
GRADUATE BUSINESS CAPSTONE HANDBOOK (MGT695C)

School of Business and Management



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The Project Handbook is periodically updated and corrected. Your feedback and comments will help improve this process. Please note any corrections, additions, deletions, or other changes that you would like to see made in the next edition of this handbook. Please send or email your suggestions to one of the addresses below.

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Part I
General Information

General Information
MGT695C
Graduate Business Project

Course Textbook

Depending on the project choice, there is a textbook to purchase. A textbook has been chosen to aid in the creation of business plans. A second textbook has been chosen to aid in the completion of a Business Research Project. There is no textbook for the Business Client Project. Additionally, it is recommended that students access the NULS link for the American Psychological Association (APA) standards regarding grammar, style, format, and citations for research. Portions of this format are the required structure for all papers and projects in the School of Business and Management.

Approval for research involving human subjects:

Any research conducted by NU faculty, staff, or students that involves human subjects in any way must receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before the research can be undertaken. Also, any research that utilizes NU faculty, staff, or students as subjects must be approved by the NU-IRB before the research can be undertaken. If the research involves human subjects in any way, such as being recorded in a data pool or being asked to participate in a focus group, then approval of the NU-IRB is required. For more information and application form see [Http://www.nu.edu/Academics/schools/SOBM.html](http://www.nu.edu/Academics/schools/SOBM.html). Approval by the IRB for simple research may take up to two weeks. More complex research will take longer. If you anticipate you will be using or might be using human subjects in your research, contact your instructor prior to the beginning of the course. If you are unable to reach your instructor, contact the MBA Director or the Lead Faculty for Graduate Management for guidance.

Course Prerequisites

The fundamental prerequisites of this course are the core courses of the student's program. Students should be aware that the school considers the project course to be a capstone course and therefore the student must complete a minimum of 31.5 quarter units before enrolling in this course. The project handbook is available at:

Course Description

This is a capstone course in which students work as individuals or as a group under the guidance of an assigned faculty advisor. In this course students have the opportunity to conduct research and gather relevant data, to integrate and apply knowledge and skills learned in preceding courses, and to make oral presentations of their project.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

Overarching learning outcomes

- Synthesize and apply content from their graduate courses and other learning opportunities to better understand real world situations
- Understanding, appreciate, and value the relationships across business disciplines
- Distinguish real world problems and demonstrate the application of solutions from a global business perspective to real world problems

Business Plan learning outcomes

- Assess/evaluate the requirements of a comprehensive business plan, which includes appropriate background information
- Organize, the appropriate information required in a business plan
- Construct a business plan that will satisfy the needs of entrepreneurs, lender, and potential investors

Business Project learning outcomes

- Assess and define a significant business problem
- Evaluate information to better understand such a problem
- Specify and design appropriate information to identify and present a high-quality solution

General Guidelines

The project course is one months in duration. During this time, students are expected to write a proposal, complete a draft of their written paper, orally present it to the class, and submit a corrected final written version of their project.

While in the past there has been an automatic one month extension for final editing, an *I* (incomplete) or *K* (in progress) will only be available based on the same guidelines as in other courses.

At the completion of the course, students are expected to submit one error free copy and two CDs to their faculty advisor. One of the two CDs will be sent by the faculty project advisor to the MBA Director or to the Department Chair of Finance, Accounting, and Economics before they may graduate.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all designated class sessions and complete all assignments on time. Failure to do so may result in the loss of points.

Grades and Grading System

Definition of Grades:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| H = Honors | Honors is awarded for Outstanding achievement – note that this is similar to the definition of “A” achievement in a class awarding A, B, C, & F. |
| S = Satisfactory | Satisfactory is awarded for Commendable achievement – note that this is similar to the definition of “B” achievement. |
| U = Unsatisfactory | Marginal or poorer achievement is considered unacceptable – note that what is considered “C” achievement is unacceptable in this course. |

This grade is not included in the student’s GPA.

K In Progress A designation representing a sequential course in progress. At the end of the sequence, a grade will be received and will replace the “K” grade. No credit is awarded until the sequence is completed and a permanent grade is entered replacing the “K” grade. No grade points are assigned for the “K” grade.

I Incomplete: A grade given when a student is unable to complete the course requirements due to uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey (preferably in writing) these circumstances to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If the instructor decides that an “Incomplete” is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the “Incomplete” to the student in writing. An “Incomplete” must be removed no later than the second complete quarter following the original course completion date, but may be for a shorter period at the discretion of the instructor.

An “T” not removed within the stipulated time becomes “U”. No grade points are assigned.

W Withdrawal: Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. A “Withdrawal” will not be allowed after the beginning of the sixth class session. This is a permanent mark with no grade points assigned.

S Satisfactory: Credit is granted but no grade points are assigned.

H Honors. No grade points are assigned.

