**FIELD PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

During this course we will discuss a variety of topics related to the management of technology in organizations. However, nothing can substitute for the experience of witnessing technology-related issues in practice. The field project is designed to expose you to the realities of how technology is being managed in companies. It also presents an opportunity to apply what you are learning about technology in evaluating how companies are doing in their technology management endeavors.

**Field Work**

As a team, you are required to choose a company that you know well (preferably a company in which at least one of you currently works). Understand the company’s strategy and then pick one business area that is related to that strategy. Evaluate what role technology is currently playing in enabling the business area to achieve its strategic goals. Assess the major technology-related challenges facing the business area such as Data/Business Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Could Computing and Storage, Blockchain Technology, FinTech, and Internet of Things (IOT). As a team, you must interview *at least* 4 people – 1 information systems person, 1 business area manager, and 2 end users. Information systems personnel are folks that actively work in the development and maintenance of IT in your organization. Business area managers are managers in the business area that you have selected for your analysis. If you would like to include interviews of additional business managers to get a wider understanding of technology related problems in the organizations, you can do so. End users can be anyone who relies on technology for their day-to-day operations.

**Analysis**

Once you have gathered the necessary information in your field work, draw upon the knowledge you have gained about technology management from this course to evaluate how the company is performing in its use of technology. Based on your knowledge, develop a specific proposal about how the business area might improve its ability to meet its strategic objectives using technology. The cases you have reviewed can be used as a baseline if you would like.

Be specific in outlining the pros and cons of your proposed solution in your proposal. Imagine you are pitching your solution to the managers with whom you have spoken. What are the estimated costs of your proposed solution? What are the expected benefits? Identify concrete numbers and outcomes, even if they are rough estimates (e.g., this will expand market share by 2%, this will cut delivery lead times by 3 days, this will boost customer retention by 5%). Consider this as a sales pitch to the business managers.

The analysis may focus on the following questions.

* What value proposition is being created by the firm? In particular, what is the nature of the innovation in the product, service, or offering? How is this value proposition unique, innovative, or disruptive?
* How are information technologies being used to create this value proposition? How is the firm likely to generate revenue through this innovation?
* What is the basis of its profitability? What might obstruct this revenue stream from being realized?
* What is the likelihood that this innovation is sustainable? Will it have a disruptive effect on the industry? If so, how will the disruption occur?

**Deliverables**

There are three deliverables for the field project.

**1. Field project proposal (10% of project grade):** This is a one-page singles-spaced write-up in which you must identify the company your team has chosen, a schedule of activities (e.g., identify interviewees, research company background, timeline to conduct interviews), and a list of individuals whom you plan to interview (including role, title, business unit. **You do not need to provide names of the individuals.** If the business area personnel would like to keep information confidential, please note that in your proposal.

**2. Field project presentation (50% of project grade):** You are required to make a 7–10-minute presentation of your field project. The presentation should provide a ***VERY*** brief overview of the company, its strategy, and the role of the business area on which you have focused. You should then detail the business area’s current use of technology to achieve its strategic objectives as well as your proposed solution for enhancing its capabilities.

We will adhere strictly to the 7–10-minute limit so please be sure to rehearse your presentation beforehand. Points will be deducted if your actual presentation time exceeds the allotted time. Consider that you are making your presentation to upper management. Focus your presentation on the essential details. You can refer the audience to more in-depth information in the written report.

*Everyone on the team is required to present.* It is your choice as to how and what your team members present. ***You can have on person lead the presentation although all members must discuss an area within the presentation.***

**3. Field project report (40% of project grade):** You are required to prepare a written report and a PowerPoint on your field project. The report must provide a profile of the company, its strategy, the business area on which your project focused and its role within the broader company strategy. The report must also include details from your interviews, including information about how the business area is using technology to meet its strategic objectives as well as the key technology challenges being faced. Finally, the report should detail your analysis and recommended solution. There is no page limit on the report. This report should have a minimum of 4 single-space pages.

**Due Dates**

1. Field project proposal: due week 2 [due prior to the beginning of the class via email]

2. Field project presentation: due week 5 by the end of the day.

3. Field project report and PowerPoint: due week 5

Here is an *example* of the Field project report outline:

***Introduction***

a. Goal of the project

b. How it was conducted

c. How the report is structured

***2. How the project was conducted—Brief***

a. Background of the company

b. Who was interviewed

***3. Interview results***

a. Issues and challenges

b. Your critical assessment: what are they doing well and what could they do better

c. Recommendations

d. Overall observations: What can your organization learn from other organizations with similar business problems, overall trends observed, etc.

