

SOM 795 / MGMT 446 - Small Business Management

The course consists of a 2-4 person team assigned to consult with a local small business. The TA or professor will be available during his/her office hours every week for consultation, but appointments are suggested. Only one class is scheduled at the beginning of the semester. Attendance is required for this class. The only other required meeting is held midway through the semester. At that meeting teams will give a progress report. Students will have many other meetings with their clients, professor, and team members, in addition to others needed to complete the consulting project. A team's internal discipline in adhering to the schedule of reports is extremely crucial. Periodic meetings with the professor or TA are *strongly recommended*.

Professor:

Jim Theroux - SOM 307C Office Tel: 545-5677 Fax: 545-3858 theroux@som.umass.edu

Office Hours: Tu/Th 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM and by appointment

Text: None

Workload: It is expected that each student will contribute one fifth of a normal 40-hour workweek to this project at a reasonable level of efficiency (*i.e.* 8 hrs per week). It is our experience that few teams do well unless *each* member contributes this basic eight hours every week. Teams must keep a record of times and hours worked on the project.

Team Project: Each team will be assigned to a small business and will consult with one or more employees. A typical project involves: **(a)** problem definition, **(b)** development of the team workplan, **(c)** completion of research and analysis, **(d)** derivation of conclusions and recommendations, possibly some implementation, and **(e)** generation of a final report (one copy for client and two copies for the professor). A short presentation to the assigned company at the end of the project **is required**; however, some companies may want shorter rather than longer reports.

Expense: Each individual should keep a record (with receipts) of all mileage, telephone calls and other expenses. At the end of the summer, after the letter required from the company is received, these expenses for mailings should be submitted with a deduction of \$25 per team member. Thus, if there are three team members, expenses must exceed \$75 before any reimbursement can occur. Accordingly, team members should share expenses equally. Major expenses for mailings or extensive telephone surveys must be at the client's expense. Some expenses for computer database searches may be absorbed, but beyond \$50 should be discussed with the professor and/or the teaching assistant.

Course website: none

Grading:	Work Plan Document	15%
	Team Consulting Process	30%
	Team Report and Client Feedback	55%

IMPORTANT NOTES

In keeping with the consulting nature of the class, the dates are deadlines that must be met by all teams. It is also the team's responsibility to ensure that the company and the professor or TA are always informed about the progress of the project. Be sure your client has clear expectations about how frequently you plan to communicate with them.

All teams face major difficulties that they must solve successfully in order to perform well. Among them are:

1. **Sharing the work and controlling the project equitably among the team members.** The ground rules for this need to be agreed upon early and discussion between team members should begin tonight and be quickly completed. Breaking a project down is essential but teams that then go their separate ways rarely produce satisfactory results. Establishing the team constitution (see separate handout on team development from first class) should facilitate solving this difficulty. At the end of the semester each student will evaluate his teammates.
2. **Acquiring the knowledge to design the project and complete it.** Neither the company nor the professor(s) nor the TA are team members, but are resources to teams. The teams have to be in control of their own internal processes. This requires that teams schedule communication among themselves and with the client companies and professor. Teams should also schedule periodic meetings, as necessary, with the companies, the professor and the TA or whomever else in order to run their project. The professor may also schedule meetings. Ultimately only the team members are in full possession of all information relative to completing the project, including what it is that the team does not yet know.
3. **Planning a complete semester-long project is a new skill** for most team members and will not occur naturally. Teams need to plan, organize, staff, implement and monitor to succeed. Teams need to be self-managing and should regard heavy intervention by the professor and/or the TA or the client as a weakness. Reviewing and following the team management guidelines distributed during the first class will assist in minimizing this difficulty.
4. **Confidentiality is very important** to the company for which you are working and you should be sure to respect this at all times. Projects are not to be discussed casually with non-team members. Failure to respect confidentiality is a major cause of problems for consultants working with start-up companies.
5. **Prior to utilizing the UMass letterhead** for communications and before sending major documents (letter of engagement or final report) to client, please review them with the professor or the teaching assistant.

SCHEDULE FOR SOM 795G/MGMT 466
Small Business Management

THIS SCHEDULE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR EACH TEAM.
IF YOU DO NOT ADHERE TO IT AND HAVE NOT NEGOTIATED BEFOREHAND WITH
THE TA/Professor YOUR GRADE WILL BE AFFECTED

Approx. Date Activity

Per Univ. Schedule	Introduction to course. Organization meeting to assign students to teams and companies. Team development material handed out. Attendance required.
First two weeks	Team meeting with <u>Professor/TA</u> and <u>companies</u> . Meeting time, place and attendees are arranged by team.
Feb. 15	Teams prepare Letter of Engagement , review that letter with TA and/or professor prior to sending it to the client, and then get client signature or email approval. The letter can be in email form.
Last week of Feb.	First Report due. Must have clear statement of objective and fully developed work plan document. Submit project PLANNED Hours Schedule to TA. The time up to this point should be spent in intensive company and industry research to develop a work plan that accurately reflects the work to be done by each team member.
Prior to Spring Break	Second Report due. Must include full outline of final report to be produced, and final draft of initial sections covering nature of project, methodology, individual responsibilities and timeline.
Before 3/31	Required Meeting to present progress to the class. Exact date TBA.
Apr 28	Full draft of final report due by 4 PM. Copies sent to client after review with Professor and or TA, and BEFORE the final client meeting.
Before 5/12	Presentation of Final report. Made to client by this date. Please invite Professor and/or TA.
Before exam period	Two Copies of Final report due to Professor accompanied by an email from client company indicating report receipt and acceptance. Team members must also submit Project ACTUAL Hours Schedule to professor.
May 14	Submit final expense report including detailed receipts for any spending per student in excess of \$25. [Reimbursements for expenses available from Mary Parker SOM 362].
May 15	Course and Peer Evaluation Forms due in sealed envelope to TA/professor mailbox.

SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT - SOM 795/MGMT 446

Immediately following initial meeting(s) with client, the team is to write a clear statement of objectives that describes the work you are agreeing to complete for the client. The more detail the better. This statement is to be incorporated into a Letter of Engagement to be signed off by the team members and the TA or professor prior to sending it to the client.

By the last week of February your first written report is due. Please include:

- 1) A copy of the signed Letter of Engagement. The Letter should be a description of what the team has agreed to do written in enough detail that there can be misunderstanding about expectations on either side.
- 2) A description of the nature of the project including specific methods for gathering information and how you will divide the work in the team. This is research you should complete to assure development of a comprehensive Workplan.
- 3) The Workplan Document.

The Workplan document is expected to incorporate at a minimum:

- a. A statement of the project, assignment, problem area of support to be provided
- b. Identification of the team members and description of the methodology to be employed to tackle the project
- c. Detailed responsibilities agreed to by each team member and committed completion dates.
- d. A definition of the final deliverables. In most cases the only deliverable is the final written report. Please include a proposed table of contents for the final report.
- e. Detailed person by person schedule showing the planned time committed to the project over the balance of the semester. (Please use attached Team Member Project PLANNED Hours form for submission of this item.)

Please submit a copy to professor or TA by email.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the TA or your Professor.