

MGT 419
BUSINESS STRATEGY CONSULTING SKILLS

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

In organizational and marketing strategy courses such as MGT 201 or MGT 248, students learn theories and frameworks to diagnose business issues and recommend performance improvement, such as Porter’s Five Competitive Forces, Nohria’s Organizational Structure, or Grant’s Diversification and Vertical Integration Strategy. In this course, you will learn practical business consulting skills which will help you apply these strategies in the workplace. (Note, those courses are not prerequisites.)

Strategy consultants from firms like McKinsey, Bain, Accenture or EY apply the “CEO perspective” of these strategic models to answer complex business questions that companies don’t have the time, objectivity or depth of skills to tackle themselves. Professional consulting itself is a craft with structure, frameworks and best practices. In this course, you will learn some of the key tools that business strategy consultants use to frame and analyze problems and communicate findings.

Additionally, since professional consulting is a combination of structure and relationships, the course will introduce you to issues of relationship management and organizational politics.

This course will be useful preparation for all students’ Integrated Management Project and other strategic undertakings. It is also useful for those students interested in consulting and internal staff roles such as strategic planning, M&A, product management, and market research.

Course Materials

1. Business Strategy Consulting Skills Course Syllabus: You are responsible for the information contained in this syllabus.

2. Text Pak: One case has been assigned for this class. Please read it before the first class. Lecture slides will be available on Canvas.

Course Requirements

This 1 unit elective is graded and you have the option of turning in work individually or as part of a team. The maximum team size is 6 students, all of whom will share the same grade. The course grade will be based 50% on homework #1 and 50% on homework #2.

1. Attend all sessions: You must attend all days, in full, to pass the course.

2. Come prepared: Come to class having read all the relevant material.

3. Participate in class: Students are expected to pay attention and participate in class discussions, group exercises and projects. Ideal class participation involves thoughtful comments and questions.

4. Demonstrate grasp of techniques: Students need to demonstrate a good grasp of the various consulting tool in the class exercises and homework assignments.

Prerequisites

This class is open to all GSM students. It is recommended prior to your capstone IMPACT project, but can also be taken after.

Grading

Two Assignments Comprise the total Grade

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>%Value Grade</i>	<i>Due</i>
<i>Framing (template provided)</i> <i>Issue or Hypothesis Tree (template provided)</i> <i>Research Plan (template provided)</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>Before Second Class</i>
<i>Dot/Dash Outline (structure provided)</i> <i>Presentation (structure provided)</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>Before Third Class</i>

Course Schedule

IMPORTANT NOTE: All “Readings” and “Case” should be read before class. Readings are optional. All “Exercises” will be completed during class. No pre-work is necessary for these Exercises. Students should bring their laptops to class in case you wish to use them for the exercises.

DAY 1:

INTRODUCTION

- What is strategy – vision as context
- Types of consulting – strategy and other types of management consulting

STRATEGY SKILLS PART 1

- Framing – context, burning platform, question, framework
- Research – issue trees, hypothesis trees, research plan development

Homework due before class 2: Framing, Issue or Hypothesis Tree, Research Plan

DAY 2:

STRATEGY SKILLS PART 2

- Analysis – grouping using the Minto pyramid structure, insight, recommendation formulation
- Storytelling – dot/dash outlining, slide structuring
- Presentation best practices – design, flow, use of data

Homework due before class 3: Dot/Dash Outline, PowerPoint Presentation

DAY 3:

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Building trust – the trust equation, active listening, speaking with impact
- Engaging prospects & clients – client relationship journey

Notes About Expectations for Class Behavior

It is expected that all class members will treat each other with respect and dignity. It is unacceptable to insult, harass, or demean any member of the class. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.

In general, students should adhere to the [UC Davis Principles of Community](#), copied below.

The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society carries within it historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.

We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.

We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences. We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.