**Prepare as a word processed document (such as Microsoft Word). Use 12-point font, Times New Roman.  Use black ink for majority of your work and only use colors if it enhances your ability to communicate your thoughts.**

**Your assignment should be the equivalent of approximately five pages of double-spaced text, approximately 1/2 page for each of the eight questions (four in Part 1 and four in Part 2).**

**Include a bibliography, which includes at least four references.**

**You may use MLA or APA style.**

**Bud Light**

**Part 1 - What is Strategic Marketing?**

**Questions**

1. ***Creating Value for Customers.***Consider the customers you believe currently use your product or service and the definition of marketing offered in the course content.  As we begin our study of marketing, what are your preliminary thoughts as to how you think the company creates value for its customers based on the concepts in this week's readings.
2. ***Role of the Customer in the Company's Strategic Plan.***The readings indicate that the best marketing begins with the customer and that commitment to the customer begins with including the customer in the company's mission statement.  Find your company's mission statement.  Repeat it (or attach as an exhibit if it is too long) and comment on its effectiveness in demonstrating the company's commitment to having a customer focus.  Could the mission statement have more focus on the customer?  How would you recommend it be modified?  Is it supported with value statements or other evidence of a customer focus?
3. ***SWOT analysis.***  Identify at least one element of each of the SWOT categories (a strength, a weakness, an opportunity, and a threat).  Explain your choice using a citation if needed.  Then identify possible implications for each of the four elements.  *For example, if a strength is a a strong national brand name, the implication is that the company may be able to launch other related products under the positive umbrella of the same brand name.  Conversely, if a major weakness is the company is carrying a lot of debt, the implication is that the company not not be able to achieve significant growth, but may have to consider retrenchment strategies.*
4. ***Competitive Analysis.***Identify at least two major competitors or those two products that are trying to sell essentially identical products to the same type of consumer.  Then, identify at least three criteria that are important to those consumers when they are making their decision as to which of the three competing offers to buy (e.g. price, specific benefit, service, warranty, convenience, specific feature, etc.).  Make a little chart with the three criteria along the left-hand side and the competitor products (including your own product) across the top.  Rank each of the products on a scale from 1= low to 5= high on each performs on each of the three criteria.  Add down each column.   Which product ranked highest overall based on the sum of the columns.   Then, look at the highest score in each of the criteria boxes.  Which products ranked the highest on each of the three criteria? Was it the same product, was it three different products?  What do these results tell you about the competitive environment of your product category.  Which product is the leader?  Which product is the follower, challenger and nicher if those categories apply?

**Part 2 - Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty,  Management and Empowerment**

**Things to Consider:**

* You may want to find a Most Valuable Customer (MVC) of the product or service if you are not one yourself, or alternatively think like an MVC.  What is the evidence of an MVC of your product or service?  It isn't just that the customer regularly buys the product or service.  It means that the customer is treated differently -- better -- than other customers.  It means that the MVC represents about 20% of the company's revenues.   These are the customers with whom the company regularly communicates, offers special deals,  and other ways as outlined in the text and as you can find with just a little bit of googling on the internet.
* You may want to calculate the lifetime value of a most valuable customer.  See the discussion of the lifetime value calculation in the week's reading, and calculate the LTV using this simple equation:  LTV = (Price - cost to produce the product) \* number of annual purchases \* number of years expected to purchase - initial acquisition costs.  For simplicity sake, you can assume your customer will have a relationship with you for ten years and you can make an educated guess as to how much the initial acquisition costs were to get him as a customer in terms of advertising or other types of promotion efforts.   If you are not an MVC yourself, make and share your assumptions about your calculation. If you are not an MVC, you might want to find someone who is and ask them why they are loyal to the product or service and what they feel the company does for them that is special that they don't do for other customers.
* You may need call or visit a store to take a look at your product or service if the website does not provide you everything you need to evaluate the company's product or service privacy policy.  Usually the privacy policy is available on the website.

**Questions**

* 1. ***Customer Empowerment.***How does your product or service offering empower its customers as discussed in the course readings this week?  In other word, how are customers part of the marketing for the company? Identify the feedback vehicles they may use, especially social media. Do the social media efforts seem to be creating buzz marketing? If not, what could they do to generate more ‘buzz’?
  2. ***Customer satisfaction***.  How does your product or service offering communicate ways for customers to express their dissatisfaction? If possible, outline what remedies the product or service may be taking to ensure satisfaction.
  3. ***Customer Relationship Management.***Does it appear that your product has a customer relationship management strategy?  In other words, do they treat the top tier of customers differently than other customers? If so, what is your evidence?  If not, should they have a CRM strategy?  Or, are there compelling reasons why your product or service should treat all customers the same?  Refer to course content concepts in your response.
  4. ***Customer privacy***.  Review your product or service offering's privacy policy (usually published on its website). Analyze whether you think they do enough to protect the customer’s privacy or what steps you might suggest they take to protect customer's privacy.  Refer to the privacy policies or the information on warranties and guarantees.  The company's customer support page might also be useful. Do they publish a remedy should the customer's privacy be breached?  Should they?