



# Make A Pitch



## Selling Sociological Sausages

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## Selling Sociological Sausages

Although, when all's said and done, this is really just a simple evaluation exercise disguised as something a bit more interesting, it does have its benefits. These include:

- students more-actively engaged in their learning.
- targeted teacher time for those who need it.
- greater student investment in their learning.
- a focus on both knowledge and higher skills.

While you can make the activity as simple or as complex as you like (by adding or removing different layers), the basic idea involves choosing a sociologist / perspective / theory / method and asking students to “market it” as if they were selling sausages (other meat / vegetarian options are available).



- Divide the class into small groups (or work individually if you prefer).
- Each group takes on the role of a Marketing / Design Agency tasked with selling whatever you want them to learn (such as different sociological perspectives on education).



## Short Version

In this version of the exercise the task is to “Represent the Brand” by designing an advertising proposal that shows it off in the best possible light.

“The brand” can be anything you like:

- a **sociological perspective** - such as Functionalism.
- a **sociologist** - such as Marx, Weber or Durkheim.
- a **research method** - such as Participant Observation.
- a **theory** applied to a particular context - such as the Correspondence theory of education.

# Branding

*The focus in this short version, therefore, is on identifying and emphasising the strengths or advantages of the perspective / method / theory etc.*

Each group is given, for example, a particular sociological perspective to advertise, which they can do in whatever way they want within the limits of the brief you give them (see below).

The advertising copy they produce (such as text, pictures, graphics etc.) should be reasonably short, punchy and catchy: the aim is to sell the Brand.

## The Brief

If you want to set limits (of both time and imagination) on the work each group does you may want to specify how they present the information they use. You may, for example, set a brief that only requires text, or text and a single picture.

Whatever limits you set it would be useful to tell each group that the task involves trying to convey as much useful information as possible in an entertaining, informative and educational way.

## Extension

If you want to extend the activity, commission each group to design a proposal for “attack adverts” that aim to show competing Brands in a poorer light.

If, for example, a group was responsible for branding a Functionalist perspective they could be commissioned to produce an “attack ad” for a Marxist or Interactionist perspective.

*The general idea here is to identify and emphasise the weaknesses of competing perspectives.*

## Long Version

For a longer version of the exercise you can commission each group to create a complete “Brand” for their respective perspectives / theories / sociologists / methods.

The longer version extends the previous version (where students variously focus on the strengths / weaknesses of a perspective, theory or method) through the addition of a couple more categories.



### Who we are

This section describes the brand. For example, if they were promoting a method such as Participant Observation, students would use this section to provide some basic background information about the method (such as what it involves, different types and so forth). In other words, this section is used to describe Participant Observation.

### What we do

This section can be used for interpretation and explanation. In this example, students might use the section to illustrate different types of Participant Observation (overt and covert) and provide examples of different studies that have successfully used the method.

### What we offer

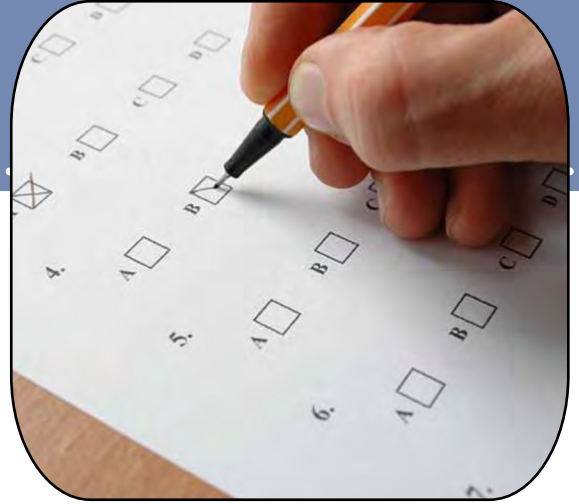
As in the short version, the focus in this section is on “promoting the brand” (in this instance Participant Observation) by identifying and explaining its strengths / advantages.

### We know we’re not perfect, but...

In this version students should identify the disadvantages of, in this instance, Participant Observation and suggest ways these weaknesses / limitations could be addressed or overcome.

The idea here is that if other Brands are going to go on the attack students need to be aware of the kinds of criticisms their Brand is likely to receive and, where possible, suggest ways to neutralise them.





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