**5. Conclusion**

Questions you may ask your respondents:

1. ***Individual and company profile:***
   1. What is your current job (position, level, title)
   2. What job function (accounting, marketing, production, R&D)?
   3. How many people do you oversee? How long have you been in your current job?
   4. How many total years of full-time work experience do you have?
   5. Age and gender?
   6. What industry do you work in?
   7. How many employees work for your company?
   8. How many employees at your location?
   9. Do you work in the central office/headquarters for your company? If no, do you work at a regional branch/subsidiary/etc.?
   10. Company reach (local, statewide, regional, national, international)?
2. ***The overall IT strategy***
   1. What is the overall IT strategy?
   2. How does this strategy align with the overall strategy? How often is this reviewed?
   3. The IT organization: how is this structured. Who is the highest-ranking IT official (CIO, IT Director?) and to whom does this person report.
   4. IT-related Culture: Do they have an innovative culture as it relates to IT. That is, do they like and appreciate IT and use it to its fullest potential, or do they view it as a necessary evil to be grappled with? Would their customers and partners agree that IT innovation is an essential part of their culture? Do they tend to be followers or leaders in relation to their competition as it pertains to IT?
3. ***Social Media Strategy***
   1. Is there an articulated (current) social media strategy?
   2. What is their future social media strategy?
   3. Who is in-charge of the social media strategy?
   4. Do they actively monitor social media? Do they proactively respond? Is there a person or a team dedicated to this?
   5. Social media usage by employees: Do they worry about time wasted and how do they monitor it? Is there a written policy for this? Where is it? How are people made aware of it?
   6. Does your organization use any social media? Which social media applications ((Facebook, YouTube, Google+, Twitter, and so on) does your organization use?
   7. For what purposes does your organization use specific social media applications (using the application examples above)? Consider both internal and external purposes.
   8. What specific features of the above social media application(s) does your organization use to meet above purposes?
   9. What is your favorite feature of the above application (or top three if that makes sense). What features of social media do you use most (chat, status updates, file sharing, etc., [features, not the whole application]. For example, we use Facebook (app) for its status updating and picture sharing capability, but not to chat with anyone (features)?
   10. What do you think is the biggest concern about social media considering organization use? Why?
   11. What policies/guidelines/rules does your organizations provide that define/limit acceptable use of social media? If they are different for different social media applications, please tell us.
   12. How are these policies delivered, promoted, monitored, enforced?
   13. Do you use any social media personally? What applications do you use personally? Why do you use [identify] application? Provide an example of recent use for each application identified.
4. ***Mobile Strategy*** 
   1. Same questions as Social Media strategy. Then add the following.
   2. Do they conduct business via mobile devices?
   3. Is there a mobile app for their business? Was it developed in-house?
   4. Are employees allowed to bring their own unit to work?
      1. Do they purchase equipment for their employees? Is this standardized?
      2. Who pays for (voice and data) service?
      3. Are interactions monitored? What about personal usage?
      4. Expectations of response time (Evenings? Weekends? Turnaround time)
      5. Is there a written policy for this? Where is it? Are people aware of it? How are people made aware of it?
5. ***Information security***
   1. To what extent is security a big issue for them? What kind of information security are they most concerned about (at a broad level)?
6. ***Accepted Use Policies***
   1. Does your company have an "acceptable use policy" for email communication, text messaging, video conferencing etc.? if yes, which and what is it (they could e-mail it). Note if policy is separate for each type of communication or one policy encompassing all communication.
   2. Does your company maintain local or global (or otherwise) acceptable use policies (i.e., do the policies in place in the US (given global reach) affect other countries or does each locale implement their own policies?)?
   3. How often does your company review its acceptable use policies with employees?
7. ***Critical Assessment of the IT strategy***

(This is your assessment, based on the interviews.)

* 1. What is the overall IT strategy and how it fits with what you have learned in this class.
  2. Also, provide an evaluation of what they have done – does it seem appropriate for the organization?
  3. What recommendations do you have for them?