

Course Syllabus for HDDR 6346 Organizational Consulting

Spring Term

March 14-16 and March 28-30

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Course Overview

The focus areas of mediation, negotiation, arbitration, conflict management, team building and coaching all have one thing in common – practitioners within these fields are called upon to provide advisory support as consultants to individuals and organizations. Within this course, students will learn how to apply a well-tested consulting model to a variety of consulting situations. The class introduces the basic core elements of organizational consulting, including establishing trust with clients, establishing expectations of the consulting problems, planning a consulting intervention, and managing a consulting intervention. Students also learn the different challenges associated with internal and external consulting, and how to successfully market consulting businesses.

Course Content

First Weekend:

Section 1

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 1-3)

An Overview of the Field:

- Changes underway in the field of consulting
- How organizational consulting differs from mediation or business consulting
- How to position yourself in the field
- Self-assessment: Whether consulting is right for you
- Common misconceptions

Building Trust with Clients:

- Trust as the ante in the game of consulting
- Factors that contribute to a trusting relationship
- How to build credibility as a consultant
- Communication issues that can derail consulting interventions

Section 2

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 4-6)

Negotiating Expectations and Contracting:

- How to insure that you identify and meet client expectations
- Working with the scope of your agreement
- How to negotiate expectations, and respective roles & responsibilities with clients
- Elements typically found in a consulting agreement

Section 3

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 8-9)

Dealing with Resistance:

- Factors which create client resistance
- How to recognize resistance
- How to overcome resistance

Section 4

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 10-13)

Diagnosis & Data Gathering:

- How to use interviews and focus groups to your best advantage
- How to consolidate interview data into an assessment report
- How to use large group methods in data gathering

Section 5

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 14-15)

Managing Feedback to the Client and Key Stakeholders:

- How to prepare a report summary
- Common pitfalls in presenting feedback
- How to help the client make a “go-forward” decision

Second Weekend:

Section 6:

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 16-17)

Managing Consulting Interventions:

- Actions for insuring the success of consulting interventions
- How to anticipate and deal with resistance to organizational change

Section 7:

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapter 7)

Internal vs. External Consulting:

- How internal and external consultants differ in roles, competencies, and work challenges
- What it takes to succeed as an internal consultant
- Suggestions for insuring success as an internal consultant

Section 8:

(Pre-work: Read Block; Chapters 19)

Ethics & Issues in Consulting:

- Common ethical issues: conflicts of interest, disclosure of information, collusion, etc.
- Actions one can take to avoid ethical dilemmas

Sections 9-10:

You will be directed to readings in your binder as pre-work for these last two sessions.

Consulting as a Business:

- Common pitfalls in setting up a consulting business and how to avoid them
- How to identify a lucrative market niche for your services
- How to price your consulting services
- Marketing, branding and promotion

COURSE TEXTS

- *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*, by Peter Block (3rd edition)
- 3-Ring Binder (Note: Don't become worried when you see the size of the binder. You will not be responsible for reading all of these materials. Some of these materials will be used within each class session, while others are provided as background reference material on those subjects which are not sufficiently covered in the text)

GRADING PROCESS

50% - Write an analysis (5-8 pages, double-spaced) of a consulting case that will be provided by the instructor. (Additional directions will be provided in class). **Must be sent to kbarclay@smu.edu via e-mail we will discuss the due date in class.** *When sending this assignment, please identify yourself only by your student ID, not your name and use the following protocol to name the document: 22XX3344.docx.*

50% - Develop a 3-5 marketing summary which explains your marketing segment, marketing niche, target audience, and the unique “value added” that you would provide to your customers as an external consultant. **Must be sent to kbarclay@smu.edu via e-mail** *When sending this assignment, please identify yourself only by your student ID, not your name.*

[Note: don't be intimidated by the term ‘marketing summary’. This course does not assume that students have previously had coursework in business. The process of developing a marketing plan will be discussed in detail during the second weekend of the course.]

