

Entrepreneurial Marketing

AP/ENTP 4291 Credits: 1.5

Fall 2026

Course Information

Course Instructor: Laurie Baker, PhD
E-mail: lbaker1@yorku.ca
Office Hours & Location: By appointment
Course Time & Days: Wednesday
2:30-5:20pm

Class Location: MK 5055
Course eClass site

Land Acknowledgment

First Nations peoples have lived on this part of Turtle Island for millennia, stewarding the land, the water and all that contributes to life in this region. Today, the culture and presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples enrich the lands and people of this territory.

More than two centuries ago, the Mississauga people welcomed settlers to this territory, providing sustenance and engaging in trade and commerce. Between 1781 and 1820, eight treaties were signed between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who opened their territory to settlement. Today, York University's Keele Campus is located on Toronto Purchase Treaty, No. 13 lands and is situated on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee.

Treaty history is foundational, and it is our collective responsibility to honour the land, as we honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be learning, working and thriving on this land, and we commit to learn the truth and be active in the process of reconciliation. ([York University's Keele Campus Land Acknowledgment](#))

Course Overview

Course Description

This course focuses on the challenges of developing and implementing marketing strategies that are unique to the entrepreneurial context. Emphasizing market development and value creation, students will gain familiarity with marketing concepts and activities relevant at each stage of the new venture lifecycle through readings, case studies, critical reflection on real-

time new venture marketing activities, and classroom exercises and/or simulations.

Building on prior coursework in marketing and new venture management, this course emphasizes strategic decision-making in the entrepreneurial context. Early-stage ventures face constraints such as limited resources, low market awareness, and unproven value propositions. Students will explore how to address these challenges through market opportunity identification, customer discovery, value proposition design, competitive positioning, pricing, and go-to-market planning. Drawing on frameworks such as effectuation, lean startup, and customer development, students will learn how to build a market-driven business model and design a strategy to engage and grow an early customer base. Through team-based experiential projects, students will apply these theories to real ventures, testing assumptions, evaluating marketing options, and adapting plans based on data and feedback. This hands-on approach enables students to practice entrepreneurial decision-making in uncertain environments, building the agility and creativity needed to succeed in real-world ventures.

Pre-Requisites: AP/ADMS 2200 Introduction to Marketing and AP/ADMS 3920 New Venture & Small Business Management

Course Credit Exclusions (CCE): None

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and apply key marketing theories and models to the entrepreneurial context, including effectuation and lean startup principles.
- Develop a marketing strategy for a new or early-stage venture, based on segmentation, positioning, and customer insight.
- Critically evaluate real-world marketing challenges faced by entrepreneurial firms through case studies.
- Apply marketing theories to real-time entrepreneurial decisions using experiential learning projects or simulations.
- Reflect on the iterative, strategic nature of early-stage marketing and its influence on venture success.

Course Format

This course is offered in-person, over six sessions. Some elements of the course will be administered via eClass (i.e., quizzes, reflections, and assignment submissions). Attendance in

class is strongly encouraged as our sessions will not be recorded (slides will be posted to eClass with partial notes). There is also a class activity component in the grade structure.

Note: any session that cannot be delivered in person will be delivered via Zoom during our regularly scheduled class time or delivered asynchronously if necessary.

We will be relying on three primary sources of information: weekly instructor-led sessions (lectures, activities, cases, Q&A, etc.); case studies and journal articles, and other media.

Course Organization

Session 1 - September 9, 2026

Lecture

- Course format review

Readings/Materials

- No readings

Activities

- **The Weirdest Possible Idea**
 - Teams generate the worst possible ideas for provided brands
 - Target: 8-10 one-sentence “weird” ideas
 - Teams will then be asked to reverse-engineer their worst idea to reveal the implicit assumption it violates and the real marketing principle hiding inside it
 - Submit at the end of class.
- **Team Project Introduced**
 - Teams shared; entrepreneur client introduced.

Session 2 - September 16, 2026

Lecture

- The Entrepreneurial Marketing Context
- In-Class Case Study: Ritual

Readings/Materials (for Case Discussion submission before class)

- Sean Wise, & Phillip Raffi. (2016). [Dan Martell: Opportunity Evaluation by a Serial Entrepreneur](#). SAGE Publications: SAGE Business Cases Originals.

- Pattinson, S. (2016). [Case Study: Strategic Thinking: Intelligent Opportunism and Emergent Strategy - The Case of Strategic Engineering Services](#). International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 17(1), 65–65.
- **Optional:** Mansoori, Y., Lackéus, M. (2022) [Comparing effectuation to discovery-driven planning, prescriptive entrepreneurship, business planning, lean startup, and design thinking](#) Small Bus Econ 54, 791–818.
- **Optional:** Nijssen, E. J. (2022). Entrepreneurial marketing: how to develop customer demand (3rd ed.). Routledge. Pgs 1-13. Available [online](#) through York's Library holdings.