Diversity

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every business program. Students are required to act respectfully toward other students and instructors throughout the courses. Students are also expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom and develop management skills and judgment appropriate to such diversity in the workplace.

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. Students are also expected to identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Communication Skills:

Both written and oral communications are required in the classroom of every student.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using word-processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software in this course. The use of the Internet and email may also be required.

Writing Across the Curriculum: <http://www.nu.edu/Academics/StudentServices/WritingCenter/WritingAcrossTheCurr.html>

Plagiarism: <http://www.nu.edu/Academics/StudentServices/AcademicPoliciesandP/AcademicDishonestyan.html>

Attendance Procedures: <http://www.nu.edu/Academics/StudentServices/AcademicPoliciesandP/AttendanceProcedures.html>

Library Resources: <http://www.nu.edu/LIBRARY/JournalArticles/ByDatabase.html>

APA Reference Guide:

<http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>

Additional Internet resources related to APA style:

<http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>

Formatting the Written Report

Please access the NULS link for details (www.nu.edu/library). See example of APA format at end of document.

Headings

Major sections (sometimes called “chapters”) should be started on a new page (like the chapter of a book) and the title should be centered, bold, and typed with capital letters.

Headings for sub-sections (second level headings) are left justified, bold, and the initial letter is capitalized.

Headings for the next level of sub-section (third level headings) are left justified, capitalization of initial letter, and underlined. No letters are typed in bold.

Page Numbering

All pages except the *Title Page* and *Abstract* or *Executive Summary* are numbered using Arabic numerals. These numbers are centered at the bottom of each page. The *Table of Contents*, *Dedication*, *Acknowledgements*, and *Abstract* or *Executive Summary* are numbered with small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.).

Spacing and Font Size

The written project is double-spaced in 12 point, Times New Roman. Margins are one inch on all four sides.

Grammar “Don’ts”

- Do not use contractions, such as “don’t” instead of “do not” or “it’s” for it is.
- Do not use personal pronouns such as I, me, they, we, and you
- Avoid clichés such as “hopefully”, “obviously”, “as you know”, and “in other words.”

Referencing Sources

As a general rule, every statement of fact in the project ends with a citation that includes the author(s)’ last name and publication year. This citation must then appear in the Reference Section. For example, *the extensive development in computer technology over the past decade is slowly being integrated into the classroom (Swan, 1997)*. Do not use footnotes.

Use of APA Standards

Look at formatting sections of this handbook for guidance in applying APA formatting standards to your choice of project.

Specific Style Issues

Proper grammar, spelling, word usage, and sentence construction are required. Final Projects are expected to be submitted without errors. Projects with errors may be returned for correction.

APA Style Sheet for References is available at <http://datel200.nu.edu/web/documents/APA.pdf> or at the end of this document

Project Suggested Timeline

ACTIVITY	Class Week	1	2	3	4
Submit Completed Forms					
Form 1 – Project Selection		X			
Project Process					
Review and Discuss Requirements		X			
Topic Selection		X			
Project Writing			X	X	X
Project Proposal			X		
Draft Proposal				X	
Oral Presentation**					X
Submit Completed Project					X

*Note: The Project Course, MGT695C, is designed to be completed within a one-month period. If extenuating circumstances exist, an extension in the form of an “I” or “K” may be negotiated with the instructor.

** The Oral Presentation is expected to be given at the end of the month, regardless of whether or not the final written document is complete.

To be completed by all students regardless of project type

FORM 1

Selection of Project Type and Topic

Prior to the development of the project proposal, students select a topic for their project. The topic is submitted to the Faculty Advisor for approval.

Date: _____ Degree Program: _____ ID Number: _____

Student(s) Name: _____ Name of Faculty Project Advisor: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Format: () Business Plan () Business Client Project () Business Research

Brief Description of Topic (or assignment, if selecting an internship): _____

If team project, name of other student(s): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____ Action by Faculty Advisor: () Approved () Not Approved

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Part II

Business Plan

MGT 695C Project Business Plan

Contents

General Guidelines

Sample Outline for a Business Plan

Form 3: Business Plan Evaluation Form

MGT 695C: Graduate Business Project Business Plan

General Guidelines

Business plans are business communications rather than an academic paper. The purpose of such communications is to provide the basis for business decisions. The reward here is for being concise and precise. This is not the place to show all that you have learned in your MBA program. Use what you have learned to choose the most critical information to include. The more clearly the business plan can be written, the more effective it will be.

Business plans are used to acquire capital and to guide the operation. For these reasons, keys to a successful plan are in substantiating the viability of the venture. A business plan includes a clear statement of the nature of a business venture, the business opportunity, the steps to be taken to capitalize on the opportunity, and the financial requirements. Research in this option is primarily in quantifying the opportunity and the competitive situation.