Important Note Regarding the Grading Policy for Papers and Projects:

All papers are graded ‘blind’ by the instructor. This means that when submitting papers please identify yourself through the use of your student ID number not your name.

All papers and projects are due on the dates indicate. Papers and projects that are submitted past these deadlines will not be accepted and will result in an grade of “F”/

93-100 = A Exceptional	A superior / outstanding performance. Has mastered the concepts and adds unique contributes to class discussions.
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90-92 = A- Excellent	A very good / admirable performance. Displays understanding in all areas of the class, and contributes successfully to class discussions.
87-89 = B+ Outstanding	Above average performance. A few insignificant flaws may appear, but overall has great application of the field.
83-86 = B Good	A generally satisfactory, intellectually adequate performance. Few significant flaws in performance.
80-82 = B- Adequate	A barely satisfactory performance. Contributes little to class discussions and lacks a clear understanding of concepts.
77-79 = C+ Not sufficient	An unacceptable performance. Unable to engage in class discussions and has little comprehension of theories.

Academic Policies of Special Importance to Students

Academic Integrity and Ethical Conduct as an SMU Student:

Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the Student Handbook. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies, and penalties regarding academic honesty.

http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp

Religious Observance:

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professor in writing at the beginning of the term, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

Class Decorum:

To foster a good learning environment for yourself and your fellow students we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines during class:

- Please turn off (or set on vibrate) all cell phones or pagers.
- Do not read newspapers, books for other classes, or other outside reading material during class.
- Walking into class late is disruptive as is leaving early. If you have to leave early, make arrangements before class begins, and then, when you leave, do so quietly.
- Professional respect and courtesy for your fellow students is imperative at all times

Key Learning Objectives	How Achieved
1. Students will learn to differentiate between client-driven, consultant-driven, and collaborative consulting.	Given case situations, students will identify the appropriate type of consulting approach.
2. Students will learn the six basic steps of progressing through a consulting engagement.	Given a Harvard Business Review case students will develop a written description of how they would apply the six steps to the case situation.
3. Students will learn the most common ethical issues faced by consultants and how to effectively resolve these issues.	Given three case situations, students identify the types of ethical issues embedded within each situation and suggest options for resolution.
4. Students will learn to identify the most important differences in the engagement challenges faced by internal vs. external consultants.	Given a case scenario, students will describe how they would need to alter their consulting approach during the contracting phase, from the perspective of both an internal and an external consultant who is assigned to manage the engagement.
5. Students will learn the criteria that comprise an effective consulting agreement.	Given a hypothetical agreement students will evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement, based on a list of evaluation criteria.
6. Students will learn how to identify their target client base and personal consulting 'brand'.	Students will work in teams to identify their preferred market niche within a client/deliverable matrix that will jointly be by the entire class.
7. Students will learn how to consolidate field data into a consulting assessment report.	Given a case study of an hypothetical company, and interview and survey data related to the case, students will be asked to derive an analysis of the data and identify the three most important consulting needs that would need to be included in the client's assessment report.

Rubric for the Consulting Case			
Grading Components	Grading Factors Related to Case Content		
<i>Background Information</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points
<p>In this section you will be asked to provide a brief description of those key factors that provide a contextual framework for understanding the underlying causes of the coaching issue.</p> <p>This section is typically ½ - 1 double-spaced, typewritten page.</p> <p>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>The background information is largely incomplete, providing only a cursory and vague description of the case.</p> <p>Example: “This case concerns a request for coaching assistance by Carlos Hernandez, an IT manager.”</p>	<p>The coaching case contains some of the relevant detail on the client(s), but lacks detail relating to critical events that led up to the presenting problem.</p> <p>Example: “Example: “This case concerns a request for coaching assistance by Carlos Hernandez, Director of Software Development within the IT department of Acme Corp. Carlos is a relatively new manager, having joined Acme only six months ago.”</p>	<p>All relevant contextual background information on the client or client company is accurately described.</p> <p>Example: “Example: “This case concerns a request for coaching assistance by Carlos Hernandez, Director of Software Development within the IT department of Acme Corp. Carlos is a relatively new manager, having joined Acme only six months ago. Carlos replaced Carol Smith, the previous director who had been with Acme for over 15 years, and who was well respected by her work team.”</p>
<i>Problem Definition</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points

