

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Critical
Thinking
Resource

Marketing

About The Wall Street Journal's Critical Thinking Resource

We developed this guide to help you maximize The Wall Street Journal as a resource for your classes. You'll be able to energize discussions and engage students with tangible examples of course concepts that your students can apply in the real world. In addition, with the help of faculty partners, we've curated a special collection of our most popular and thought-provoking articles about marketing. For each of these readings, we provide a summary, correlation to course topics, classroom applications and questions suitable for launching discussions and conducting assessments.

Here are some of the many ways to incorporate WSJ into your courses:

- **COURSE READINGS:** Assign articles as required reading alongside your textbook sections. For best results, include assessment questions on quizzes and exams.
- **DISCUSSION LAUNCHERS:** Use articles to spur classroom and threaded discussions in online and hybrid courses on core concepts and current events.
- **EXTRA CREDIT:** Allow students to read optional articles and answer assessment questions for extra credit.
- **GROUP PROJECTS:** WSJ is a rich source of real-world topics for group research and presentation projects.
- **RESEARCH PAPERS AND CASE STUDIES:** WSJ features provide timely citations for research projects.

Subtopic: Marketing Strategies in the Financial Services Industry

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Rich Millennials Would Rather Manage Their Own Money, Thank You

REPORTER: Rachel Louise Ensign, Peter Rudegeair

REVIEWED BY: Brian Tietje, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

DATE: November 8, 2021

TOPICS: targeting, financial services industry

LINK TO ARTICLE: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

More rich young investors are opting to go without a traditional financial adviser. Instead, they are betting they can get good enough investment options from do-it-yourself digital platforms that are cheap and easy to use. Many also want to invest in riskier assets, like cryptocurrencies and tech startups, that mainstream advisers often don't offer. The wealth-management businesses at top firms like Morgan Stanley and Bank of America Corp.'s Merrill Lynch continue to mint profits with moneyed older clients. But competition from digital upstarts is growing, and traditional firms know they need to attract the next generation of lucrative customers.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

You could have your students develop a recommended marketing strategy for a wealth-management firm that wants to target young rich investors. This could be an individual or group project.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the investing habits and tendencies of rich young investors.
2. What does it mean that an individual's investing style is self-directed?
3. How do the investing habits of young rich investors differ from moneyed older clients?
4. What strategies are wealth-management businesses trying to use in an effort to attract rich young investors?
5. Critically evaluate the strategies you described in your previous answer.

AmEx Gets Younger, More Blue Collar

REPORTER: Telis Demos

REVIEWED BY: Brian Tietje, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

DATE: October 25, 2021

TOPICS: target marketing, financial services marketing

LINK TO ARTICLE: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

What do plumbers and Gen Zers have in common? Both are spending money right now. Investors seem a bit concerned about credit cards. After surging for much of the year, share prices of card companies have mostly fallen or underperformed the broader bank sector since the start of earnings season in mid-October. But American Express defied the gloom, sending its shares higher following its earnings report. One driver might have been its exposure to small-business activity. Small enterprises in businesses such as auto repair, home construction or plumbing can also be beneficiaries of tight markets, with more pricing power. The fact that supplies might cost more isn't bad news for card volumes, either.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

You can ask your students to describe and critically evaluate at least three different target markets for credit card services. As the article explains, some markets, like corporate spending customers, are not spending as much money as they have in the past, while others, like small businesses, are. Another activity is to ask students to explain how credit card companies make money and then to explain what AmEx is doing to fare better than other credit card companies.

QUESTIONS:

1. In your own words, explain how credit card companies make money. Mention at least two different ways they generate income.
2. For what reasons is American Express (AmEx) stock performing well while the stocks of other credit card-related companies are not?
3. What metric is used as an indicator of how much credit card companies are investing in growth? Why?
4. Describe and critically evaluate at least three different target markets for credit card services.
5. How might this opportunity align with a company's efforts to advance its diversity, equity and inclusion efforts?

Square Inc.'s CFO Talks Bitcoin, Afterpay and Cash App

REPORTER: Nina Trentmann

REVIEWED BY: Brian Tietje, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

DATE: October 28, 2021

TOPICS: market growth strategies, financial services marketing

LINK TO ARTICLE: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUMMARY:

The Wall Street Journal spoke to Amrita Ahuja, Square's chief financial officer, about managing the company's growth strategy. Square Inc., started out as a payment-services provider, enabling small businesses to process card payments with inexpensive white card readers and tablets. Since then, the company has added more services for businesses, a digital-payments service for consumers, a payments platform for artists, and a developer platform that plans to build a decentralized bitcoin exchange.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION:

You could ask your students to briefly describe and critically evaluate at least three of the different services that Square is offering, with a focus on how those services are positioned for market growth opportunities.

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe Square if you were describing the company to someone who has never heard of it before?
2. List and briefly describe the various services that Square offers.
3. Why does Square's CFO believe that bitcoin is best positioned to be the "native currency" of the internet?
4. Describe and critically evaluate the three primary ways that Square is growing Cash App's penetration rate.
5. Describe Square's target market(s).