The Business Plan format provides an opportunity for students to develop an actual, workable business plan for a new business or existing company.

Guidelines for the Project

A business plan is not a thesis and therefore does not involve a thesis-type literature review. However, a business plan does require research. At a minimum, marketing research is needed in order to quantify the opportunity which will include determining the total demand, the unmet demand, how competitors are or could satisfy this demand, how your offering is to be distinctive in this market, and your reasonable sales projections at your proposed selling prices.

Marketing research for an existing product in a new market involves an analysis of demographics and customer profiles in markets where the product is currently being sold successfully, and the comparison of such demographics and customer profiles to those of the proposed new market. The proposal should cite the specific sources from which such data are obtainable.

One of the most common problems with students' business plans is the lack of connection between the market demand and the financial statements. There often is little or no foundation for the projected revenue figures cited, including initial sales and sales growth. Make sure this connection is crystal clear.

Content and Organization of the Business Plan Project

Title Page

The title page is not numbered.

Dedications, Acknowledgements, Lists of Tables, and Lists of Illustrations

These are optional but rarely used in Business Plans. If used, begin numbering the page with lower case Roman numerals.

Table of Contents

This table is also numbered with lower case Roman numerals.

Executive Summary

The purpose of an Executive Summary is to write a brief description of your plan that allows the reader to gain the essence of the entire plan in less than two pages. It is intended to give a busy executive the key information and lead the reader to the sections that will answer the executive's primary questions. It is not an introduction to the plan, as you may have written in typical papers. This Executive Summary, although positioned first in the project, should actually be written last. In this way you know what you are summarizing. Writing it earlier will cause it to tend towards a traditional introduction.

This section begins the Arabic numbering of pages, beginning with "1."

The Business Plan Project

The Business Plan must include the following topics. Various Business Plans organize this information in different orders but the content must be included. Students should choose an outline that most effectively builds the argument that this project is viable and has an acceptable risk.

- Introduction
 - Purpose of the plan (attract investors, diversification, etc.)
 - Introduction to market opportunity

- The Company
- How company will respond to opportunity
 - Marketing and Sales Activities
 - Product or Service Research and Development
- Organization and Personnel

- Market
 - Industry Overview
 - The history of the industry
 - Size of the Industry
 - Industry Evolution
 - The trend-Where the industry is expected to be in 5 or 10 years
 - The key players in the industry
 - Barriers to entering the market
 - Competition strengths and weaknesses
 - Target market
 - Major characteristics of the target market (what does the customer look like?)
 - Expected target market growth for the next 5-10 years
 - Product and Industry Life Cycles
 - How does the position in the Product Life Cycle affect this business plan?
 - How does the position in the Industry Life Cycle affect this business plan?
 - Product or Service Research and Development

- Company Description (proposed new organization)
 - Type of Business and Legal Structure, e.g., LLC, sole proprietorship
 - Mission and Objectives
 - Distinctive Core Competencies

- Management and Ownership
 - Board of directors and Rationale for Members
 - Management staff structure
 - Key managers
 - Future Additions to the Current Management Team

- Marketing Activities
 - Overall Marketing Strategy
 - Sales Strategy
 - Analysis-Strengths, Weaknesses as they relate to Opportunities, Threats (SWOT/TOWS)

- Risk Management
 - Loss Control
 - Retention of Personnel
 - Insurance

- Products and Services
 - Detailed Product/Service Description
 - Product Life Cycle
 - Copyrights, Patents, and Intellectual Property Rights
 - Research and Development Activities

- Operations
 - Production and Service Delivery Procedures
 - Supply Chain

- Financial Analysis
 - Funds required and their uses
 - Current funding requirements
 - Funding requirements over the next three years
 - Use of funds

- Financial statements for first 3 years (monthly first year and annually for years 2 &3) (use template)
 - Income statements
 - Balance sheets
 - Cash flow statements
 - Determine capital requirements

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Conclude whether or not it is a viable business venture (or a viable business/strategic path for the client company
- Explain why the student should or should not pursue the business venture at this time (or why or why not the client business should pursue the path under investigation)

References

This section continues with the Arabic numbering of pages. Only sources of information that have actually been cited in the project are included here.

Appendices

The appendices continued with the Arabic numbering of pages from the previous section. The actual titling of the appendices receives letter designations, rather than numbers. Therefore, you would have Appendix A, Appendix B, not Appendix 1, or Appendix 2.

This section includes information that is too detailed to be included in its entirety in the body of the project. This would include raw data, sample questionnaires, and detailed computations. This section would also include information that is referred to but is not essential to the project, such as relevant policies, laws, forms, pamphlets, sample letters sent to organizations and subjects, or subject consent forms.

