

## BUSINESS CASE ASSIGNMENT

For this assignment, you will work as a member of a group to develop and write a Business Case report directed to the Band Council offering a solution for a business issue you have identified.

A Business Case is a document that details a specific business problem, considers a broad range of options to address that problem, and then builds the case in favour of one of those options. It provides an argument that justifies the expense, the risk and the resources necessary, as well as any potential benefits for, or risk to, the reputation or brand. It usually has an emphasis on budget, but also considers other factors.

The purpose of the report is to help a specific organization make the best decision about an important initiative by fully exploring the potential benefits and problems associated with the options available. Each group will select one nation and identify a specific business problem facing this nation. The primary task of your group is to explore options for addressing this problem. The final document is expected to provide sufficient information for the Band Council to move forward on the initiative by making an informed and effective decision.

A Business Case requires a pragmatic rationale, explanations of solutions and benefits, as well as options rejected. It forces participants to consider the solution within its context, and as an alternative to business as usual, providing a framework that helps decision makers prioritize options.

A Business Case must provide a thorough analysis of the costs and benefits. This is difficult because it requires guessing how much something will cost before it is purchased or implemented. Therefore, assumptions must be based on something that is comparable, and must be stated very clearly. Moreover, analyzing costs and benefits also requires attributing benefits to things that are difficult or impossible to measure, such as culture, future benefits or customer satisfaction.

Read pages 97-110 of *Working Effectively With Aboriginal People*

**There are Three Deliverables for this Assignment.**

## DELIVERABLES - There are Three Deliverables for this Assignment

### *Deliverable One – Memo & Work Plan*

In the **Work Plan** identify all key deliverables with team lead and deadline for each.

Write a **1.5-2 pages Memo** to your instructor, identify:

- A specific First Nation you will use for your case;
- Details of the business issue, purpose for the initiative, or problem facing that Nation;
- The method you will use to determine alternative solutions;
- At least three of the best alternatives you will consider; and,
- Justification for your most favoured alternative.

**Due: Thursday, March 17, by email** (\*CC all group members)

### *Deliverable Two – Business Case Report*

Choose a BC First Nation, identify a business issue needing a solution and a project or business that would address the issue. Write a complete Business Case for Band Council justifying the use of resources necessary. Include a robust options evaluation, and one option with thorough justification. **Consider the Council's stated economic priorities, existing businesses, etc.** The report should be a maximum of **14 pages or 4500 words** including an executive summary. Title page, table of contents and appendices are not included in the page count. Use standard margins and 12 point font. *You will be deducted one point for every page or 100 words (or portion thereof) you are over the limit.* The report should not be less than 10 pages or 3500 words.

**Due: Friday, April 10, 11:59pm via turnitin**

### *Deliverable Three - Presentation*

As part of this assignment, your group will make a 5-10 minute presentation to the class who will offer comments and suggestions for improvement. The presentation will present the project problem, identify the alternatives and discuss the recommended option.

All members of your group must take an active speaking role in the presentation and talk about specific elements of the report. No one should simply act as the announcer.

You are encouraged to use a presentation program such as PowerPoint, Keynote, or Prezi to present your plan.

**Due: Sides due Wednesday, March 30, by email. All members of the group must be present March 31 in class for the presentation.**

15% of your grade for this assignment, includes the feedback you offer in class.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

*Your report should include the following sections:*

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Problem Identification:** description of the problem & current state including Council's stated economic priorities, existing businesses, etc.
3. **Project Goals**
4. **Project Assumptions**
5. **Project Constraints**
6. **Methodology:** identify what specifically you will do to determine the most appropriate option. E.g. market research, focus group, pilot project, etc.
7. **Performance Measures:** specify how you will determine the effectiveness of the project
8. **Options and Alternatives Analysis:** In order to determine the best option, you must consider a wide variety of options, even those that might at first seem far fetched. Be sure that each option you identify directly addresses the problem.
  - a. Include at least 4 options intended to solve the problem you have identified. Include a "do-nothing" or status quo option.
  - b. Provide a *Cost-Benefit Analysis* for each option or alternative, the more feasible options will require more detail. Consider how much each option is likely to cost (dollar values are best, but you may use high, medium or low if you're unable to determine an approximate dollar value). Also consider the benefits of each option including those benefits to which a dollar value cannot be assigned such as culture or ethics.
  - c. Identify the significant risks of each option or alternative (e.g. financial, social, environmental, reputational or operational risk).
9. **Recommended Option:** Choose one best option and provide a complete justification, including quantifiable and unquantifiable risks and benefits for that option.
10. **Implementation Plan & Timeline:** Provide a plan and a timeline for your recommendation, including key milestones and resources (people, money, equipment, etc.) required.

## Choosing a Suitable Nation:

Choose a First Nation about which you can find enough information to carefully consider the problem and the options.

Once you have chosen a Nation, identify a problem or an area of improvement required for improved functioning and/or profitability. This might be a need for:

- i. Increased revenue
- ii. Employment opportunities
- iii. Development of services
- iv. Other

You will need to determine the existing businesses and the level of business sophistication within the Band and the strength of their economy. This will help you identify options that will meet the needs of the community.

You will have to make assumptions about existing initiatives and other aspects of the community. State those assumptions clearly. This process will push you to think through the business problem in detail and identify the necessary information. In many instances it will be necessary to identify costs as *high*, *medium* or *low* when exact values cannot be determined.

## Teamwork

This is a collaborative project, so all members of your group are expected to contribute equally to preparing, writing, and presenting the plan. While all members of the team should take on a role that makes effective use of their capabilities, everyone should contribute substantially to the writing of the assignment submission.

One objective of this assignment is for you to develop teamwork skills so that you'll be better prepared to work on group projects in your profession. Part of this process is learning how to deal with members who don't contribute equally.

If a member of your group isn't contributing equally, you may need to:

- Discuss it with the member,
- Use persuasion to motivate the member,
- Seek assistance from the instructor, and/or
- Ask the member to leave the project.

Members who are asked to leave a group because they haven't done their share of the work will be required to come up with their own business case and complete the assignment individually.

## Submission/Marking

Only one member of your group needs to submit the final version of the business case. It must be submitted on the due date in the manner prescribed in class.

The assignment will be graded using the standard marking rubric, including a score for the class presentation. All members of the group are expected to contribute equally and will receive the same grade for the assignment. However, if the group unanimously determines that an individual's contribution is unsatisfactory to the extent that it negatively affects team performance or results, or causes other group members to carry that individual's load, the underperforming group member will receive a lower individual grade.

**Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day.**

### **ASSIGNMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. Analytical Skills:** consider quantitative *and* qualitative data to identify, analyze and develop business opportunities or solve business problems.
- 2. Critical Thinking:** evaluate a business and make reasoned well supported decisions about how it might improve and the trade offs inherent in "improvements."
- 3. Sustainability:** in addition to profitability, consider measures of success such as sustainability and ethics.
- 4. Research & Reading:** interpret primary source material, such as a company website and audited financials, to determine issues and solutions that will be appropriate for the company in question.
- 5. Applied Learning:** apply what you've learned at Sauder to a real world business.
- 6. Group Work:** work effectively in a team to come to a common conclusion and deliver one high quality project.