Activities

- **Framework Classification**
 - In teams, students receive a short description of a real early-stage startup's marketing behaviour and individually identify which of the three frameworks best explains what the founder is doing, and one assumption embedded in that approach.
- **Team Project Milestone (Optional Submission) - Maps to Sections 2, 3, 4**
 - 1. Customer discovery plan: target segment hypotheses, assumed jobs-to-be-done, and proposed interview protocol.
 - 2. A structured scan of publicly available customer voice (reviews, forums, social commentary, published market research).
- **Reflection Journal 1**

Session 3 - September 23, 2026

Lecture

- Market Opportunity Identification and Customer Discovery Lecture
- In-Class Case Study: Koho Financial

Readings

- Prescott C. Ensign, & Devin McDonald. (2024). [Wilder Harrier: A Pioneering Eco-Friendly Pet Nutrition Start-Up](#). SAGE Publications: SAGE Business Cases Originals.
- Satchu, R. (2024). [How a Mission to Cut Food Waste Launched a Multimillion-Dollar Venture](#). HBS: Working Knowledge.

Activities

- **Customer Interview Simulation**
 - Students pair up: one plays the founder, one plays a prospective customer for their venture. The interviewer spends 10 minutes developing a set of questions. The interviewee reviews the company case brief.

- Students submit an individual written reflection on one moment where their partner said something unexpected and what assumption it challenged.
- **Team Project Milestone (Optional Submission) - Maps to Sections 3, 4**
 - Business Model Canvas audit with each of the nine blocks marked as data-grounded or assumption, with a one-line rationale for each section
- **Reflection Journal 2**

Session 4 - September 30, 2026

Lecture

- Value Proposition Design, Positioning, and Branding Lecture
- In-Class Case Study: Slack & Wealthsimple vs. Canadian wealth management incumbents (Toronto)

Readings

- [Thinking Big and Building Trust: Michael Katchen's Wealthsimple is Breaking the Hype Cycle.](#) (2017) BrainStation Magazine.
- [From 0 to \\$1B - Slack's Founder Shares Their Epic Launch Strategy](#) (N.D.) Review First Round.

Activities

- **Business Model Canvas Audit**
- **Positioning Rationale**
 - Students individually write a one-paragraph positioning rationale explaining why their team chose the positioning they did and a one-paragraph identifying who the positioning explicitly excludes and why drawing that boundary is a strategic choice rather than a limitation.
- **Team Project Milestone (Optional Submission) - Maps to Sections 5, 6, 8**
 - BMC audit, VPC, riskiest assumptions, and competitive analysis including the positioning map.
- **Reflection Journal 3**

Session 5 - October 7, 2026

Lecture

- Go-to-Market Planning and Early Customer Acquisition Lecture
- In-Class Case Study: Wattpad (Toronto)
- Supporting Case Reference: Knix (Toronto)

Readings

- Majeau. N.D. [How Wattpad Got its First Million Users](#). SAAS North AI.
- **Optional:** Wallace, C. (2021). [“Go-to-Market Strategy.”](#) Harvard: Rock Centre for Entrepreneurship.
- **Optional:** Barratt-Pugh, L., Zhao, F., Suseno, Y., Redmond, J., & Standen, P. (2026). [Capitalising on the Social Interactional Nature of Digital Entrepreneurship: An Agenda for Digital Entrepreneurs](#). *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 35(1), 154–188.

Activities

- **MOAT assessment and Bullseye Exercise:**
 - Each team runs their venture through Bush's MOAT framework to identify which growth motion is the best fit, then completes a Bullseye exercise within that motion: brainstorming channels in the outer ring, identifying middle-ring candidates, and defending their bullseye choice with explicit resource and timing constraints. Individual submission of a written justification of their team's chosen motion and bullseye channel, explaining what evidence from Weeks 2 to 4 supports the choice.
- **Team Project Milestone (Optional Submission)**
 - Full draft marketing plan
- **Reflection Journal 4**

Session 6 - October 21, 2026

Activities

- **Team Presentations:**

Presented as a professional and strategic briefing to the entrepreneur client (~15-20 mins)

The focus is on actionable recommendations a real founder could act on

Presentation structure:

- Venture and market context (brief)
 - Customer discovery synthesis: what you found vs. what was assumed
 - Value proposition and target segment
 - Competitive positioning and pricing rationale
 - Go-to-market plan with channel priorities and early metrics
 - Top three recommendations and next 90-day priorities
- **Submission format of Marketing Plan – Final Report on the following week**

Report sections:

- Executive Summary

- Section 2: Venture and market context
- Section 3: Customer discovery methodology and findings
- Section 4: Market segmentation and target customer profile
- Section 5: Value proposition and assumption testing
- Section 6: Competitive positioning and pricing strategy
- Section 7: Go-to-market plan: channels, sequencing, metrics, milestones
- Section 8: Strategic risks and adaptation logic
- Appendices: Value Proposition Canvas, positioning maps - if applicable

Instructor Office Hours and Communication Guidelines

Office hours are virtual and by appointment only. Please email me (lbaker1@yorku.ca) to book an appointment. I will generally respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday to Friday.