Required Content

BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION

Business plans are expected to present a convincing business case for the establishment, expansion, or continuation of a business. The business plan author must present data to substantiate there is sufficient demand to support this venture. Business plans are required to document either an unmet or under-met need in the market. This need should be quantified to the degree possible. The less the need is quantified, the higher the risk factor for this venture. A business plan should include a clear demonstration of the opportunity in the market place and what will be required to capitalize on it. Ensure your business plan addresses:

1. Current demand in market – Report the total sales (to all competitors) of this product/service.
2. Market trends – Identify whether this is a growth, mature, or declining market and what consumer or technology trends will affect future sales.
3. Competitors' market share – Report each of the major competitors and their market share. Identify their competitive advantages and disadvantages.

4. How this venture will better or equally satisfy the need – Present the expected competitive advantages and disadvantages this business will have in this market.

BUSINESS PLAN FINANCIAL DATA

Each business plan must include the following financial data. The figures for the first year are presented by *month*. A second set of pages should show summary figures by *year* for the first three to five years. On projected income statements (profit and loss statements), vertical percentages as well as dollar amounts for each year are recommended. An MS Excel spreadsheet template will be made available, upon request, which includes the required elements of financial data. Students are not required to use this template but those not using it must provide the required data in a format that contains the information in a standard presentation format.

1. **Sales Forecast** in units, prices, and total dollars, followed by **Cost of Goods Sold** (Cost of Sales) in units, prices, and total dollars

Sales forecasts should be supported by a discussion of the assumptions used. Cost data should be supported by a schedule of direct labor costs, any direct product overhead costs (those that will vary in direct proportion to unit sales), and direct material costs if applicable. (Since cost of goods sold figures vary in direct proportion to sales, the C of G % on sales is relatively constant.)

2. **Projected Income Statement (Profit and Loss Statement)**

Start with summary of Sales and Cost of Goods Sold from Schedule 1 above, and continues with Gross Margin (Gross Profit), Sales and Marketing Expenses, and Administrative Expenses as shown on the sample.

All Salaries and Wages expenses, both selling and administrative should be supported by a schedule detailing the number of personnel in each category (selling, officers, administrative) and the average monthly wages for each person in the category. Payroll taxes and employee benefits (payroll burden) should be calculated as a percentage (e.g. 30%) of aggregated gross wages. Don't forget interest expense on outstanding loan balances.

3. **Projected Cash Flow**

Start with net profit from Schedule 2, above, and add back the Depreciation expense, subtract cash paid for capital equipment (fixed assets), add cash inflows from borrowing or equity investment, and subtract cash outflows for loan repayment and any dividends paid or partners' draw.

4. **Projected Balance Sheet**

The ending balance on the Projected Cash Flow statement should be the figure used for Cash on the Balance Sheet. “Retained Earnings” should be the figure at the beginning of the year; “Earnings” (or Net Income) must be the net profit figure from the Income Statement. (Unless merchandise inventory is one of the major assets of the company, it is suggested that an assumption be made that all operation expenses are paid in cash, and therefore there would be not accounts payable.)

5. Breakeven Analysis

For each of the years for which you project a profit, provide a breakeven analysis that shows Sales at a breakeven level so as to produce zero profit after subtracting all fixed selling and administrative expenses.

Recommended textbook for the Business Plan option:

Abrams, R. M. (2003). *The successful business plan: Secrets and strategies* (4th ed.). Palo Alto, CA: The Planning Shop TM. ISBN: 0-9669635-6-3

FORM 3

**Business Plan Evaluation Form (Rubric)
MGT695C**

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Project Title: _____

Rubric for grading

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Research – 10%						
Evidence of higher level research						
Evidence of multiple sources						
Evidence of primary data						
Content – 50%						
Completeness						

Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						
Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 40%						
Grammar						
Spelling						
APA format						
Citations						
Clear expression						
Tables, graphics, etc. appropriate and clear						
Original words						
Overall						

Oral presentations will be graded on the following criteria:

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Content – 60%						
Completeness						
Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						
Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 40%						
Correct grammar, vocabulary						
Speaking skills						
Use of appropriate technology						
Use of visual aids						
Appropriate use of tables, graphs, figures						
Ability to engage listener						
Ability to respond to questions, comments						
Courtesy to other's presentations						
Overall						

COMMENTS:

Part III
Business Client Project

MGT 695C Project

Business Client Project

General Guidelines

A business client project addresses a specific business problem in a particular business. Students will function as either an internal or external consultant with a clearly defined task and an expected deliverable. This project parallels common assignments in organization where an individual is tasked to study a problem and make recommendations to higher level decision-makers. In most cases, the problem will have been addressed multiple times in the past but the solutions have not been as successful as required. The need is for a fresh look and fresh recommendations!

This task is accomplished by following these steps: 1) systematically clarify the presenting business problem, 2) determine the questions to be answered, 3) decide how to answer the questions, 3) collect and analyze data, 4) draw conclusions, and 5) make recommendations. Key to success is framing the inquiry differently than has been used in the past. This is an opportunity for students to utilize the concepts and approaches learned in their various Master's programs. A systematic examination using this new frame will provide a fresh view of the problem.

