



Course Outline 2017

BUSADMIN 780: MANAGING BUSINESS GROWTH (15 points)

Quarter 1 (1172)

Course Prescription

A project-based course in which teams take on the role of planning the growth of an enterprise. It examines possible growth strategies and provides practical experience in identifying, assessing, and valuing strategic opportunities for growth.

Programme and Course Advice

Prerequisite: BUSADMIN 768 or 778

Goals of the Course

The paper presents a fieldwork opportunity to apply skills gained during previous MBA papers to a real business. The term “real” connotes a business with which participants will interact on a regular basis during the course. Course participants will work in syndicates with an allocated organisation to address a problem or issue chosen by the organisation’s management, usually relating to growth management. The project will be conducted following a systematic framework called “the consulting process,” similar to that used by the top consulting organisations.

Whilst other MBA papers have included extensive and intensive use of case studies, BUSADMIN 780 focuses on actual businesses with actual issues. The paper requires a holistic approach to problem-solving in which course participants will have to contextualise problems, analyse such problems from multiple perspectives, and suggest interventions. Such interventions will be supported by strong rationale and theoretical foundation from relevant management fields. In case studies, the nature of the problem (e.g., strategy, people) is apparent because it is presented in the context of a particular paper. Because there is no clear frame of reference, fieldwork requires the ability to diagnose the nature and drivers of issues.

This course will place participants in a real-time environment in which the people, problems, and solutions have real impact. The overarching goal of the course is to sharpen participants’ professional skills in:

- Identifying a problem or opportunity faced by a business.
- Determining what information participants need to learn about the problem or opportunity.
- Discovering where to find relevant information and how to interpret the information.

- Strengthening the ability to function in a group and developing a cross-disciplinary understanding of business problems.
- Recognising that any organisation is a complex system in which relationships and effects among the parts must be considered.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course it is expected that the student will be able to:

1. understand how to seek information relating to a business and propose a set of actions as a result of research, within the context of an uncertain organisational environment;
2. gather, organise and interpret information, considering multiple perspectives, stakeholders and contingencies;
3. analyse a highly unstructured and uncertain management-related problem, and pinpoint theoretical models/frameworks from which to derive recommendations;
4. analyse a problem from the perspective of management theory and apply objective enquiry, systematic analysis and research; and
5. participate in a team effort, perform to the expectation of peers, and manage intra-group relationships and conflicts.

Those outcomes embed what is called the “consulting process” or the “consulting approach” to addressing business issues.

Content Outline

- Session 1 The consulting process and approach
- Session 2 Overview of general management tools and frameworks
- Session 3 Syndicate WIP Presentation 1: Statement of work
- Session 4 External Analysis
- Session 5 Project mentorship and consultation
- Session 6 Positioning analysis – Working with entrepreneurial companies
- Session 7 Syndicate WIP Presentation 2: Project strategy
- Session 8 Internal Analysis
- Session 9 Project mentorship and consultation
- Session 10 Presentation to clients and expert panel

Learning and Teaching

Because this is a project-based experiential paper, sessions will provide an opportunity for project supervision and team individual consultation with the lecturer.

There will be three types of class sessions: formal lectures, syndicate presentations, and project review. Class sessions will serve many purposes – information dissemination is only one of them. The class is primarily a forum for the students and instructor to critically review and discuss the process and content of the allocated project. Participants need to become sufficiently self-aware as to how they might best exploit these different learning forms to their own benefit. The first two sessions will provide participants with some basic tools to undertake fieldwork. In addition, an introduction to management frameworks will be provided to help participants with framing client problems within a holistic context and with identifying the potential nature of problems (e.g. strategic, operational, and technological). This is the “consulting content.”

Teaching Staff

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Learning Resources

There is no prescribed book, but the following titles are strongly recommended:
Blank, S., & Dorf, B. (2012). *The Startup Owner's Manual: The Step-By-Step Guide For Building A Great Company*.
Evans, V. (2013). *Key Strategy Tools: The 80+ Tools for Every Manager to Build a Winning Strategy*. FT Prentice Hall.
Fleisher, C. & Bensoussan, B. (2007). *Strategic and Competitive Analysis*. FT Prentice Hall
Fleisher, C. & Bensoussan, B. (2015). *Business and Competitive Analysis*. FT Prentice Hall
Fleisher, C. & Bensoussan, B. (2015). *Analysis without Paralysis: 12 Tools to Make Better Decisions*. FT Prentice Hall
Fombrun, C & Nevins, M (2006). *The Advice Business: Essential Tools and Models for Management Consulting*. Pearson Prentice Hall

Assessment

This paper is internally assessed – there is no final exam.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 Work-in-progress Presentation | 5% |
| 2 Work-in-Progress Presentation 2 | 5% |
| 3 Final Presentation | 40% |
| 4 Final Report | 50% |
| Peer Review (*) | (moderator) |

Further details of these assessments will be provided during class and on CANVAS.

The broad relationship between these assessments and the core learning outcomes is as follows:

| Learning Outcome | WIP Presentation 1 | WIP Presentation 2 | Final Presentation | Final Report | Team Member Contribution |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | X | X | X | X | |
| 2 | X | X | X | X | |
| 3 | | X | X | X | |
| 4 | | X | X | X | |
| 5 | | | | | X |

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The University of Auckland regards cheating as a serious academic offence. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. In coursework assignments submitted for marking, plagiarism can occur if you use the work and ideas of others without explicit acknowledgment. Work can be plagiarised from many sources, including books, journal articles, the internet, and other students' assignments. A student's assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection mechanisms. Upon reasonable request, students may be required to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review.

The way of avoiding plagiarism is to reference your work properly. If you are in doubt about how to reference properly, ask someone – your lecturers, tutors and the Student Learning Centre are good places to start. Please refer to the following website for further information about academic referencing: www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/

The document *Guidelines: Conduct of Coursework* provides further advice on how to avoid plagiarism. It can be found at:
www.business.auckland.ac.nz/conductcoursework

The penalties for plagiarism can be severe, including losing some or all of the marks for the assignment. Major offences can be sent to the University's Discipline Committee, where further penalties can be imposed.