Required Course Materials

All required articles or reading materials are available via the York Library or are available in the public domain.

Technical Requirements

Several platforms may be used in this course (e.g., eClass, Zoom, etc.) to access course materials, submit assignments, contact the course director and/or teaching assistant (TA) and engage in learning activities.

Need technical help? Check out the following links for information, resources and support:

- [Student Guide to eClass, Zoom and AI Tools](#)
- [Online and Zoom Meeting Etiquette](#)
- [eLearning Getting Started](#) (LA&PS eServices)
- [Student Guide to Remote and Online Learning](#)

If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) webpage or email askit@yorku.ca.

Course Evaluations

Course Evaluation Chart

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Format	Submission
Case Discussion Contribution	Weekly	15%	Word Doc	eClass
Reflection Journals	Weekly	15%	Word Doc	eClass
In-class Exercises	Weekly	20%	Word Doc	eClass
Marketing Plan Presentation (Team)		20%	Slideshow	In class & eClass
Marketing Plan - Final Report		30%	PDF/Word Doc	eClass
		100%		

Assessment Descriptions

Case Discussion Contribution - 15%

Before each content session (Weeks 2 through 5), you will submit a short written response to the assigned case or reading material. Submissions are due on eClass before class begins and must be 300 words or fewer.

Each submission has two parts. First, a synthesis: summarise the key marketing insight or decision in the assigned material in your own words. This is not a summary of the plot: it is your analytical read of what the case reveals about entrepreneurial marketing. Second, a discussion question: pose one question you genuinely want the class to explore. It should be something the material raises but does not resolve, not a question whose answer is already obvious from the reading.

Reflection Journals - 15%

You will complete four short reflection journals across the course, one after each content session from Week 2 through Week 5. Each journal is submitted to eClass after the session and before the following week's class.

Each journal prompt asks you to connect what happened in the session: the case discussion, the exercise, the frameworks introduced, to your own experience working on your team's venture project. Each journal should be approximately 250 to 350 words.

In-class Exercises - 20%

During each content session from Week 2 through Week 5, you will complete a short individual exercise administered in class. These are graded individually even when the preceding team activity informs your response. Activities are submitted on eClass unless otherwise noted.

Marketing Plan - Presentation - 20%

In the final session, each team delivers a 15-20 minute, professional presentation of their marketing plan to the class. The presentation is framed as a strategic briefing to your venture client: the standard is a clear and defensible set of recommendations that a real founder could act on.

Your presentation should cover the arc of your team's work across the course: what you discovered about your customer that confirmed or challenged your initial assumptions, the value proposition and target segment you developed from that discovery, your competitive positioning and pricing rationale, and your go-to-market plan with priorities and early metrics. Close with your top three actionable recommendations and a 90-day priority list for the venture.

All team members are expected to present and to field questions.

- Presentation structure:
 - Venture and market context (brief)
 - Customer discovery synthesis: what you found vs. what was assumed
 - Value proposition and target segment
 - Competitive positioning and pricing rationale
 - Go-to-market plan with channel priorities and early metrics
 - Top three recommendations and next 90-day priorities

Marketing Plan - Final Report

The marketing plan is the cumulative product of your team's work across the course. It is not a document produced at the end of the term but a polished integration of the checkpoints, research, and strategic thinking your team has developed since Week 2.

The plan should be grounded in evidence from your qualitative secondary research rather than in assumptions about who your customer is or what they value. A strong plan will show visible evolution across the course: where your team started, what you discovered, what changed as a result, and why the strategy you are recommending reflects those findings. A plan that reads as though it could have been written in Week 1 without any research or iteration will not meet the standard.

- Final Report Structure
 - Executive Summary
 - Section 2: Venture and market context
 - Section 3: Customer discovery methodology and findings
 - Section 4: Market segmentation and target customer profile
 - Section 5: Value proposition and assumption testing
 - Section 6: Competitive positioning and pricing strategy
 - Section 7: Go-to-market plan: channels, sequencing, metrics, milestones
 - Section 8: Strategic risks and adaptation logic
 - Appendices: Value Proposition Canvas, positioning maps - if applicable

How to Submit Assessments

Submit assignments on eClass, unless specified otherwise.

Late Work Policy

Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 1% per day. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Director but may require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter). Late assignments that are accepted will be graded but will not receive written comments. **PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS MUST CONTACT THE COURSE DIRECTOR BEFORE AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE IF THEY REQUIRE ACCOMMODATIONS.**

Missed Assessments, Tests and Exams

In addition to notifying the Course Director, you can use the [Absence Reporting](#) tool on the eClass platform to self-report certain temporary absences that prevent you from meeting your academic obligations.