Research in this option will focus on identifying alternative ways of addressing the key question. Business projects are usually internal to an organization and used by these businesses to solve problems and make informed decisions. In most cases, students choosing to participate in an Internship will complete this business project option.

A business project is an example of practical business writing. The writing is expected to be crisp and clear. The guidance here is to "Get to the point and back it up." Do not labor your points. Once the research is completed, the document to be produced should be considered a persuasive argument on behalf of the recommendations. Again, a clear, concise presentation of the information will work best. A thoughtfully conceived and thoroughly executed study will provide a good foundation for this argument. The logic of the recommendations should be easily observed by those receiving the report.

Considerations for the Client Organization

Consider the following when selecting the client organization:

- Client organizations may be the student's employer, a small business seeking assistance, or a planned new venture organization.
- Client organizations must be willing to provide students the opportunity to study and develop a general management perspective including operational, financial and human resource management issues.

- Client expectations regarding confidentiality and other issues should be discussed with client’s organization
- Client organizations are responsible to assist students in the development of the project by identifying problem areas where research is needed and by providing data for analysis

Consider the following responsibilities of the student or team:

- The student or team must identify sources of information relevant to the project and be assured of access to that information and to those persons who can provide it
- The student or team should have a clear understanding of what the client expects to be the outcome of the project. In what form should this outcome be delivered? This is known as the “Deliverable.”

Required Content and Organization of the Project

Title Page

The title page is not numbered. Refer to the sample provided at the end of these project format instructions.

Executive Summary

The executive summary page is not numbered. The purpose of the executive summary is to provide an abstract of the information provided in the project. Clarity and conciseness are essential. Four to six brief paragraphs are usually sufficient.

Dedication and Acknowledgement

Inclusion of a dedication is optional. If a dedication is included, begin numbering the page with lower case Roman numerals. These elements are rarely included and, if they are, should clearly contribute to the desired outcome. An acknowledgement of contribution by individuals may be included at the end of the project report.

Table of Contents

This table is also numbered with lower case Roman numerals. Refer to the example “Table of Contents” at the end of this section.

Introduction

The introduction section begins with a brief discussion of the area of interest and then presents the following sub-sections:

- Background of the Problem Description of the background of the problem (brief historical perspective and explanation of why the problem remains unsolved at this time). Remember your audience, does not require an introduction to the company.

- Statement of the Problem The problem is presented in statement form, e.g., “The problem is ...” Conclude this section with a clear statement of the question or questions that need to be answered to solve this problem.
- Purpose of the Study This section explains why the study is being conducted. It may be (but not be limited to) one of the following:
 - To effect a change
 - To solve a real business problem for an existing business
 - To predict future situations
 - To compare and contrast (strategies, technologies)
 - To develop a specific program (marketing, process improvement, performance evaluation)
 - To determine the feasibility of (x, y, or z)
 - To conduct an organizational diagnosis of (x, y, z company)
 - To conduct an analysis of (emerging economic trends, the impact of leadership style on corporate culture)

Literature Review

The purpose of the Literature Review is to guide the inquiry. What research has been completed on similar topics in other organizations, the same industry, or other industries? This may include both academic and business literature. Questions to answer in this review are:

- How have others defined/framed similar problems?
- What approaches did they use to find solutions?
- What solutions did they discover?
- What were critical weaknesses of these approaches?
- What else have you learned from these studies that will help this study be more productive?

The Literature Review should provide the foundation for your Methodology section. You choose approaches because they produced productive results in similar situations. You may choose not to use approaches because of their unproductive results.

The presentation of the Literature Review should lay a logical and complete foundation for the Methodology that follows.

Warning: The Literature Review should not be a history of the organization. You do not need to tell a boss or a client the history of his/her organization.

Methodology

How will you proceed to answer the research question asked in the Statement of the Problem? What information do you need to gather inside and outside the organization to answer the question? What steps will you follow to systematically analyze this data?

How will you know when your question is answered? In a Business Project, this should not be a lengthy section but it should provide clear guidance to you as you proceed. It also demonstrates that you were thoughtful and thorough in your approach to solving the organization's problem.

Conclusions

By being thorough in earlier sections, this section should be brief and to the point. The findings are the setup for the recommendations to follow. Briefly review and recap what you discovered through your research.

- The problem and the question this study was expected to answer.
- Some of the issues/problems that were investigated
- Key findings of this investigation
- Possible solutions

Recommendations

The recommendations should build on your conclusions by stating actions steps that the organization can take to address those conclusions and make improvements. Consider the concept of "sufficiency." Are your recommendations sufficient to significantly solve the problem? Are they practical and affordable both in financial and other resources? If these obvious steps are not possible, what do you recommend? How do you present your recommendations in a way that gives decision-makers choices?

