L03

management consulting

module leader

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1. MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY (BST 540)

A. COURSE RATIONALE

The consulting industry has been one of the fastest growing professions with revenues of over $125bn. In the UK there are over 60,000 consultants and consulting firms are placed at the top of the preferred employers of MBA students. However, the relationship between management consulting and business is not always a positive one - at Enron, WorldCom, Parmalat and Adelphia, the profession played a key part in the resulting disasters. With consulting becoming increasingly central to business and providing the flexibility (and salary) to which many graduates aspire, it is important MBA students have a clear understanding of not just how to consult and how to manage consultants, but also the ethical risks involved in the profession.

B. LECTURER: DR JOE O'MAHONEY

Prior to his career in academia, Joe was a Senior Management Consultant for Xansa and Head of Business Analysis (Products) at Three. Joe is the founder of two companies and continues to provide advice and consultancy services to professional service firms. Joe has taught on the Cardiff, Warwick, Aston and Lancaster MBA courses. Some of Joe's material and ideas can be found here: www.consulting-ideas.com. Joe is currently funded by the ESRC to examine innovation in the consulting industry: working with Deloitte, IBM, Bain and several smaller consultancies to examine what 'worked' with new service development. He has published his work in several leading journals and is the author of *Management Consultancy* with Oxford University Press. Joe can be contacted at joeomahoney@gmail.com.

C. TEACHING STRATEGY

Teaching is aimed at producing students that are ready for the consulting world by engaging them with real-life consulting issues and international consulting firms**. The course will use real-life cases to immerse students in the challenges of consulting in the real world**. This approach will use cases from the lecturer's own consulting experience and other sources to provide a dynamic and realistic environment for student learning (see www.hbs.edu/case).

D. READING

The core reading for this course is: **O'Mahoney, J. and Markham, C. (2013)** ***Management Consultancy,*** **Oxford University Press.** I will also place a number of articles on Blackboard for your use. You will not need any other books but if you were interested in further reading I would suggest: Wickham, P. and Wickham, L. (2008) *Management Consulting: Delivering an Effective Project*; Argyris, C. (2000), Sadler, P. (2007) Management Consultancy. *Kogan Page.*

E. COURSE CONTENT

The course will comprise 8 x 3 hour blocks which will comprise a mix of lectures, case-studies, exercises and speakers. Speakers are chosen for their expertise and excellence in the field of consultancy**. Attendance at speaker sessions is, therefore, compulsory, and absence will result in 10% of marks being deducted.** A reading will be provided each week prior to the lecture. Students will get much more out of the lectures if they read these beforehand.

Your assignment is group-work based around engaging with a local charity. As part of this you will be given coaching by PA Consulting, one of the UK's largest consultancies.

2. TIMETABLE

DATE	LECTURE (2.30-3.30)	ASSIGNMENT / SPEAKERS (4.00-5.30)	EXERCISES
2 May	Introduction to Consultancy	NA	Consulting Christmas Data Analysis When Definitions Matter Perspectives
9 May	Clients & Procurement	PA: Training in Interviewing X2	Proposal at Moss NHSPFiT FiReControl Proposal Writing Johnson & Johnson
16 May	Problem Definition, Tools & Methods (Matt doing lecture)	Meet the Clients	Danone Wickham: Halifax Foods. StayMobile Timpsons Dolphin Assessing the Culture of Cardiff
23 May	Managing a Consultancy	Guest Speaker: Steve Lewis	Bearing Point A failed take-over Yammer
30 May	Sales & Proposals	Guest Speaker: Doug Ross	Alex Polizzi Designing a Sales Strategy Elephant Krypton
6 Jun	The Dark Side of Consultancy	PA: Training in Presentation X2	When research becomes political FireControl, (ethics) Ball Inc (internal) Enron Image consulting for dictators The German Legal Challenge
13 Jun	Delivering Consultancy	Presentations to Clients	Gekko Communications & Mike (7.1) The 99% project When relationships go wrong Intellectual Property Problems
20 Jun	Careers	Assignment Hand-in	Equipco (as homework) McKinsey Test Case Interviews

3. ASSIGNMENT

GET INTO GROUPS

Students must get into groups of their own choosing (4-5 people) and elect a leader who will inform Claire of the group members (name + student number). Each group will be assigned a local charity in order to assess the business problems of a company and propose one solution. You will meet your charities on the following dates:

Meet the Charities: Date 16th May 4.00pm

Present to Charities: Date 13th June 4.00pm

As part of your course you will receive coaching from PA consulting, one of the UK's leading consultancies. You must attend both session. The best presentation will be given a prize by PA Consulting on the 21st June.

