TIM158
Business Case Assignment

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Business Case Assignment

- Individual Assignment, posted on class website
- Due by Tuesday, May 5, 2015
- Optional early draft Thursday April, 30
A business case is an argument why an organization should make a change, usually including spending money to get there.

It includes a description of the business problem or opportunity, the costs and benefits of each alternative solution, and the recommended solution for approval.
Example: Assignment Scenario

• You are the CIO (Chief Information Officer) for UCSC.
  – The university wants to reduce the annual deficit and be able to take its learning globally. You want to

  The chancellor has said –
  “the university of tomorrow must be defined today. We must prepare to lead the charge. We need to transform or we will be left behind. Yes, we will spend the money. This is our survival we are talking about ...”

• You have the following areas
  
  • Move entire IT into the cloud?
  • What can we do to generate more revenue?
  • Can we extend the class room?
  • What can we do to optimize operations?
  • Admission and/or enrollment systems
  • Collaboration with other universities
  • Paper free university
  • Transportation systems
  • Payments and transactions
  • Teaching channels and methods
  • Research commercialization
  • Utilization of social networks or online communities

• Your task
  – Select an area for analysis, and produce a business case for a proposed change that will benefit the University.

You can select another topic too. Please email any questions.
Outline

1. Executive Summary
   - Issue
   - Recommendation
   - Justification

2. Problem Definition
   - Problem statement
   - Alternatives available
   - Summary of Preferred Alternative

3. Recommended action
   - Organizational Impact
   - Risks
   - Technology and infrastructure Plan

4. Project Overview: A plan for the transformation
   - Goals and objectives of transformation
   - Success metrics
   - Major Project Milestones

5. Cost Benefit Analysis
   - Impacts on revenue
   - Impacts on costs
   - Comparisons with alternatives
Details

• This is a writing assignment

• 5-6 pages
  – 12 point font, 1.5 spaced, including figures/tables etc.

• Submit a hard copy in class and an electronic copy to the instructor and TA
Basics

- Grammar and spelling matter – even for great ideas!
- There are NO excuses for spelling mistakes in today’s world
- Avoid repetition
- Use subject headers appropriately
Basics

• Think about your audience.
  – Who are they?
  – Why are they reading this?
  – What do they want to find out?

• Make it easy for them
Basics

Citations and references

1. Use quotes when you quote.

2. Use a numbering system so that the reader can easily find the source of your information.

3. Using a bibliography at the end of your document, include the Author, date, title and location of your source

   – An html address is not sufficient – that ONLY gives the location
Making a case for change

Make a structured argument for your recommendation. Here is a good technique for persuasive writing, known as the Minto Pyramid Principle:

S: Situation – Where are we now
C: Complication – What has changed
Q: Question – What should we do?
A: Answer – We need to...

This technique can be used for speeches, documents, presentations, etc. These are NOT section headers – and often work better integrated subtly
S: Situation

• This should be something everyone agrees on
• Establishes that you know what you are talking about, and the relevance of the situation.
• This part is facts, not opinion

E.g. Japan is one of the world’s largest economies. Approximately 30% of their power comes from nuclear power plants.
C: Complication

- Something has happened to upset the status quo.
- A recent event or discovery
- The audience should instantly see that is raises a question

E.g. A massive earthquake then resulting tsunami have caused damage to some of Japan’s nuclear plants. The fallout may cost lives and environmental damage, and will damage confidence in nuclear power.
Q: Question

• The question should be obvious from the complication
• This should lead to an answer

E.g. How should Japan plan for an economical, safe energy future?
A: Answer

• The answer is your main point.
• Summarize first, then break down to details
• The main body should all support this answer

E.g. Japan should build 50 foot walls around their northern coastline, while investing in geothermal power stations for energy growth
Logical arguments

• Your answer should actually address the question that was asked
• Start with the main point and break down the parts of it

“Japan should build 50 foot walls around their northern coastline, while investing in geothermal power stations for energy growth”

  – Why 50 feet?
  – Why northern?
  – Why geothermal?
Types of logical arguments

• Deductive
  – Premises
  – Inference
  – Conclusion

Start with a premise. If all the premises are true then the conclusion must hold.

• Inductive
  – Premises provide evidence
  – Open to debate