Recommendations may have tiers. Clearly stating the expected results of each recommendation allows decision-makers to weigh the options and make their choices.

- Describe your final recommendations and why it is the best solution/prediction
- Describe alternative recommendations and why they are more limited
- Describe the implications for management/businesses with respect to these choices.

References

This section continues with the Arabic numbering of pages. Only sources of information that have actually been cited in the project are included here. These references should comply with APA standards.

Appendices

The appendices continue with the Arabic numbering of pages from the previous section. The actual titling of the appendices receives letter designations, rather than numbers. Therefore, you would have Appendix A, Appendix B., not Appendix 1, or Appendix 2.

This section includes information that is too detailed to be included in its entirety in the body of the project. This would include raw data, sample questionnaires, and detailed computations. This section would also include information that is referred to but is not essential to the project, such as relevant policies, laws, forms, pamphlets, sample letters sent to organizations and subjects, or subject consent forms.

FORM 3
Business Client Project Evaluation Form (Rubric)
MGT695C

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Project Title: _____

Rubric for grading

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Research – 10%						
Evidence of higher level research						
Evidence of multiple sources						
Evidence of primary data						
Content – 60%						
Completeness						
Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						
Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 30%						
Grammar						
Spelling						
Format						
Citations						
Clear expression						
Tables, graphics, etc. appropriate and clear						
Original words						
Overall						

Oral presentations will be graded on the following criteria:

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Content – 60%						
Completeness						
Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						

Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 40%						
Correct grammar, vocabulary						
Speaking skills						
Use of appropriate technology						
Use of visual aids						
Appropriate use of tables, graphs, figures						
Ability to engage listener						
Ability to respond to questions, comments						
Courtesy to other’s presentations						
Overall						

COMMENTS:

Part IV
Business Research

MGT 695C: PROJECT

Business Research

A business research project explores business questions as they relate to industries, business climate, and business practices. This option is a traditional research option requiring a clear research question, review of the literature, methodology, analysis, and conclusions. Research in this option will focus on findings in related research plus the methodological alternatives.

Warning: This is a traditional research project that requires the use of traditional research methods and presentation. This is not just a longer “class paper.” This is a rigorous academic exercise. Before selecting this option, students are expected to examine two or three peer reviewed journal articles to benefit from examples of this type of project. The final document must fully comply with APA formatting standards. That said, there have been many successful, productive research projects completed in MGT695C.

General Guidelines

- The Business Research option provides students with the opportunity to engage in more traditional research to answer questions that provide guidance to business and individuals.
- Examples of Business Research include exploring the differences between and among companies or industries, identifying and tracking economic or consumer trends, or examining emerging management or leadership approaches.
- This type of project may involve the collection of primary and/or secondary data.
- The research may be descriptive, explanatory, or predictive in nature
- Exemplary research will:
 - Have a clearly defined purpose
 - Have a detailed research process
 - Have high ethical standards applied

Required Content and Organization of the Final Project

Title Page

The title page is not numbered. Refer to the sample provided at the end of these project format instructions.

Abstract

The executive summary page is not numbered. The purpose of the executive summary is to provide an abstract of the information provided in the project. Clarity and conciseness are essential. Two to four paragraphs are usually sufficient. An abstract is usually much shorter than an Executive Summary.

Dedication

Inclusion of a dedication is optional. If a dedication is included, begin numbering the page with lower case Roman numerals.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are also optional. If a dedication page is not included, this would be the first page to be assigned a lower case Roman numeral. If there is a dedication page, the acknowledgement page would be numbered “ii.”

In this section, the researcher may wish to recognize any assistance provided in conducting the research or in preparing the project. It is appropriate to recognize any special financial support provided from funding agencies, any editorial help, graphics design, or other contributions. The assistance and support of family members may also be mentioned in this section.

Table of Contents

This table is also numbered with lower case Roman numerals. Refer to the example “Table of Contents” at the end of this section.

List of Tables

This page continues with the lower case Roman numerals. Refer to the example at the end of this section. All information that is depicted in tabular/matrix form in the body of the report should be titled and receive a table number, beginning with Table 1. All tables are then listed with their respective page numbers from the body of the report.

Tables that are referred to, but not contained in the body of the report, are placed in the appendix. These receive letter designations (Appendix A, Appendix B), and are not assigned table numbers.

List of Illustrations

This page continues with the lower case Roman numerals. Refer to example at the end of this section. All information represented by graphs, diagrams, charts, and schematics, which are included in the body of the report, are titled and receive a Figure number, beginning with Figure 1. All figures are then listed with their respective page numbers from the text.

Any illustrations that are referred to, but not included in the body of the report, are placed in the appendix. These do not receive Figure numbers.

