

# MGMT232 BUSINESS CONSULTING (GI)

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Maximum number of students: 60

Course is open to Asia Term and SMU Undergraduates

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The SMU-X course "Business Consulting" is jointly offered by SMU and the University of St.Gallen. It is designed to allow students to translate classroom knowledge into professional experience. It is a unique oppor-tunity to learn more about consulting services and apply theoretical knowledge to a real business project. The core focus of this class rests on a group work built around a real world business project offered by one of our corpo-rarte partners. For each session (GI and G2), we are collaborating with more than twelve different corporate partners with each student group benefitting from an exclusive relationship to their own corporate partner. The corporate projects cover different industries and different topics. Students are invited to share their preferences with which corporate partner (and thereby in which industry or on what topic focus) they wish to work and gain experience.

This SMU-X course is a combination of advanced in-class learning and practical interaction with the business world via project work and guest lecturers who work/have worked with major consultancy companies such as McKinsey, BCG, or Bain. The lectures introduce the world of consulting by teaching the basic steps and tools used during the consulting process. You will learn how consultants frame, analyse and solve problems and how they present their solutions to their clients. You will obtain tools and frameworks to reduce complexity and structure a project. Several mini cases and lived situations with your corporate partner will help you to develop an understanding of how to approach a business project and manage the relationship with your corporate partner as a client. Guest lectures will provide you with industry insights and hands-on experiences about the day-to-day business of a consultant.

The unique opportunity to explore, learn, and directly apply competencies in a real life, multidisciplinary, team-based consulting experience with a company/organization is the distinguishing feature of this course. You will be working in teams for (large) corporations or smaller startups, acting as student consultants working on real challenges the organizations presently face. The solutions you develop will be presented to the senior management of the companies. In previous semesters, our corporate partners included DBS (banking), Adidas (sports apparel), WWF (nature conservancy), Nestlé (nutrition), SingPost (logistics), Lufthansa (airline), CapitaLand (real estate), Sygnum (fintech), Lazada (E-commerce) and many more.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Formulate a clear-cut description of the problem a client wishes to address
- Frame the problem, break it down into sub-problems, and identify interdependencies
- Analyse the formulated problem by using an appropriate problem-solving approach
- Present and communicate their results to the clients
- Work in a multi-national and/or multi-cultural team, appreciating specific strength of each team member
- Interact with corporate representatives on a professional level
- Prepare a proposal that persuades a potential client to adopt it
- Understand how consultants use their expertise to win engagements

# PRE-REQUISITE/ CO-REQUISITE/ MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)

Please refer to the Course Catalogue on OASIS for the most updated list of pre-requisites / co-requisites for this particular course. Do note that if this course has a co-requisite, it means that the course has to be taken together with another course. Dropping one course during BOSS bidding would result in both courses being dropped at the same time.

#### The course is recommended for students in their 3rd year.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODS**

Attendance & class participation (individual):	10%
Progress report (individual and team):	15%
Mid-term Presentation (individual and team):	30%
Final Presentation (individual and team):	45%
Total	100%

Faculty have been instructed not to reuse questions verbatim from past year papers or published test banks, for the graded continuous assessments and examinations in this course.

#### Attendance and class participation

Attendance in all scheduled classes (at SMU and with the corporate partner) is required and your class participation will be assessed. Participation is a central part of the learning process for you and your classmates. When you contribute, you also help others learn. Your participation mark reflects your contribution to your classmates' learning. This includes your attendance and active participation in class discussions and group activities.

#### Progress report

Each team prepares their progress report and subsequently uploades it to the learning management tool. You will obtain feedback on your progress. Together, we will also discuss your progress report in class prior to your mid-term presentation.

#### Mid-term presentation

The mid-term presentation is the first presentation to your client. Every team presents the status and preliminary results of its business consulting project. The presentation usually takes place at the client's company site. The presentation has to be uploaded to the learning management tool prior to the mid-term presentation. All team members have to attend the presentation. In addition, each group also has to submit a logbook (think of this as the list of billable hours of work) documenting each group members' contributions to the progress of the project.

#### Final presentation and written work

Every team presents their final results of its business project to the management of the company and submits a PowerPoint Presentation that can be independently read and understood and as such might serve as a written report. All team members have to attend the presentation. The presentation has to be submitted to the learning management tool prior to the final presentation. In addition, each group also has to submit a logbook documenting each group members' contributions to the progress of the project.