How to Use Citations in this Course

[The Chicago Manual of Style](#) will serve as the preferred citation style for this course. However, any social science-based style is acceptable if used consistently. In-text citations are required for both cited and paraphrased text.

Resources to help with citations:

- [I need to cite and reference](#), Learning Commons
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), York U Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [Student Papers & Academic Research Kit \(SPARK\)](#)

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
A+	9	90–100	Exceptional
A	8	80–89	Excellent
B+	7	75–79	Very Good
B	6	70–74	Good
C+	5	65–69	Competent
C	4	60–64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55–59	Passing
D	2	50–54	Marginally Passing
E	1	40–49	Marginally Failing
F	0	0–39	Failing

Course Schedule

Important Dates

Explore York University's [Registrar's Office](#) to find a list of important dates, including class start and end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

Course Policies

Please review the course policies in this section. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Integrity and Conduct

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, students are responsible for understanding and upholding standards of academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. Students are

encouraged to use reliable [on-campus resources](#) that support coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of academic misconduct, review the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created, in whole or part, using generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). The use of AI tools, such as Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, DALL-E, translation software or similar applications, to complete academic work **without the knowledge or permission of the instructor** is considered a breach under York's Academic Conduct Policy. For more information, review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

If you are unsure whether the use of an AI tool for your academic work is permitted:

- Carefully review the assessment guidelines
- Check for any messages from the course instructor on eClass
- Consult with the instructor or TA before using these tools

Accessibility

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to course directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Requests for test and/or exam accommodations normally require three (3) weeks or 21 days before the scheduled test or exam to allow for appropriate arrangements. To learn more, visit [Accommodated Exam/Test Scheduling](#).

Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work

This policy applies to course assessments worth 20% or less of your overall course grade and does not apply to exams held during the final examination period. Students may self-declare two (2) 7-day consideration periods each 12-week term and one (1) 7-day consideration period per six (6)-week term. An Attending Physician's Statement (APS) is not required for these self-declared absences. However, an instructor may request a signed APS for the final examination period, coursework worth more than 20% of the course grade and missed work outside of the self-declared academic consideration period(s).

Students can submit their self-declaration(s) for academic consideration [using eClass](#). Students are then responsible for contacting the instructor no later than two (2) business days after the end of the consideration period(s) to arrange details of any accommodation for missed coursework. If you do not do this, you may get a zero (0) on the missed work. Where courses have built-in accommodations already established, the instructor may decline

providing additional accommodations under this policy. For further details, please review the [Policy on Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work](#).

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and to making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations for days of religious significance](#). If any of the dates listed in this course outline for assignments, tests or deadlines conflict with a day of religious significance, students should contact the instructor at least two (2) weeks, or 14 days, before the relevant deadline.

If the accommodation request relates to an exam or falls within the formal examination period, students must complete and submit the [Religious Accommodation Agreement \(PDF\)](#) at least three (3) weeks, or 21 days, before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this specific course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor, unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials, including book chapters, journal articles, music and videos, have either been licensed for use in this course or are used under an exception or limitation permitted by Canadian copyright law.

Students may not publish, post to an internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying or distributing this material, such as uploading content to a commercial third-party website, may result in a charge of misconduct under York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Final Examination Identification Policy

For final exams in this course, students must present a valid York University official photo identification card ([YU-card](#)) to verify their identity and sign the examination attendance roster. Students are encouraged to prepare for exams by reviewing York's Policies on the [Conduct of Examinations](#) and the Registrar's Office [Examination Tip Sheet](#).

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit written assignments to Turnitin through the course's eClass site for a review of textual similarity and the detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students consent to their material being included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database, where it will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's

use of the Turnitin service are available on the [Turnitin website](#). Students may opt out of using Turnitin. Those who wish to opt out, should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Student Support and Resources

York University offers a wide range of student support resources and services, including writing workshops, peer mentorship, wellness support and career guidance. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) provides support and guidance to students in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) offers support and accessibility accommodations, as required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) provides resources and counselling to support personal wellness and academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) and [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) offer free study sessions and academic supports that enable students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in select courses.
- [The Writing Centre](#) offers drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio and access to an accessibility specialist.
- [Centre for Indigenous Student Services](#) provides a community space with academic, spiritual, cultural and physical support, including writing and learning skills programs.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students in developing English language skills, including reading, writing and speaking.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) is a collection of timely and targeted resources to help students achieve academic, personal and professional success at different stages of their university journey.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) administers the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident and conflict resolution support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and provides escorted accompaniment for members of the York community to and from any on-campus locations, including the parking lots, bus stops or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).