Introduction

The introduction section begins with a brief discussion of the area of interest and then presents the following sub-sections:

- Background of the Problem Description of the background of the problem (brief historical perspective and explanation of why the problem remains unsolved at this time)
- Statement of the Problem The problem is presented in statement form, e.g., “The problem is ...” Conclude this section with a clear statement of the question or questions that need to be answered to solve this problem.
- Purpose of the Study This section explains why the study is being conducted. It may be (but not be limited to) one of the following:
 - To predict future situations
 - To compare and contrast (strategies, technologies)
 - To prepare for the development of specific program (marketing, process improvement, performance evaluation)
 - To conduct an analysis of (emerging economic trends, the impact of leadership style on corporate culture)
- Significance of the Study This section provides information concerning the import of the study. For example, this study is significant because it:
 - Adds to the body of knowledge of business in general
 - Is of import to the business under study
- Assumptions The purpose of this section is to present some of the factors the researcher is asking the reader to accept as conditions of the study. Some examples are:
 - The sample is representative of the population
 - The appropriate variables have been selected for examination the measurement tools are valid and reliable
- Limitations These are those factors or conditions that may impact the data and are out of the researcher's control. Examples are:
 - Information obtained from surveys may not be valid
 - Non-valid instruments
- Delimitation's This section identifies the boundaries of the study and ways in which findings may lessen the ability to generalize. For example:

- The nature and size of the sample
- The uniqueness of the setting
- Limitations of the methods selected

Literature Review

The Literature review is an examination of the literature describing research into your topic or closely related to your topic. The purpose is to explore how others have researched your topic and what they found. The results of the Literature Review should inform your methodology to allow you to build on what others have discovered.

This section begins with a general description of how the Review of Literature will be organized and presented. Then, the review may be organized as follows:

- The general history of the topic (resented chronologically)
- The current state
- Related factors and circumstances
- Related research by others, if appropriate

It is important to integrate the areas of Review of Literature into a logical sequence, starting with a broad focus of the topic and narrowing down to a specific topic.

Methodology

This section describes the design of the research used to answer the research question or address the research problem. The methodology is intended to be the action plan for the balance of your research. How will you frame your inquiry? What data will you collect? How will you collect it? How will you analyze it once you collect it. The content and length of this section depends on the nature of the research. This section may also include:

- Descriptions of the participants (who are they, and why were they chosen?) or business studied
- Instrumentation used to obtain data
- Procedures or steps in conducting the study and obtaining data
- Data analysis

Conclusions

- Briefly review the general topic and the need to explore the aspect addressed in this research
- Briefly recap some of the issues/problems that were investigated

- Briefly recap the possible solutions
- Describe your final recommendation and why it is the best solution/prediction
- Describe what the implications are for management/businesses with respect to these findings

References

This section continues with the Arabic numbering of pages. Only sources of information that have actually been cited in the project are included here.

Appendices

The appendices continue with the Arabic numbering of pages from the previous section. The actual titling of the appendices receives letter designations, rather than numbers. Therefore, you would have Appendix A, Appendix B., not Appendix 1, or Appendix 2.

This section includes information that is too detailed to be included in its entirety in the body of the project. This would include raw data, sample questionnaires, and detailed computations. This section would also include information that is referred to but is not essential to the project, such as relevant policies, laws, forms, pamphlets, sample letters sent to organizations and subjects, or subject consent forms.

Pagination

Page/Section	Type of Numbers
Title Page	None
Dedication (optional)	Begin with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii)
Acknowledgements (optional)	Continues with lower case Roman numerals
Table of Contents	Continues with lower case Roman numerals
List of Tables	Continues with lower case Roman numerals
List of Illustrations	Continues with lower case Roman numerals
Introduction/Executive Summary	Begins with Arabic numbers (1,2,3)
Business Plan Project	Continues with Arabic numbers
Conclusion and Recommendations	Continues with Arabic numbers
References	Continues with Arabic numbers
Appendices	Continues with Arabic numbers

Recommended textbook for the Business Research option:

Geoffrey Marczyk, David DeMotteo, & David Festinger (2005). *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 0-471-47053-8

FORM 3
Business Research Evaluation Form (Rubric)
MGT695C

Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Project Title: _____

Rubric for grading

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Research – 10%						
Evidence of higher level research						
Evidence of multiple sources						
Evidence of primary data						
Content – 50%						
Completeness						
Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						
Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 40%						
Grammar						
Spelling						
APA format						

Citations						
Clear expression						
Tables, graphics, etc. appropriate and clear						
Original words						
Overall						

Oral presentations will be graded on the following criteria:

