

MODULE 5 ASSIGNMENT: PRODUCT STRATEGY AUDIT

(Research + Narrated PowerPoint)

Purpose

This assignment helps you analyze a real offering the way marketers do: not as "a thing," but as a bundle of **outcomes, experiences, and support**. You will research a product or service, evaluate its **customer value and friction**, and recommend improvements using the **three levels of a product** (core/actual/augmented) and **features** → **benefits** thinking.

What You'll Create

Submit **two items**:

1. **Narrated PowerPoint: 5–8 slides and 3–5 minutes**
2. **Research Notes (1 page)**: bullet notes with your sources + key findings

Your grade reflects both your **slides** and your **spoken narration**.

Step 1 — Choose an Offering to Audit (Pick ONE)

Choose a product/service students actually use (campus or local). Examples:

- Campus coffee cart, tutoring center, gym, bookstore, shuttle/transportation, meal plan option
- Delivery service, streaming subscription, food brand, productivity app, campus event series

You must also choose **one competitor or alternative** (a direct competitor OR "what people do instead").

Step 2 — Research Requirements (Minimum)

Use **at least 3 sources**, including:

- **Company source**: official site/app/store listing
- **Customer voice**: reviews, ratings/comments, or a quick mini-survey (3+ classmates)
- **Competitor/alternative evidence**: competitor price/offer details OR a substitute alternative (example: "YouTube instead of tutoring")

Research Notes (1 page, bullets)

Include:

- Your **3+ sources** (links are OK here)
- **6–10 bullets** with key facts: pricing, features, customer praise/complaints, friction points, competitor comparison notes

Narrated PowerPoint Requirements (5–8 slides)

Keep slides clean and speak the details in your narration. Use this slide structure:

Slide 1 — Title + What You Chose

- Offering name + category (good/service/experience)
- Target customer (who uses it most)

Slide 2 — What Customers Are Really Buying (Core Benefit)

- 2–3 bullets: the outcome customers want (convenience, confidence, stress relief, saving time, etc.)

Slide 3 — Value Equation (Benefits – Costs)

- 3 benefits
- 3 costs (**at least 2 must be non-money costs** like time, effort, stress, uncertainty, or risk)
- 1 sentence: "Overall value feels high/medium/low because..."

Slide 4 — Three Levels of the Product (Core / Actual / Augmented)

Create a simple chart with:

- Core benefit (outcome)
- Actual product (features/design/what they receive)
- Augmented product (support/service/ease: onboarding, reminders, guarantees, help resources)

Slide 5 — Friction Audit (Where People Drop Off) + Competitor

- 2–3 friction points in the experience (steps, confusion, long wait, decision fatigue)
- One quick comparison: what the competitor/alternative does better (or faster/easier)

Slide 6 — Recommendations (Your Product Strategy Fix)

Recommend **2 improvements**:

- **1 actual product change** (feature, packaging, design, quality, menu simplification, etc.)
- **1 augmented product change** (support/service/ease: onboarding, reminders, clearer process, guarantee)

Each recommendation must clearly **increase benefits or reduce costs/friction**.

Slides 7–8 (Optional)

Use only if needed:

- A simple "before vs after" experience flow
- A stronger value proposition + proof points
- A quick mockup of an improved process ("Start Here" button, 3-step booking, bundle option)

Narrated PowerPoint Instructions

Use this tutorial to record narration in PowerPoint:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5dgwwa5XRA>

Submission (Canvas)

Upload:

1. Your **PowerPoint file with narration** (preferred) *or* a video export if instructed
2. Your **Research Notes** (PDF or Word)

Grading Rubric (100 points total)

A) Research Quality	20 pts
3+ sources; competitor/alternative included; evidence is specific and relevant.	
B) Core Benefit + Value Analysis	20 pts
Clearly identifies the real outcome customers want and applies benefits—costs with non-money costs.	
C) Three Product Levels	20 pts
Accurate, thoughtful core/actual/augmented breakdown.	

D) Friction + Competitor Insight**15 pts**

Identifies realistic friction points and compares to a competitor/alternative.

E) Recommendations**20 pts**

Two strong, realistic improvements (1 actual + 1 augmented) that clearly increase value.

F) Presentation Quality + Requirements**5 pts**

5–8 slides, 3–5 minutes, clear narration, professional slides, minimal errors.