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

The main idea of the course is that you understand current and future challenges of the business consulting world and are able to translate your theoretical knowledge into practical performance. Therefore, the course comprises four different learning activities:

- I. regular classroom sessions
- 2. real business consulting projects conducted with selected companies
- 3. interactive guest speaker discussions
- 4. feedback sessions with corporate representatives and course instructors

The first learning activity of the course consists of classroom sessions led by Prof Dr Stefan Morkoetter and Prof Dr Matthias Tietz in which you will learn the basic steps of the consulting process. Students are introduced to tools and frameworks helpful in decomposing problems and structuring project work. Ideally much of the classtime takes place in an interactive dialogue form with well-prepapred and well-informed participants.

The second learning activity is a business consulting project that you work on in teams of 4-6 students. Each group of students advises one corporate partner (e.g. company or organization in Singapore) which assigns a well-shaped task

to the team. At the end of the course, each team presents their solution to the senior management of their corporate client. This learning activity will provide you with the unique opportunity to apply your theoretical knowledge to a real business environment, thereby training for your future professional careers.

The third learning activity comprises interactive sessions with guest speakers who share their practical experience and expertise. Guest speakers, professors, and students all interact together and discuss specific consulting topics, some of timeless and others of current relevance.

Finally, based on several feedback sessions – both with corporate representatives as well as the course instructors – you will experience how to implement feedback order to improve your work as well as learn from it for your future work and professional career.

## CONSULTATIONS AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

For personal consultations, please contact <u>stefan.morkoetter@unisg.ch</u> or <u>matthias.tietz@unisg.ch</u> to make an appointment.

Teaching assistants are part of the course and their names and email addresses will be communicated at the beginning of the course.

# **CLASS TIMINGS**

This course will be taught in one 3-hour session on Thursdays (12:00 to 15:15) with a 15-mins break.

## **RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS**

- Maister, D. H., Green, C. H., & Galford, R. M. (2021). The Trusted Advisor. Free Press.
- Minto, B. (2021). The Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing and Thinking. FT Publishing.
- Rasiel, E. M. (2021). The McKinsey Way: Using the Techniques of the World's Top Strategic Consultants to Help You and Your Business. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Baaij, M. (2014). An Introduction to Management Consultancy. Sage Publishing.
- Verlander, E. (2012). The Practice of Professional Consulting. John Wiley & Sons.
- Stern, C. W. & Deimler, M. S. (2006). The Boston Consulting Group on Strategy: Classic Concepts and New Perspectives. Wiley.
- Consentino, M.P. (2016). Case in Point 9: Complete Case Interview Preparation. Burgee Press.
- Cheng, V. (2012). Case Interview Secrets: A Former McKinsey Interviewer Reveals How to Get Multiple Job Offers in Consulting. Innovation Press.
- PrepLounge: <u>https://www.preplounge.com/en/home</u>
- CaseCoach: <u>https://casecoach.com</u>

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Academic Integrity**

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <a href="https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx">https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx</a>.

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## **Accessibility**

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university's disability services team if you have questions or concerns about academic provisions: <u>DSS@smu.edu.sg</u>. Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

## Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.

# WEEKLY LESSONS PLAN (TENTATIVE)

## WEEK I COMPANY PITCHES AND INTRODUCTION OF CORPORATE CHALLENGES (I)

- 1. The first lecture provides an overview of the business consulting course and explains the set-up and expectations of the business consulting projects:
  - Introduction to consulting services
  - Learning objectives of the course
  - Working on a real business project for a corporate partner
  - Getting an overview of different consulting projects & client types
- 2. Company representatives present their business projects (I):
  - Introduction of corporate business partner
  - Understanding the company's background and future strategy
  - Description of individual business projects

### WEEK 2 COMPANY PITCHES AND INTRODUCTION OF CORPORATE CHALLENGES (II)

- I. Company representatives present their business projects (II):
  - Introduction of corporate business partner
  - Understanding the company's background and future strategy
  - Description of individual business projects
- 2. Setting up your project partnership for success
  - Preparing for a client meeting
  - Setting and managing an agenda
  - Successfully building a partnership

### WEEK 3 SCOPING OF YOUR BUSINESS CONSULTING PROJECT

- I. Preparation for your individual kick-off meeting & start to work on your first impression
- 2. Getting to know your client's industry and company background
- 3. Actual kick-off meeting with company representatives and the entire student team
- 4. Individual coaching sessions with project teams if required
- 5. No classroom session

