


Syllabus: Inside Today's Business Schools

Publisher: The Standard


Year: 2000

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THE INDUSTRY STANDARD

November 13, 2000

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B-to-b, b-to-c and p-to-p – an executive-level program explains and explores the challenges of the new economy's alphabet soup.

By Kathi Black





Course: E-Distribution and E-Tailing Strategies
Location: International Institute for Management Development
Instructor: Nirmalya Kumar
Class Size: 50

Description: The institute, located in Lausanne, Switzerland, offers several executive MBA programs. Kumar is the head of the school's fledgling e-commerce program, and this four-day class is one of its first.

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Kumar says the course is for executives dealing with new-economy challenges at traditional and Internet companies, examining both business-to-business and business-to-consumer issues. It discusses three types of b-to-b companies: aggregators, auctioneers and marketplaces. In the b-to-c section, Kumar will look at the two concerns facing e-retailers: customer acquisition and fulfillment. The professor is particularly interested in how brand loyalty works online. Contrary to conventional wisdom, he says, online customers "are much more loyal to the brands and less promotion-sensitive than offline."

Kumar has not forgotten the other hot something-to-something business issue today: peer-to-peer networking.

"We're going to do a whole case on a music company and the challenges that the music industry faces because of Napster. How sell music will be completely different in 10 years," he notes. All case studies are Europe- and Asia-based because the challenges to Internet companies in Europe and Asia are very different than those in North America.

Kumar recommends certain books with a caveat: "I tell most people that this is not a great area for books but for articles. The only problem is that newspapers and magazines don't do too much