, the perceived value of that product is higher for the owner. This is called "endowment effect". I theorize that this effect is even more powerful when the owner buys the product on the day the product is launched or by preorder. This means that when a customer owns a product on the day it is launched, the customer will think that this specific product s/he owns is more valuable than the other same products. This project is composed of new product marketing, endowment effect, and time inconsistency.
17	**How Do The Customers Get Affected by The Online Reputation Systems When They Have Their Own Experience? (English only)** Online reputation systems affect the customers while purchasing. Because people can't touch the product when they purchase online, they tend to trust on the comments of people who had bought the same product from the same seller before. It has been shown that negative and positive comments about a product affect the new customers dramatically. However, what if the customer has his/her own experience before? It can be assumed that if the comments and the experience are in the same way (positive or negative), this could only empower the customer's behavior. The question is what happens if the customer has opposite experience that the comments of other people.
18	**Sales Channel Loyalty and Channel Migration (English only)** Some customers could prefer to use only a specific channel for their purchases and develop a channel loyalty in time. This could decrease the profit of the company in the long term because multi-channel purchasers are more profitable although some firms prefer their customers to use only one channel. In this case, the firm could want to lead the customers to one or more specific channels. This is not easy because the customers could show resistance and even leave the firm. The aim of this project is to find out the reasons why customers choose certain channels, why they develop loyalty for these channel and what are the ways to change this preference. This project is composed of multi-channel sales and loyalty.

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19	**Big Buying Days: Do They Harm the Company in the Long Term (English only)** Some companies organize big sales events called big buying days and sell all the products with discounts. Some major big buying days are Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Singles Day. The companies sell big amounts of products in 24 hours. They even set new sales records. These events bring new customers to the company because the products are sold for low prices. However, these events could cannibalize the firm's past and future sales. The existing customers could wait for this event or they buy beforehand even though they don't need it that time. Big buying day could increase the profit in the short term but harm the company in the short term. How it affects customer loyalty is another issue. The aim of this project is to figure out pros and cons of the big buying days.
20	**When Do Loyal Customers Give Up on Their Love Brands? (English only)** Love brand (love mark) happens when a customer is in love with the brand. These customers save money, give up on their other expenses, and are excited about the products of their love brands. The price of the products from this brand may be high; but this is fine for the customers, they do not switch to the rival brand. Apple and Starbucks are good examples for love brands. The question is when these customers give up on their love brands and switch to the rival brand based on the innovation level of the rival brand. For example, a better camera that the new Samsung phone offers wouldn't change an Apple addict's mind; however, a flying phone could work. The aim of this project is to find out what characteristics change this decision and how. In the long term, an analytical model could be developed to find out the thresholds.
21	**Middle Manager Resistance against New Sales Channel Launch (English only)** Many of the retailing firms have become multi-channel in the last decades. These channels are stores, traditional methods such as catalogs, the Internet and mobile. A new channel launch could be a rocky road as well as it is beneficial for the company. A new channel launch means organizational change. Although this change starts from the top management, incumbent sales channel managers (middle managers) are an important part of this process as well. These middle managers could support the new channel or show resistance against it. The aim of this project is to find out what kind of characteristics of the company, top management and middle management affect this resistance and how. This project is composed of middle managers and multi-channel sale.

Die Seminarbewerbung reichen Sie bitte die folgenden Unterlagen als ein(!) PDF-Dokument ein:

- Liste aller Seminarthemen in der Reihenfolge Ihrer Präferenz
- Kurzes Motivationsschreiben für Ihren Themenerstwunsch (maximal eine ½ Seite)
- Lebenslauf
- Abiturzeugnis
- Vordiplomzeugnis/Bachelorzeugnis
- Aktueller Notenspiegel (Master/Diplom)
- Studienverlaufsplanung

Bewerbungen für das Seminar im Herbst-/Wintersemester 2017 sind in **digitaler Form** per **Email** an **Sabrina Zieren, M.Sc.** (szieren@bwl.uni-mannheim.de) zu schicken und werden **zwischen dem 21.08.2017 und 01.09.2017**, 12:00 Uhr akzeptiert.