#### WEEK 4 FRAMING PROBLEMS: STRATEGIC TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS

- 1. Often the issues the client wishes to have addressed are numerous and vague. After having won an engagement, the second step is thus to formulate a clear-cut understanding of the more important questions which can and should be further addressed. An appropriate methodology must be chosen and data must be sourced or made available to answer these questions.
- 2. Consulting relies on team work and quite often team members come from various backgrounds. In order to successfully deliver the best outcome of your project, team work and team spirit is essential.
- 3. To master both content and collaboration challenges, consultants rely on a whole range of different tools and frameworks (some of which you have already encountered during your studies). We will discuss the framing of problems and introduce you to a set of promising tools in order to work successfully on your business projects. Some of the aspects we might discuss include:
  - Focus areas and strength of different team members
  - Interdependencies of workflow items
  - Precise formulations of working hypotheses
  - Successful team work frameworks and structures
- 4. Actual kick-off meeting of students with company representatives
- 5. Individual coaching sessions with project teams if required

### WEEK 5 PRESENTING YOUR FINDINGS: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- 1. Your cllients need answers, understand them, and feel driven to action, thus you will learn ways to present your results with in actionable language and clear communication depending on different audience types. Aspects of the sessions we might discuss include:
  - Who is in your audience and how can you be relevant for them?
  - How can you develop a storyline and then convincingly tell the story?
  - What's the main message you wish to share?
  - What form and style are appropriate?
  - How do you structure the "perfect" slide?
  - How do you keep your audience engaged beyond the presentation?
- 2. Student teams work on the assigned consulting project.

### WEEK 6 CONSULTING INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

- 1. After working on your own business consulting project for a few weeks, we situate your learning as part of the story of business consulting, its origins, evolution, and present day challenges. You'll get an overview of the industry and gain an understanding of different industry dynamics past and present. Together we critically review the function of consultants, how it has changed, and investigate for what purpose most consultants are hired by companies today. In addition, we will focus how international, sometimes geographically dispursed consulting teams are successfully working together and how you can apply these best practice solutions to your own team work during the course of this class, during your business consulting project, and beyond. Questions we might debate include:
  - Why do companies hire consultants?
  - What were the role of consultants in the past and what is their role in the present?
  - How have consulting project types evolved over time?
  - How are consulting firms structured today and how might they evolve in the future?
- 2. Preparation of your progress reports

#### WEEK 7 PROGRESS REPORT: IN-CLASS FEEDBACK SESSIONS

- 1. Ahead of the recess week, each student group has to submit a progress report (see details under Assessment Methods).
- 2. Based on these progress reports, you will get feedback in class inviting you to learn from each other and get an understanding on how to further update and improve your work. This feedback session is a good opportunity to critically evaluate your work against that of other teams and before it is presented to the clients.

#### WEEK 8 RECESS / MID-TERM BREAK

#### WEEK 9 SHARING OF RESULTS WITH CORPORATE PARTNER AND CONVERTING FEED-BACK INTO ACTION

- 1. Team mid-term presentations to corporate partner: The mid-term presentation of individual groups takes place either in week 9, 10 or 11.
- 2. Every team presents the status and preliminary results of its business consulting project. The presentation typically takes place at the company site of the project sponsor.
- 3. Working on business consulting projects
- 4. No class room session
- 5. Individual coaching session with project teams if required.

#### WEEK 10 SHARING OF RESULTS WITH CORPORATE PARTNER AND CONVERTING FEED-BACK INTO ACTION

- 1. Team mid-term presentations to corporate partner: The mid-term presentation of individual groups takes place either in week 9, 10 or 11.
- 2. Every team presents the status and preliminary results of its business consulting project. The presentation typically takes place at the company site of the project sponsor.
- 3. Working on business consulting projects
- 4. No class room session
- 5. Individual coaching session with project teams if required.

## WEEK II LESSONS LEARNED FROM A CAREER THAT STARTED IN CONSULTING

- 1. A job in consulting has served many as as a starting point to a successful professional career. Starting your career in consulting allows you to acquire certain skills that are also applicable to other job profiles outside of the industry. Based on a guest lecture students will discuss together the role of consultants in the business world and will be challenged to reflect on their own career plans and perspectives.
- 2. Team mid-term presentations to corporate partner: The mid-term presentation of individual groups takes place either in week 9, 10 or 11.

### WEEK 12 GETTING YOUR JOB IN CONSULTING

1. The focus of this case-practice lecture will be on "cracking the case" and also helps you to prepare for job interviews at leading consultancies as it is part of their interview process.