<p>In this section you will be asked to provide a summary of the coaching assignment, as described by both the client (the coachee) and the client’s manager. Please keep in mind that your problem definition should be restricted to an objective description of the initial coaching problem or issue, and that you should avoid jumping to conclusions regarding underlying causes or proposed solutions.</p> <p>This section is typically ½-1 double-spaced, typewritten pages.</p> <p>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>The coaching issue is vaguely defined or contains implied solutions.</p> <p>Example: “The problem was that Carlos was viewed as being a micromanager and he didn’t understand the company.”</p>	<p>The coaching assignment is carefully defined and avoids statements that imply a proposed solution.</p> <p>Example: “Carlos’ manager has indicated that she has received several recent complaints from Carlos’ team members regarding the fact that his leadership style is viewed as too directive and confrontational. From Carlos’ perspective, the only ‘problem’ that he faces is that of receiving insufficient support from his manager.”</p>	<p>The coaching assignment is carefully defined, avoids statements that imply a proposed solution, and identifies key events leading up to the proposed problem.</p> <p>Example: “Carlos’ manager has indicated that she has received several recent complaints from Carlos’ team members regarding the fact that his leadership style is viewed as too directive and confrontational. From Carlos’ perspective, the only ‘problem’ that he faces is that of receiving insufficient support from his manager. Carlos has also indicated his concern that he was brought in to Acme to initiate an aggressive change management process within his function, and that he is struggling with the best way of aligning this goal with his manager’s goal of building positive relationships with</p>
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			the members of his work team.”
Causal Factors	1-7 Points	8 - 14 Points	15 -20 Points
<p>In this section you will be asked to identify those key underlying causal factors that were within the control of the client(s), and which were shown to be related to the onset and development of the coaching problem or issue.</p> <p>This section is typically 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.</p> <p>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>Identified causal factors are only vaguely described, and may include as causal factors, broad environmental circumstances that were outside of the client’s control.</p> <p>Example: “One major causal factor was that the events took place during an economic downturn.”</p>	<p>All relevant causal factors are clearly described and are supported by the facts of the case. In addition, only those factors that were within the direct control of the client were listed. However, the student does not refer back to specific events or incidents mentioned in the case to substantiate the importance of these causal factors.</p> <p>Example: “Carlos had only been on board for three months and had come from a company that had a completely different organizational culture. These factors contributed to the difficulties that Carlos continued to encounter in balancing the performance</p>	<p>All relevant causal factors are clearly described and are supported by the facts of the case. Only those factors that were within the direct control of the client are listed. In addition, the student the student mentions specific events or incidents in the case to substantiate the importance of these causal factors.</p> <p>Example: “Carlos had only been on board for three months and had come from a company that had a completely different organizational culture. These factors contributed to the difficulties that Carlos continued to encounter in balancing the performance</p>

