

790 Capstone Management Project

Introduction

790 CAPSTONE MANAGEMENT PROJECT engages students in the conduct of a management project in an area of especial relevance to the student's current or prospective area of business focus. The subject is designed to integrate the knowledge and applied skills learned in the U21Global MBA programme in the production of project deliverables. Students are tasked to prepare a management consulting report, either as a solution to a problem internal to the participant's workplace, or as an external consulting project responding to a real-world situation or advanced case study. The project incorporates and integrates the major concepts and applied skills in an area of particular professional interest to the student.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this subject, students should be able to

- integrate theories learned in previous subjects to real business problems
- apply conceptual frameworks and global best practices to management challenges
- formulate practical solutions for companies through comprehensive analysis of an organisation
- use knowledge and skills learned in the core disciplines of accounting, finance, marketing, management, economics and data analysis
- demonstrate the ability to use electronic resources of the Internet effectively as a major business resource

Required textbooks

Greiner, L and F. Poulfelt. *The Handbook of Management Consulting: The Contemporary Consultant: Insights from Leading Experts*. Ohio: South Western, 2005.

Zikmund, W. *Business Research Methods* (7th ed). Ohio: South Western, 2003.

Prerequisites

601 Organisational Behaviour
602 Data Analysis for Managers
611 Financial Reporting and Statement Analysis
612 Finance
620 Managerial Economics
630 Marketing Management
640 Managing International Business
650 eBusiness
660 Operations Management
690 Strategic Management

Assessment

Students will be graded in their participation in four ongoing discussion boards over the 12-week period. These discussion boards will cover the four broad areas of:

- Problem Identification

- Data Collection
- Analysis
- Recommendation and Feedback

Examples of Possible Projects

Students are encouraged to integrate theories learned in previous subjects to real business problems that relate to their real-world responsibilities. To assist them with an overview of the practice of management consulting in major practicing areas, students can refer to their proposed text, Greiner and Poulfelt (2005). Examples of possible projects in various consulting areas include the following:

Information Technology Consulting

- Creating a strategy and plan for eBusiness in a real-world organisation
- Developing an IT proposal to support an organisation's international expansion plans
- The use of IT to support the development of an organisation's human resources

Strategy and Organisation Consulting

- The application of the value-driven consulting model to a real-world organisation
- Developing a comprehensive programme for culture change across the organisation
- Developing an integration programme for two merging companies
- Building a new organisational design to enter international markets
- A major headquarters cost-reduction programme in a real-world organisation
- Strategies for outsourcing in a real-world organisation
- Developing a programme of strategic alliances in R&D and branding

Marketing Consulting

- Developing an integrated communication strategy for a new product/service
- Tailored marketing mix strategies for social and environmental marketing
- Market analysis, segmentation analysis, positioning analysis, channel studies, pricing analysis, marketing audits
- Managing the lifetime value of various segments of customers

Operations Management Consulting

- Audit of the assembly-line load balancing of a real-world organisation
- Improving the service encounter design of a real-world organisation via effective measurement, recovery planning and critical incident analysis
- Designing systems for mass customisation in the manufacturing/service sector

Human Resources Consulting

- Improving a company's human capital management as a source of competitive advantage
- The systematic tracking and evaluation of compensation awards and performance evaluation results for a real-world organisation
- Evaluating the compatibility, flexibility and analytical power of an eHR system

- Culture change and skill development in a real-life organisation
- Impacts of downsizing on efficiency and effectiveness
- Initiation and management of an active outsourcing programme
- Managing key staff members through a flotation, spin-off or divestiture
- The impact of trade unions on doing business nationally and internationally

Consulting to CEOs and Boards

- Proposal for the CEO/Board's role in crisis management and prevention
- Corporate-wide risk analysis and management programme
- Comprehensive strategy development and communication programme
- Structuring board and management committees

Globalisation Consulting

- Analysis of the global environment: Social-economic-political risks and opportunities
- Development of a global strategy for new market entry: The implications of cost, customer, innovation and competitive performance indicators
- Achieving balance in globalisation capacity and global paradox management

Public Sector Consulting

- Developing effective performance outcome training and evaluation processes by proposing alterations to existing civil service rules
- Customising government services for various segments of citizens
- Models of eGovernment to help shape state and local portal designs

Merger and Acquisition Consulting

- Planning and selection of strategy for inter-firm fit
- Assessment of business and cultural impediments to integration success
- The transference and combination of core competencies and best practices
- Achievement of synergies
- Managing human resources in an M&A environment
- Cultural diagnostic and integration programme
- Acquisition of a competitor
- Analysis and evaluation of an R&D pipeline
- Cross-border acquisitions
- M&A: Buying brands and distribution
- Corporate portfolio rationalisation programme

Knowledge Management Consulting

- Developing a blueprint for implementing a Best Practice Sharing initiative
- Developing an integrated knowledge management measurement model
- Analysing the process of knowledge creation in a high-tech industry
- Developing a strategy to foster knowledge stewardship in a virtual team
- Exploring cross-cultural issues in knowledge management

Online Consulting

- Creating and sustaining competitiveness across time and space
- Developing a strategic proposal for project-specific extranets that enable organisations to monitor progress
- The integration of the Internet/Web services into an organisation's expansion and outsourcing activities
- The use of the Internet and real-time information systems in data-mining and decision support systems