

Team Project Guidance

This is a group project comprising two stages—Marketing Plan Part I and Part II—that will be integrated into a final PPT that your group will present in class. This project will help you apply the tools you (will) learn in strategic business analytics to real, complex business situations.

Your team will act as business consultants and complete a business plan for a company or organization of your choice, you also need to define what business problems you intend to tackle. Then you are going to conduct comprehensive analysis to make data-driven decisions. At least one tool (e.g., regression, cluster analysis, time series etc.) that you learn in this class should be included in the data analyses part, a simple descriptive statistics or correlation analysis would not be considered as sufficient.

In Part I, you will collect background information and define the problem you will be working on. Questions that should be answer in this part include: who is the client? What problem do you want to solve? Can you break down the problem to sub-problems? What leads to the current problem? What are the constraints that you face? You also need to design a research plan: e.g., outline how you can conduct and complete critical research components such as data collection and data analysis (a page summary need to be submitted before the spring break). **Note:** in this assignment, you also need to list the timeline and team member's role in the appendix.

In Part II, you will collect data to study consumer/business demand/trends and potential business opportunities, and analyze the data. You also need to develop business strategies copying with the business problem. The final PPT will cover Part I and II. All teams will present their final projects. *The winning team of the “Best Presentation Award” will get a bonus point (1% of the course grade).* **Note,** the original data and the code you used on this project should be included in the final package of your submission.

1. Potential Problems

The first step is to identify a business problem that you are going to use analytic tools to solve. Below I list some interesting problems. But they are only intended to get you thinking and please don't be constrained by them.

I am going to use Airbnb as an example (BTW, I only use Airbnb as an example, you can work on any project that you are passionate about as well as having access to the data. One of the common sources of big data is www.kaggle.com). Airbnb is a leading sharing economy company that provides a platform for local hosts to rent unique accommodations. Founded in 2008, the company now has over 1,500,000 listings in 34,000 cities and 190 countries. It has significantly disrupted the hospitality industry and the entire housing market.

Multiple decision makers are associated with Airbnb: the Airbnb company itself, hosts and guests. Taking different roles (who is your client: Airbnb or a special host on

Airbnb), you can ask different kind of questions:

If your client is the platform

How satisfied are guest consumers with the hosts? In different neighborhoods? At different time of the year? Can we use reviews to predict guest satisfaction?

How much revenue does Airbnb bring to the economy in Asheville?

If your client is the sellers:

If I want to be a host on Airbnb,

(Product) What features of the listing can attract high demand?

(Place) How many competitors do I have? Which location has high demand and low competition?

(Price) What's my optimal price? Shall I consider seasonality in demand to do dynamic pricing?

2. Communicating the Project

Team Presentation

You are to take the role of a group of consultants presenting to the client (Airbnb, host or guest). The client may know more about the issue than you do, and will be generally familiar with the firm's situation. Or he/she may have had only a slight opportunity to read the material before a meeting. Leading them through the situation, your analysis and recommendations require considerable skills to hit the right level of detail. Also make sure that each member of the group gets some "air time." This is difficult to do in practice, but is very effective if the group is well rehearsed and the changeovers are seamless. Be well-prepared and pay extra attention to the substantive content, materials and style of the presentation.

Notes:

(1) Practice your presentation well. Your team will have 10-15 minutes to present the plan (depending on how many groups we will have at the end).

(2) If you plan to prepare a PowerPoint presentation, please make sure that you thoroughly test it before your presentation. Too often, presentations fail because of problems related to PowerPoint.

(3) On the day your group is presenting, make sure that all of you are on time.

Additional issues related to the presentations

Teams not presenting will serve as the clients, will ask questions and will comment on

the project. Participating as clients will greatly help other teams, so all of you should attend the presentations!

3. Grading of the Project

Presentations (250 in total)

- Message clearly communicated to audience
- Use of marketing terminology
- Professional and persuasive presentation style
- Readability of slides, confident handling of equipment, lighting
- Speaking, eye contact, posture, gesture, movements
- The result appears as if the team worked well together
- Good match of speaker to topic Good hand-offs.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF A.I.

1. Students using A.I. tools should be transparent about their use in alignment with university and course policies for academic integrity.
2. Collaboration with ChatGPT or other AI composition software is permitted (with limit) in this course with appropriate documentation of how it was used and for what purpose.