DELIVERABLES

You must print out and deliver:

- a 2,000 word proposal (by the group) 50%
- a PowerPoint presentation (by the group) 30%
- a 1,000 word Reflexive Essay (to be completed by every individual) 20%

Each student must EACH hand ALL of these deliverables in because the CMI accreditation is based on individual submissions not group work. The hand in date is Friday 21st June at 1200 to Mel Poyser in the MBA Office.

DETAILS

PROPOSAL

The proposal should focus on *one* specific business issue and be a fully costed proposal for a solution, with a project plan, resources etc…. You should also include any research you have done and, if you wish, some 'tasters' of the solution. In most circumstances a proposal will have a plan, deliverables, a register of risks etc… The PowerPoint presentation is fifteen minutes long and should be a summary of the proposal. You will do this to the charity and will be marked by an assessor.

REFLEXIVE ESSAY

The Reflexive Essay should be a 1,000 word reflection on your own strengths and weaknesses in working on the assignment and what you could do about the weaknesses. It should contain and analysis of:

- Your role in the group, including examples of leadership, and how this impacted the group dynamics
- Why did you perform the role the way you did and how did this relate to the group and the client?
- What techniques and processes you used to ensure successful group achievements
- What feedback and support for personal development you provided to another team-member.
- Any ethical considerations or conflicts and how you dealt with them.
- How the culture of the client affected the way you approached it both personally and analytically.
- An assessment of your areas for improvement (in terms of being a consultant) and a plan for how this might be achieved. This should take account of any networks that you might use for support / development / contacts.

You will be marked on your ability to identify areas where you might improve and how you might develop the skills and competences you need to be an effective consultant. It should be honest, open and frank. You don't need to introduce the charity or its problem, but a *brief* overview of what you did and why should be done. The main part should focus on what you and the team learned, how you will improve on any weaknesses and plan to do better in the future.

PREVENTING 'FREE-LOADERS'

Each group member must also, after handing in their assignment, email me a score of the efforts of their other individual group members. This will either be: 2 = average – excellent OR 1 = weak – poor. The normal mark should be '2' and it is only when an individual has consistently made little effort that they will be scored '1'. Any student that is scored '1' by three or more group members will have their marks reduced by 30%. The feedback scores will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone.

TIPS ON WORKING WITH THE CHARITIES

- Before meeting the charities you must all individually print out and sign the NDA (below) and give to the charity manager before the meeting. You must also all give a copy to Mel. Without this you cannot do the assignment.
- Prepare for your client presentation by researching them on the internet and thinking of useful questions to ask them. Focus on identifying a specific problem that you can help them tackle.
- Nominate one person in your group to ask questions. Work with the other groups: don't ask questions that the other group has asked, share information, co-ordinate any visits so if you all visit the charity, you go together.
- Review your progress with the charities half-way through the project. Confirm the direction you are moving in and ensure there are no (nasty!) surprises for them on the day you present your findings.
- Make your presentation focused and specific to the charity: DON'T provide loads of general information, DON'T assume they are the same as other charities, DON'T assume they have lots of money for software development and marketing. Try to provide practical, useful content. The client will NOT be interested in academic theories or models.
- PLEASE PLEASE check the marking criteria for your presentations and report (end pages). If you do the good stuff, you will get good marks, if you do the bad stuff, you won't. It's very simple.
- LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN – you will be judged on how well you respond to the CLIENT not each other.
- Communicate with the client frequently: Ensure you have a mid-point review with the client. Visit the client, at least once, preferably with the other groups assigned to the client. Ask for information from them. If you don't ask, you won't get.