		<p>demands of his new organization with the need to build good work relationships with the members of his work team.”</p>	<p>demands of his new organization with the need to build good work relationships with the members of his work team.</p> <p>An example (page 3 of the case) is found in Carlos’ first goal-setting meeting with his new team. He missed using this meeting as an opportunity to discuss his role as a change agent in helping his company meet tougher performance demands.”</p>
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Rubric for the Marketing Plan			
Grading Components	Grading Factors		
<i>Summary of Consulting Structure</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points
<p>In this section you will provide a brief description of the type of consulting firm that you are developing (sole proprietorship, partnership, etc.) You will also describe your proposed staffing size and the principle key products and services that will be offered by your firm.</p> <p>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>The description is very vague, with few descriptive details.</p> <p>“I intend to form a consulting practice that will provide conflict resolution services.”</p>	<p>The description provides some limited descriptive details</p> <p>“I intend to establish a limited partnership with another individual that will focus on providing conflict resolution training to organizations.”</p>	<p>The description provides a high level of detail and precision in explaining the nature of the proposed consulting structure.</p> <p>“I intend to establish a limited partnership with another individual that will focus on providing conflict resolution training to organizations. We will focus on providing formal workshops aimed at the first-line supervisory level within organizations.....(more here)</p>
<i>Market Segment, Size, and Selection Factors</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points
<p>In this section you will provide a detailed description of your proposed market, the size</p>	<p>Only a cursory treatment of the market has been undertaken.</p> <p>“I plan to focus my consultancy</p>	<p>All details of the market have been reviewed, but no rationale is given for market selection.</p> <p>“I plan to focus my</p>	<p>Provides a thorough review of all key factors related to market selection, along with a detailed description of that market.</p>

<p>of the market, and some of the factors that you considered in selecting this market niche.</p> <p>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>on larger companies.</p>	<p>consultancy on larger companies within the mid-to-large size (5000>employees) private sector, high-tech companies within the DFW metro area.”</p>	<p>“I plan to focus my consultancy on larger companies within the mid-to-large size (5000>employees) private sector, high-tech companies within the DFW metro area. From information that I obtained onI estimate the size of this market to be... My reason for focusing on this area is...”</p>
<p><i>Competitors and Unique Value Added</i></p>	<p>1-7 Points</p>	<p>8 - 14 Points</p>	<p>15 -20 Points</p>
<p>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>Provides only a rough guess on the competitive scene and no mention of value add.</p>	<p>Provides a more detailed assessment of the competitive scene with some generalized statements regarding value add (“my 20 years of background, etc.”)</p>	<p>Provides a detailed and validated assessment of key competitors, and a clear description on the value add in comparison to those competitors.</p>

<i>Pricing</i>	1-7 Points	8 - 14 Points	15 -20 Points
<p>In this section you will explain how you intend to charge for your services, and how your pricing model compares with those offered by your competitors.</p> <p>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	Does not mention pricing.	Mentions pricing, but no mention of how pricing stacks up against fees charged by competitors.	Provides a detailed review of pricing, with an explanation of how pricing compares with that offered by competitors.
<i>Marketing Efforts</i>	1-7 Points	8 - 14 Points	15 -20 Points
<p>In this section will identify the key organizational decision makers for your services, as well as the marketing efforts you will undertake to reach these people.</p> <p>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</p>	<p>Provides only a cursory description of how the consulting service will be marketed.</p> <p>“I intend to get my name out in front of people and professional groups”</p>	<p>Provides a detailed description of marketing efforts.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail • Training • Seminars • Writing • Web 	Provides a detailed description of key decision makers, proposed marketing efforts, and how these marketing efforts are intended to appeal to the key decision makers.

Grading Factors Related to the Style, Format, and Organization of the Paper			
<i>Style & Format</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points
This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.	The paper contains several spelling and grammatical errors and is sloppily formatted. (The title page does not include the date, course title, instructor's name, or student's name.)	The paper contains a few spelling or grammatical errors and is properly formatted.	The paper contains no spelling and grammatical errors and is properly formatted.
<i>Objectivity</i>	1-3 Points	4 -7 Points	8 -10 Points
This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.	<p>The student engages in rampant editorializing.</p> <p>Examples: "I personally believe that..." " Based on my thirty years of experience I would recommend that..."</p>	The student occasionally blends in editorial commentary with arguments derived from the facts of the case.	<p>The student provides a fact-driven analysis that omits editorial commentary.</p> <p>Example: "The executive's leadership style issues can be seen in the ineffective manner in which he attempted to prepare his team (page 5 of the case) for the sales presentation to Beta Company. Several times during this meeting the executive interrupted other team members and failed to provide them with opportunities to fully air their views."</p>