## Unit 2: Individual Project Discussion: Value Chain Analysis

The Unit 2 Project Discussion involves everyone in the class. Each student will post their choice of the company they will analyze and assess. Select one company from a predefined list of choices as described below. In this discussion, each student will share information; about their choice and about the potential resources that might be used to achieve requirements described in the Unit 4 Individual Project Paper: Value Chain Analysis, and the Unit 5 Individual Project Presentation: Value Chain Assessment.

The specific requirements for this Unit 2 Project Discussion are listed below. This Unit 2 Project Discussion offers the class an opportunity to share thoughts about how each student will proceed on their own Unit 4 and Unit 5 Individual Project assignments. In Unit 6, we will reconvene to review our Unit 5 assessment presentation and to bring closure to our Value Chain Analysis and Assessment adventure.

**You must choose one of the following six international companies:**

| | **Company Name** | **Company Website** | **Company Industry according to Company Profile in Kaplan Library** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Amazon.com Inc. | www.amazon.com | Retail |
| 2. | Dell Inc. | www.dell.com | Technology |
| 3. | Delta Air Lines, Inc. | www.delta.com | Transportation |
| 4. | McDonald's Corporation | www.mcdonalds.com | Retail [Food Service] |
| 5. | Microsoft Corporation | www.microsoft.com | Technology |
| 6. | Toyota Motor Corporation | www.toyota.com | Automotive |

**Before you make your decision of which international company to select from the list provided, consider the following:**

1. If you are a current or former employee of one of these companies, you may not choose it.
2. You may not choose a company you previously used for your project in GB530 (Marketing Management) or GB560 (Designing, Improving, and Implementing Processes).
   - ***(As a reminder, all papers in this class are submitted to Turnitin, Kaplan’s plagiarism-detection software of choice, so it is in your best interest not to use content you submitted in prior courses when submitting your assignments in this course.)***
3. Select a company you find most interesting to research for this project.
4. Consider the goal of Value Chain Management:
   - *To maximize value creation while minimizing costs by achieving full and seamless interaction among all members of the value chain, resulting in lower*

*inventories, lower process-related costs, higher customer satisfaction, shorter time to market and competitive advantage.* **A Value Chain is designed to sustain competitive advantage by achieving performance objectives and delighting customers**

5. Consider the definition of a Value Chain:

- A **Value Chain** is an **integrated** management activity that first explores and understands markets that appear attractive, second, through processes such as market opportunity analysis identifies **industry drivers** and **resource requirements**, third, considers the potential organizational alternatives that are available and likely to be successful in achieving realistic **financial and marketing objectives**. These three steps bring forth an important outcome: a model of **customer value expectations** and an understanding of **customer value drivers**. Together these provide an understanding of customer demographics and socio-economics, and these in turn provide the basis for planning an effective **marketing strategy** from which a **value proposition** can be developed. It is important that the **demand chain** profile be understood prior to making supply chain decisions. **Supply chain** considerations include product and process design, procurement decisions, and integrated inventory management and manufacturing processes. At this point, **value production and coordination decisions closely reflect customer product and purchasing behavior preferences**. Typically, many of these aspects are outsourced, thus extending the value chain beyond only one organization. **The ultimate goal is to sustain competitive advantage by achieving performance objectives and delighting customers**.

6. Review the Unit 4, Unit 5 and Unit 6 assignment descriptions (included in this document) to learn what is expected and required.

7. Consider how you will acquire information to determine the critical components to be included in your value chain analysis and to be used to assess the effectiveness of the company's value chain.

- You will submit your Value Chain Analysis in Unit 4. In Unit 5, you will assess the effectiveness of the company's value chain based upon your Unit 4 Value Chain Analysis. In Unit 6, everyone will attach their Unit 5 Individual Project Presentation: "Value Chain Assessment" in the Unit 6 discussion area and discuss their assessment. Our Unit 6 Discussion conversation will include both outcomes and perspectives. ***(All of your classmates will see and review your Unit 5 presentation.)***

- Review the chapter titles, outlines and descriptive content in the Walters and Rainbird (2007) textbook. We will use their value chain analysis model as the basis and format for our Value Chain Analysis assignments. ***(This is especially important to note because if you Google the company's name plus "value chain" you may find a description of a Value Chain for the company, but it is most likely not following the format required for this course or is it accurate or is it current, and some of those links have viruses attached, so beware).***

- Check out company websites (included above) to see what information is available.
- Check out “Company Profiles” available in the Kaplan Library. *To access Company Profiles in the Kaplan University Library:*
  *1. Enter Library from Quick Links from Kaplan portal home page.*
  *2. Choose tab “Find Articles and E-book “and from dropdown, choose “Databases A-Z”.*
  *3. Choose Business Source Complete*
  *4. At the top, in the purple area, choose “more”.*
  *5. Select “Company Profiles” from dropdown list.*

8. Consider the nature of the company’s classification: product, service or product and service, as each classification has its own unique value chain components.
9. Understand a significant graded expectation of graduate school study is based upon originality (at least 85%) and application of cited references (no more than 15%).

- ***All assignments in this class are submitted to Kaplan’s Plagiarism Software, Turnitin, to confirm originality and appropriate application of cited references. Absolutely do not use anyone else’s words as your own unless included within quotation marks and referenced. Paraphrased application of someone else’s words does not require quotation marks but must be referenced using APA in-text reference citation formatting. Kaplan’s expectation is for at least 85% of the content of your submitted postings and assignments to be in your own words.***

**Requirements for the Unit 2 Project Discussion: Value Chain Analysis**

1. Identify your choice of a company.
2. Explain why you chose it.
3. Identify potential supportive, relevant resources you will use to complete your Individual Project Paper: Value Chain Analysis assignment in Unit 4 (possible 160 pts).
4. Explain why you chose these resources.
5. Speculate on your expectations regarding the effectiveness of the company’s value chain: will your Unit 5 Assessment presentation (possible 100 pts.) prove the company’s value chain to be effective or ineffective?
6. As always, be sure to follow the Discussion Guidelines as included in the course Syllabus.

Review the Discussion Board Participation grading rubric on your course syllabus. To ensure you earn maximum points, your professionally written postings should provide substantive depth that demonstrates your proficiency to address topics and advance the discussion at a graduate school level. Your postings should represent your own experience and the knowledge you have gained through learning, by communicating clearly through the written word. Correct use of grammar, spelling, descriptive explanations, and logical flow of thought are important in all assignments.