HINTS AND TIPS FOR THE PROPOSAL (AND SOME FOR THE PRESENTATION)

- Provide a clear executive summary stating clearly what the report says.
- Ensure your recommendations are (a) not already being done by the client (b) detailed (c) realistic (e.g. a small charity cannot afford to develop an 'app'). Fewer recommendations + more detail is better.
- Do not tell the client about their 'mistakes' or what they 'should' do. The client knows the industry a lot better than you do. Talk about 'opportunities' and 'recommendations'.
- If you can, actually go out and DO something – contact a sponsor, ring up suppliers, do a good survey etc.
- Remember, most charities care most about their users. Have you considered this group?
- In your report (not the presentation) you MUST have a *brief* assessment of the client's culture and how this shaped your work with them. This is a requirement for the CMI Diploma.
- Don't have a lot of general material about charities, or the charity sector. Put it as an appendix if you need it.
- Be sensitive to the client's feelings: you can't tell them, for example, that they are *"15 years behind the competition"*!!
- Don't tell clients what they already know.
- Ensure you rehearse your presentation IN THE ROOM YOU BE PRESENTING IN
- Ensure you provide DETAILED and PRACTICAL recommendations
- In the presentation provide a copy of your report and copy of the slides, preferably in advance.
- In the presentation, non-speakers should keep their attention on the speaker.
- Do not tell the client about their 'mistakes' or what they 'should' do. The client knows the industry a lot better than you do. Talk about 'opportunities'
- Ensure every recommendation has associated costs and resources.
- Try to avoid obvious recommendations: the client will already know all the obvious stuff. Keep it detailed, practical and focused.
- With every recommendation, go into some detail: get costs, find suppliers, write a plan, look at similar projects in a similar industry, print out information for the client to take away with them. It is better to have three, detailed, focused and well thought through recommendations than twenty vague high-level ones.
- Keep slides simple and clear – not too much information.
- Ensure your examples are similar. For example, there is no point comparing a large multi-million pound charity to a small one.
- Make sure all hand-outs are proof-read by a native English speaker. Typos will often lose you a contract.
- Contents, page numbers, references list of diagrams please!
- Support every factual statement you make with references or quotations
- Have a clear structure with headings. Paragraphs should flow to make a coherent argument and sentences within paragraphs should focus on one clear point.
- Use tables, models and diagrams to summarise, support and simplify your point. Remember, managers are very busy and what to know (1) what should I do? (2) how should I do it?

4. STUDENT NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (NDA) FOR PRINTING

1. Prior to receiving further information about the charity I have been assigned for the purposes of my MBA Management Consultancy assignment, I hereby agree that any information, know-how, accounts, property rights or other detail supplied to me in the course of the engagement, or howsoever otherwise relating to an enquiry regarding the company, its financial or business arrangements and the provision of services (other than any such matters as are in the public domain) shall be treated by me as secret and confidential.

2. Any information received from the charity will be kept confidential other than for the purpose of creating my group presentation and my assignment. Such information will be kept between me, my immediate team, the other teams assigned to the charity and my Cardiff University Tutor.

3. Neither I (nor any associated business or partners) will at any time, unless agreed in advance with the Charity, disclose to any third party information pertaining to the Charity or use the information otherwise than for the purpose of completing my assignment for the MBA Consultancy Course.

4. We further confirm that we know of no conflict of interest[1] which exists with our reviewing and dealing with this matter.

This agreement will be judged under UK law regardless of my own jurisdiction, residence or location.

In addition, students and all participants in this exercise will act in accordance with the professional code of ethics set out by the Institute of Consulting here:
http://www.iconsulting.org.uk/membership/professional_code_of_conduct

All students must sign and print this individually and hand into Mel BEFORE they meet the charity. They must also give a copy to the charity before the charity presentation.

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date:

[1] A conflict of interest is where one or more interest external to this project might cause you (or be seen to cause you) being ethically compromised with this project. An example might be if you have ever been an employee of this company or if you work with a competing charity.