	0/F	1/D	2/C	3/B	4/A	NA
Content – 60%						
Completeness						
Relevancy						
Appropriate analysis						
Appropriate conclusions drawn						
Logical rational and/or justification						
Original thought						
Structural – 40%						
Correct grammar, vocabulary						
Speaking skills						
Use of appropriate technology						
Use of visual aids						
Appropriate use of tables, graphs, figures						
Ability to engage listener						
Ability to respond to questions, comments						
Courtesy to other's presentations						
Overall						

COMMENTS:

Power Point Evaluation Form (Rubric)

	2	1	0	
Introduction	The introduction presents the overall topic and draws the audience into the presentation with compelling questions or by relating to the audience's interests or goals.	The introduction is clear and coherent and relates to the topic.	The introduction is present but does not orient the audience to what will follow. The sequencing is unclear and does not appear interesting or relevant to the audience.	<hr/> X 5 = <u>2</u> 10 max possible
Content	The content is written clearly and concisely with a logical progression of ideas and supporting information. All elements are included with additional information not required. Topic is covered thoroughly.	The content is written with a logical progression of ideas and supporting information. All elements are included as required. Topic is covered.	The content lacks a clear point of view and logical sequence of information. Includes little information and only one or two facts about the topic. Information is incomplete, out of date and/or incorrect. Sequencing of ideas is unclear. Important information not included.	<hr/> X 7 = <u>2</u> 14
Text Element	The fonts are easy to read and point size varies appropriately for headings and text. Use of italics, bold, and indentations enhances readability. Text is appropriate in length for the target audience and to the point. The background and colors enhance the readability of the text.	Sometimes the fonts are easy to read, but in a few places the use of fonts, italics, bold, long paragraphs, color or busy background detracts and does not enhance readability.	The text is extremely difficult to read with long blocks of text and small point size of fonts, inappropriate contrasting colors, poor use of headings, subheadings, indentations, or bold formatting.	<hr/> X 3 = <u>2</u> 6
Layout	The layout is visually pleasing and contributes to the overall message with appropriate use of headings, subheadings and white space.	The layout uses horizontal and vertical white space appropriately.	The layout is cluttered, confusing, and does not use spacing, headings and subheadings to enhance the readability.	<hr/> X 3 = <u>2</u> 6
Citations	Sources of information are properly cited so that the audience can determine the credibility and authority of the information presented. All sources of information are clearly identified and credited using APA citations.	Most sources of information use proper APA citation and sources are documented to make it possible to check on the accuracy of information.	No way to check validity of information. Work is not cited.	<hr/> X 5 = <u>2</u>

				10
Graphics, Sound and/or Animation	The graphics, sound and/or animation assist in presenting an overall theme and enhance understanding of concept, ideas and relationships. Original images are created using proper size and resolution, and all images enhance the content. There is a consistent visual theme	Some of the graphics, sounds, and/or animations seem unrelated to the topic/theme and do not enhance the overall concepts. Most images are clipart or recycled from the internet. Images are too large/small in size. Images are poorly cropped or the color/resolution is fuzzy.	The graphics sounds, and/or animations are unrelated to the content. Graphics do not enhance understanding of the content, or are distracting decorations that create a busy feeling and detract from the content.	$\begin{array}{r} \text{X } 3 \\ \hline = \frac{2}{6} \end{array}$
Writing Mechanics	The text is written with no errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.	Spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors distract or impair readability. (3 or more errors)	Errors in spelling, capitalizations, punctuation, usage and grammar repeatedly distract the reader and major editing and revision is required. (More than 5 errors)	$\begin{array}{r} \text{X } 5 \\ 2 \\ \hline = \frac{\quad}{10} \end{array}$
Voice and tone	Authoritative, engaging, cogent, logical, sophisticated tone.	Strong, interesting, reasonable. Consistently appropriate tone.	Lacks authority; may be vague or unclear but seems interested in informing the reader. Some inappropriate tone shifts.	$\begin{array}{r} \text{X } 5 \\ = \frac{2}{10} \end{array}$
Verbal Crutches	Less than three Ah's, OK's, Umms or other verbal crutches and not getting lost during present	Five to ten verbal crutches or getting lost during presentation once.	More than ten uses of verbal crutches or getting lost two or more times during presentation.	$\begin{array}{r} \text{X } 5 \\ = \frac{2}{10} \end{array}$
Appropriate Number of Slides	15 or less	15 or less	More than 15 Less than 7	$\begin{array}{r} \text{X } 3 \\ \hline = \frac{2}{6} \end{array}$

Finished in time allotted	15 minutes	15 minutes	More than 17 minutes Less than 7 minute s	$\begin{array}{r} X 5 \\ \hline = 2 \\ \hline 10 \end{array}$
Scoring	Excellent 90-100 Rubric Points	Average 70-89 Rubric Points	Not Acceptable Less than 69 Rubric points	Total Possible Rubric Percentage Scored $\begin{array}{r} 100 \\ X \quad 65 \text{ total} \\ \hline \end{array}$ Points Scored: 100