In Unit 1 of BA200 you have been exploring the ways that successful companies carve out market share by creating differentiated products and services which meet the common needs and/or values of specific customer segment(s). Understanding how companies create value for their customers is the foundation of identifying new market opportunities and analyzing a company's potential for future growth.

For this paper, your assigned team of 4-5 students will be given a company to research. Your final deliverable will be a report that will inform the reader about your company as well as the industry areas your company operates within. Your report will also detail your company’s customer value proposition and whether their CVP differentiates them from their competitors and gives them a competitive edge.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze a company’s customer value proposition components (customer jobs to be done/needs, customer gains, customer pains, company gain creators, company pain relievers, and products and services) and generate a concise customer value proposition (or propositions) for the company’s products or services
- Recognize and show how the company has carved out market share in its industry/sector through a unique customer value proposition
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant key concepts covered in discussion section and course readings by describing your company’s enterprise model and by creating an articulate consumer value proposition analysis of your company
- Demonstrate and apply competitive intelligence company and industry research skills by incorporating and appropriately citing business databases, including but not limited to, those highlighted in the Kresge Library Research Paper module
- Demonstrate and apply best practices in teamwork and coordination throughout the research paper writing process
BA200 COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

PAPER DUE DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21 BY 11:59 PM

- **Word count:**
  - Each paper should be **2500 (± 200) words**. (approximately 10 pages NOT including Exhibits/Appendices/Charts)

- **Executive summary**
  - All papers should include an **Executive Summary** section (about 5-10% of your total paper or ~1 page)
    - the Executive Summary is also NOT included in the 2500 (± 200) word count.

- **Headings/Subheadings**
  - Use *descriptive* headings for the different sections of your paper (i.e. not just “Introduction,” “Body,” etc. as outlined below). See the “Writing the Executive Summary and other Group Writing & Research Tips” on the BA200 Research Guide for more information.

- **References**
  - Whenever information from other sources (e.g. articles, databases, web sites, etc.) is used, references must be provided in-text and in a list of references.

- **Submission guidelines**
  - One member of the team should upload a PDF copy of the final paper to Canvas by the due date.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- All papers should include an executive summary section.
  - See the BA200 Research Guide for guidance on writing the Executive Summary and the rest of the paper:
    - [https://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/ba200/BA200](https://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/ba200/BA200)

**INTRODUCTION**
COMPANY OVERVIEW:
● Introduce your company and provide background on what it does
  ○ Include qualitative descriptors such as summary of its history, founding, founder, current and prior geographic footprint, mission statement, etc.
  ○ Provide quantitative descriptors, such as market share, number of employees, revenue, net income, and income from continuing operations. Be sure that these descriptors are relevant (i.e. don’t include a number just because you have it).

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW
● Define and describe the industry your company operates within and the overall competitive landscape.
● Include major competitors (beyond the company you are focusing on)
● Include general trends affecting all firms in industry (e.g., e-commerce competition, changes in disposable income, technological developments, rise of millennials; impact of globalization; entry/exit/consolidation in industry, etc.).
● Compare the quantitative descriptors to industry averages. What story does this information convey about the company?

BODY
● What is your company’s Customer Value Proposition (CVP)?
  ○ How does the firm differentiate its products/services? What makes the products/services unique?
  ○ Consider focusing on a specific product line or brand if it helps you frame the analysis.
    ■ Product descriptions should be complete enough so that a “naïve” reader—think an individual who is not a customer or isn’t familiar with the company—would understand.
  ● What customer segments does the firm target?
    ○ What are the customer needs & values, pains, and gains?
    ○ How do the company’s customer segments differ from the industry average?
○ Describe a group of customers that have common needs. It should be clear why these customers are grouped together, i.e. geography, spending power, common interests, common values, busy schedules, etc.

• How does the firm’s products or services satisfy the target customer’s needs? Think pain relievers and gain creators.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

• How does this company compete successfully (or not) with others in the industry/market?

• How is the company’s value proposition similar or different to other competitors in the market?

• Does the company’s CVP align and/or “fit” with their target customer segments?

• Does the company’s CVP align with their mission statements?

• How does the company generate value superior to its competitors in the industry, and for which target customer segment(s) is it a better match? A worse match?

• How has the competitive landscape for the company and industry changed over time?
  ○ Why? What do you anticipate happening in the future? What impact will these changes have on the company’s CVPs? Has the company modified its CVPs in response to changes in the competitive environment?

• Are there any recommendations would you make going forward for this company?

REFERENCES

• As noted above, whenever your paper includes information from another source it should be cited in-text and in a corresponding entry in a list of references at the end of the document.

• See the “Writing the Executive Summary and other Group Writing & Research Tips” document linked from the BA200 Research Guide for more information.
RESEARCH PAPER RESOURCES

BA200 RESEARCH PAPER GUIDE

See the the BA200 Research Guide: https://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/ba200/BA200 for links to company and industry databases, the “Writing the Executive Summary and other Group Writing & Research Tips” document, and more.

OTHER RESEARCH PAPER SUPPORT

- **ONLINE LIBRARY WORKSHOP IN CANVAS**
  
  This should be completed individually. It is worth 10 points. Further instructions are in Canvas. **Due: Sunday, September 30th by 11:59 PM**

- **KRESGE LIBRARY DROP-IN AND APPOINTMENTS**

  Kresge Librarians will be available for team support throughout the term.

  - Make an appointment anytime (email: kresge_library@umich.edu or go to https://www.bus.umich.edu/kresgelibrary/contact.html )
  
  - BA200 Library Drop In Hours: stop by on **Fridays from 1-2:30 beginning September 28th** (meet in Library, 4th Floor Kresge building)

    - You can visit the library M-F from 9-5 anytime to speak with a reference librarian (and ask questions via chat after hours), but Fridays from 1-2:30 are set aside specifically for BA200 support and we will have extra librarians on hand to assist you and your team.

- **COURSE MATERIALS**

  - Remember that this paper should reflect your understanding of the main concepts covered during Unit 1 in discussion sections, readings, etc. so be sure to refer to class slides and notes in your research for this paper.

- **RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC**

  - See the BA200 Research Guide for file (also in Canvas)