- The quality of reasoning
- Hypothesis
- Application of framework to practice cases
- Helpful hints
- Process structure of project framework

## WEEK 13 WORK ON BUSINESS PROJECTS

- 1. Individual coaching session with project teams if required.
- 2. No class

## WEEK 14 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION AT COMPANY SITE

- 1. The final project presentation takes place during the weeks 14 to 16. Every team presents the final results of its business project to the senior management of the company. The presentation usually takes place at the company site of the project sponsor.
- 2. No class room session

## WEEK 15 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION AT COMPANY SITE

- 1. The final project presentation takes place during the weeks 14 to 16. Every team presents the final results of its business project to the senior management of the company. The presentation usually takes place at the company site of the project sponsor.
- 2. No class room session

### WEEK 16 FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION AT COMPANY SITE

- 1. The final project presentation takes place during the weeks 14 to 16. Every team presents the final results of its business project to the senior management of the company. The presentation usually takes place at the company site of the project sponsor.
- 2. No class room session

# **EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS COURSE COMPONENTS (ILLUSTRATIVE)**







## Social Media in South East Asia – challenges and opportunities for a European Brand

### **Company information**

Company name	Lufthansa German Airlines Example of Past Course
Business unit	Area Management Asia & Pacific
Company description	Passenger transportation is the core business of the Lufthansa Group. The objec- tive in this business segment is to strengthen Lufthansa's position as a leading Euro- pean premium carrier offering services in a global network. Lufthansa serves all ma- jor traffic flows into, out of and across Europe. To realize its goal, Lufthansa rests its growth strategy on three pillars.
	For one, Lufthansa is expanding its short and long-haul network in the medium term through organic growth. In the interest of cost efficiency, that expansion is achieved primarily through the hubs in Frankfurt, Munich, Zurich, Vienna and Brus- sels. Together, Lufthansa, SWISS, AUA, bmi und Brussels Airlines operate a wide variety of flights in serving 274 destinations in 104 countries on four continents.
	For another, Lufthansa is expanding cooperation with partners. Star Alliance, above all, is playing a major role in opening up new markets. The 26 member airlines in the airline grouping currently serve a total of 1077 destinations in 175 countries. Star Alliance will further strengthen its position, worldwide, with the forthcoming admission of TAM, Aegean and Air India. Airlines in the Lufthansa airline group op- erate additionally with an array of services in other markets on the basis of bilateral (e.g. regional) partnerships.
	Thirdly, Lufthansa actively participates in the ongoing consolidation of the airline business in Europe by acquiring stakes in Brussels Airlines, for example, or taking over other carriers – latterly Austrian Airlines – wherever that makes economic and strategic sense. The Group is accordingly evolving into a multi-hub-/multi- brand-airline system.

### **Business Project**

Initial situation	Social Media is more than a trend: It's a fundamental shift in modern communica- tion and human interaction, enabled by new internet technologies and platforms
	like social networks. Social Media has many purposes: It supports various forms of interaction by connecting, sharing, and mashing up information – it creates new user experiences. The strategic use of and the participation in Social Media has changed the business world and plays a key role for companies.
	Especially in South East Asia Social Media shows tremendous growth. In line with the general growth of the online and mobile channels. And on top users here are heavily engaged in social media and use it more frequently.
	As a global airline with a recognized premium brand, a broad product portfolio, and leading innovations in all areas of air travel, Lufthansa is constantly looking for new ways to tackle the challenges of our time on a global but as well on a local level.
	Today, we connect communities and people all over the world with our flights. To- morrow, we connect (to) them beyond by providing innovative Social Media ser- vices!

Main objective of the pro- ject	<ul> <li>At Lufthansa, Social Media is used for one main reason: to create value for both customers and potential employees. Our goal is not to create a new virtual community, but to use Social Media to create value for existing communities, integrating our services into their communication and interactions. With MySkyStatus.com – an innovative Facebook and Twitter App – we introduced a truly new form of customer benefit in a connected digital world on a global level.</li> <li>With Social Media we aim at primarily: <ul> <li>increasing awareness of the Lufthansa brand, shaping the brand values and create a brand relationship</li> <li>creating value for our customers along the entire travel chain.</li> <li>advancing brand loyalty by providing smooth, enjoyable, and socially enhanced travel experience (e.g. plan and share your trips with your friends).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Our social media credo and mission: <ul> <li>"Show our customers that our passion for precision and quality is build around their needs!"</li> </ul> </li> <li>This is the global strategy for social media and social media is a truly global development. But if we want to be relevant to the local customer in South East Asia and create a brand relationship the question here is: As a global brand with European heritage how local do we have to be and adapt to the local culture to be relevant to the local needs?</li> </ul> To achieve these aims, we are looking forward to receive your brain-teasing and challenging concept on how Lufthansa can implement a Social media strategy for South East Asia that is relevant for the local consumers. Focus of the project will be the question, which approach is best for Lufthansa as internationally operating airline:
	We are also interested in a market analysis and benchmark: How is social media used by the Asian travel industry? What are the benchmarks and best demonstrated practices?
Desired Outcome	Market analysis, benchmark and a concept how should Lufthansa implement Social media in South East Asia.
Team size	4-5
Background requirements	Team members should be conversant with spoken and written English and possess adequate working knowledge of word-processing, presentation and data-processing software.