5. PROPOSAL / REPORT MARKING CRITERIA

Criteria	Good Practice
Client Relationship	You communicated frequently and effectively with the client. You were polite and sensible in your communication. You visited the client site where possible and made an effort to engage with the wider client team when applicable. You had at least one review point with the client to ensure that you were on the right track. Were your roles and style suitable for the client's culture and personality? Did you seek to understand the clients needs in a structured and clear manner?
Interviewing	In your interview with the client you sought to understand and respond to what they were saying rather than simply reading out a list of predefined questions. You were sensitive to what they were saying and asked follow up questions that relate to their statements. You nominated one person to ask interviews. You were polite, courteous and respectful of the client at all times. You gave the client the signed NDA in your first meeting with them.
Problem Definition	Did you jointly, with the client, create a clear, well defined problem statement that was manageable within the timeframe? Were you and the client clear on the scope, milestones, plan and access / resources required for the project to work?
Data collection	Did you follow a structured approach in finding and analysing data? Did you collect secondary data in a logical and structured way from reliable sources? Was any primary data collection done sensibly and ethically?
Analysis	**Was your solution something the client already knew? Did you simply represent the client's own statements?** OR did you add value by coming up with ideas and information that the client did not think of? Was your analysis logical and coherent? Did your conclusions follow from your analysis? Did you consider using consultancy tools to structure your analysis?
Content	Was much of your content unnecessary for the problem? Did you simply get lots of general data about the client and their sector or was the information you researched really targeted and useful for the client? Did you come up with innovative ideas and approaches? What solutions might you have pursued that you did not? i.e. what could you have done differently?
Proposal Structure	Was the structure logical and coherent. Did you define the project, the scope, resources, costs, timings, plan, risks adequately (where necessary).
Presentation	Were all your names and student numbers on the document? What the document well-presented without distracting and irrelevant pictures? Did you present data effectively? Was the document free of errors? Were your sources well specified?
Value-Add	Did you go beyond the basics? Did you offer the client something innovative and useful that would put you ahead of the competition? Was your proposal memorable?

6. PRESENTATION MARKING CRITERIA

REQUIREMENT	WEAK	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Problem Identification	Business problem or scope not identified.	Problem identified or scope vague or unmanageable.	Business problem clearly identified. Scope clear and realistic.
Method / Approach	Method appear illogical and is not justified to the client.	Method is either not thought through logically or not justified to the client.	Clear and logical approach / method to approaching the problem. Method is justified to client.
Quality of Deliverables / Recommendations	Deliverables or recommendations are unclear and not suited to the problem or the client. They appear not to offer much value.	Deliverables are unclear or they appear not to offer value to the clients.	Deliverables are clear and they offer value to the client.
Client focus3	The client is 'invisible' in the presentation and their needs appear not to have been taken on board. Client seemed discontent.	Some specific client needs have been considered. Client seemed reasonably happy.	The project is very well tailored to the client's size, resources and needs. Client responded very positively.
Presentation / Communication	Two or more of: Inappropriate dress, unprofessional comments, unclear delivery, low quality materials / slides, speakers talking simultaneously, little or no eye contact, loose co-ordination, feedback not sought, low energy or enthusiasm, impolite.	One of: Inappropriate dress, unprofessional comments, unclear delivery, low quality materials / slides, speakers talking simultaneously, little or no eye contact, loose co-ordination, feedback not sought, low energy or enthusiasm, impolite.	Zero: Inappropriate dress, unprofessional comments, unclear delivery, low quality materials / slides, speakers talking simultaneously, little or no eye contact, loose co-ordination, feedback not sought, low energy or enthusiasm, impolite.
Q&A	Questions not answered adequately. Answers insincere or attempting to 'bluff'.	Questions generally answered, some insincere or bluffing.	All questions answered competently and honestly. Where the answer is not known, offer to follow up is provided.
Close	Presentation trails off. Weak close.	Average.	Close is professional and natural.

Feedback from charities: after the team has left the room, please take a couple of sentences from the charity about their thoughts on the project.