



CRANFIELD  
UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF  
MANAGEMENT

## Challenge

Train future marketing professionals with limited data experience in how to extract, explore, analyze and act on the data now abundantly available in the digital age.

# A data revolution in the creative world of marketing

Graduate students enrolled in Cranfield's MSc in Strategic Marketing learn how to transform data into insights that drive successful segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies

In a data-rich environment, companies are increasingly turning to their marketing departments to boost business performance and be more accountable for the impact of their strategies and campaigns. Measurement and accountability have always been challenging for marketing, but in an era of big data, marketers can add rigor and evidence to what was once seen as a highly interpretive field.

The data generated by new technology is transforming marketing practices. This leaves companies with a challenge: Can the marketing establishment reorient itself to take full advantage of technology and data?

"The practice of marketing is fundamentally changing," says Stan Maklan, Professor of Marketing and Technology at Cranfield University and Co-Director of the Strategic Marketing and Sales Centre. "The days of just briefing an ad agency and getting a pretty picture are going by the wayside."

Professor Maklan focuses on helping both individual marketers and their organizations adapt to the democratization of data in the digital age. That's why, after a career that included positions with Unilever and business consultancy CSC, he now pours his energy into teaching at Cranfield University, a British postgraduate institution specializing in science, engineering, technology and management. His aim is to train marketing professionals to generate strategic insights based on data that will guide businesses to market their products and services more effectively.

"It's a mental thing; therefore, you need to have enough understanding to engage with data, some confidence in your knowledge of methods, tools, data exploration and modeling."

Professor Maklan's research focuses on big data, marketing analytics, customer relationship management, customer experience, marketing measurement and accountability, and marketing leadership. He is particularly interested in advancing the practice of data-driven decision making, guiding students to ask big questions and experiment with new methodologies.

The broad objective of his course, Professor Maklan says, is for students to develop "the ability to think analytically - the ability to frame problems so that advanced analytics can solve them. And the ability to critically interpret what they're seeing. [Marketers should be able to] brief data scientists on what they want."

Providing students with real-world case studies is key to helping them develop data-focused critical thinking skills. "Just knowing that there are different ways of answering the same business problem, for many, is a revelation," he says. "If your expert comes to you with one answer, you would know to ask, 'Is this the best analysis, or if there are other ways of doing it, why do you pick this one?'"

But an analytical mindset is only the first step. Students must also learn to use the tools available to deliver on the promise of analytics. Having the right platform makes the analysis much less daunting, Professor Maklan says, and that's why he teaches students to use JMP®.

## The ability to think analytically

Students who pursue Cranfield's Master of Science in Strategic Marketing bring to the table diverse backgrounds but often limited mathematical or statistical training. "Working with data doesn't mean you are going to be a data scientist, but you're going to have to learn how to structure problems in a way that data can inform," Professor Maklan tells his students on the path to becoming marketing managers.

Of the software available, JMP seemed to be much easier than alternatives, intuitive, excellent interface and superb online support tools both for the software and statistics in general. With JMP, even if you stick with the defaults, the software is rich and intuitive enough that you can adapt, learn, play and get a result.

Stan Maklan, Professor of Marketing and Technology



## A user-friendly tool makes analytics more approachable

"We opted to focus on JMP as a platform because it coincides with the democratization of data," Professor Maklan says. "Of the software available, JMP seemed to be much easier than alternatives, intuitive, excellent interface and superb online support tools both for the software and statistics in general. With JMP, even if you stick with the defaults, the software is rich and intuitive enough that you can adapt, learn, play and get a result."

Professor Maklan gives his students data sets from industry and sets them free to explore and propose solutions. The ultimate learning outcome is for students to become comfortable, confident and adept at using analytical methods for everything from segmentation and positioning to marketing mix optimization.

With JMP, Professor Maklan says, you can spend less time teaching students how to use software and more time teaching statistical concepts and problem solving. "That's where JMP is very strong," he adds, "you can look at customer defection, for example, and run through multiple methods, and literally in a couple of hours the student will understand that different methods might give you different answers – and that your job is to understand the differences and make an informed choice."

There's value as well in the online community that JMP has created, where students can go to find a wealth of resources and participate in the online forum, [community.jmp.com](http://community.jmp.com). "A website that provides easy answers to complex questions is really hard to do well, and JMP does it," Professor Maklan says. "The Community is a great resource, and my students often watch the online videos."

## Transforming marketers, transforming the industry

The benefits of this data-driven approach are borne out further in Professor Maklan's own research, where he has argued that capabilities are developed best through reflective practitioners, often by middle managers, rather than imposed top-down or brought in via suppliers and consultants. "Marketing doesn't have the best reputation in terms of quant, although marketing people tend to be more quantitative, more into market research, and they've always understood brand share and profitability," he adds. "The amount of data we have is enormous, yet most companies don't know what to do with all the data. They probably don't even understand all the data they have."

Cranfield School of Management is hoping to change that. The program's newly minted marketing managers are more data-literate and digitally savvy than ever before; skills that leave them poised to help their organizations develop from within. Professor Maklan, for one, is confident that the results will speak for themselves.

"Data is there – you can't run from it. Marketing practices and competencies need updating to meet the challenge."

## Solution

Use JMP® software in the classroom to encourage students to explore data and learn new ways to structure and resolve business challenges.

## Results

Students who graduate from Cranfield with a Master of Science in Strategic Marketing enter the workforce with valuable marketing analytics skills and the confidence to explore and model data. Educators hope that by boosting students' data literacy, they will gradually bring better data practices to the field as a whole.

To contact your local JMP office, please visit: [jmp.com/offices](http://jmp.com/offices)



SAS and all other SAS Institute Inc. product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of SAS Institute Inc. in the USA and other countries. ® indicates USA registration. Other brand and product names are trademarks of their respective companies. Copyright © 2019, SAS Institute Inc. All rights reserved. 1928108\_G106109.0519

The results illustrated in this article are specific to the particular situations, business models, data input and computing environments described herein. Each SAS customer's experience is unique, based on business and technical variables, and all statements must be considered nontypical. Actual savings, results and performance characteristics will vary depending on individual customer configurations and conditions. SAS does not guarantee or represent that every customer will achieve similar results. The only warranties for SAS products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements in the written agreement for such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. Customers have shared their successes with SAS as part of an agreed-upon contractual exchange or project success summarization following a successful implementation of SAS software.