# **Business Consulting: project description**



#### **Company information**

Company name	Nespresso Singapore Asia Regional Office
Business unit	Retail & Customer Relationship Center
Business Project	
Project title	Effective Management of Regionalized & Multilanguage 24/7 Customer Relationship Centre (CRC)
Initial situation	Nespresso Regional CRC in Singapore is handling China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia toll free number calls. The services provided in the CRC are: Inquires from existing and potential members; After Sales Service and Technical Assistance; Home Delivery; On-line Shop Handling; Outbound Nursing Calls. A person can be allocated to several markets according her/his Multilanguage skills. In 2009, the regional CRC is staffed with 8 Headcounts. The CRC is operating during business hours only.
	To align Nespresso services with intl. standards, an extension to 24/7 availability for 2010 onwards has to be analysed.
	I) The calculation of the existing intl. capacity planning tool (headcounts) needs to be reviewed and adapted to a small CRC and Multi-Country allocation.
	2) Different 24/7 setup scenarios need to be worked out by taking into considera- tion cost efficiency and the same time Nespresso service level requirements.
	Project 1) will be needed in project 2) to define the final number of headcounts for the different scenarios (cost impact)
Main objective of the pro-	I) Adapt the existing Capacity Planning Tool
ject	<ul> <li>Manage the complexity of language requirements for each market and de- termine the most effective headcount allocation (cost/service level) ac- cording number of tasks handled in the CRC</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Analyse and adapt the intl. CRC capacity planning tool to a small CRC setup with Multi-Task and Multi-Country allocation.</li> </ul>
	The newly defined calculations will be used to calculate the number of Headcounts in 2010. The tool will be made available to other small Nespresso CRC.
	2) Evaluate and analyse operational & cost impact by extending to a 24/7 CRC.

	<ul> <li>Analyse different scenarios for 24/7 extension (internal, outsourced) by comparing cost, operational, and service level impacts</li> </ul>
	Each scenario needs an in-depth study of cost and service level impact linked to the time frame of outsourced vs. internal handling (internal could also be routing calls to a different Nespresso CRC – ie. New York)
	The established scenarios will be used to determine the Singapore CRC setup in 2010 and presented to Nespresso Headquarter during the 2010 budget process in November 2009
Desired Outcome	<ol> <li>Excel tool which allows simulation of headcount allocations according number of different tasks/timing with the new defined calculations</li> </ol>
	<ol> <li>Presentation and written reports (incl. cost simulation) for each scenario. Provide summary and recommendation</li> </ol>
Team size	4-5
Background requirements	Analytical skills Strong MS Excel skills (VBA is of advantage)
Presentation of results	<ul> <li>Presentation (incl. summary and recommendation)</li> <li>Written report &amp; Financial Calculation for each Scenario</li> <li>Capacity Planning Tool adapted to small and multi-country/language setup (Excel)</li> </ul>







# Analysis of the Rental Market for Lift Trucks in Southeast Asia

## **Company information**

Company information	<b>Example of</b>
Company name	Jungheinrich Lift Truck Singapore Pte Ltd Past Course
Company description	Jungheinrich is a logistics service provider with manufacturing operations as well as an intralogistics solution provider, which offers a comprehensive range of forklift trucks, shelving systems, services and consulting covering the entire field of intralo- gistics. The basis of the company's success is its broad range of products, strong direct sales and a targeted range of services. The clear strategic alignment of the past few years and the strong positioning of the Jungheinrich brand have created the framework for this persuasive array of services.

# **Business Project**

Initial situation	An increasing demand for rental (customer pays a fixed monthly amount while not having the goods on its asset sheet) in Vietnam, Indonesia, India and the Philippines. Distributors lack the liquidity to finance a rental fleet and/or credibility to obtain a bank loan.
Main objective of the pro- ject	Analyse the rental market for machinery in the mentioned countries. Find out about financial institutions and their current interest policies for local and foreign currency loans. Analyse the legal, tax, customs and commercial dimension of rental business. Evaluate cross border financing from Singapore into the respective countries. Elaborate whether the ownership of the asset is transferred to the distributor or stays with the principal upon completion of rental.
Desired Outcome	Make suggestions how Jungheinrich can increase its rental business within the distrib- utor territories. Develop a model which compromises the legal, tax, customs and commercial perspective of rental in the countries, e.g. how to invoice and what kind of interest to be charged to the distributors.
Team size	4-5
Background requirements	None