SYLLABUS - MGT 586 MANAGING AT THE EDGE

Fall 2012

Instructor: Mr. Jack Cooke  MS, MBA
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Credit: 3 Semester hours

Texts: Three books will be required for the course. They are:


Course Description:
This course is an investigation of companies who have achieved extraordinary business results by coupling unique business strategies with innovative organizational practices. The texts identified above, current articles from the trade journals, and published case studies will provide background for review of companies that have broken out of the ranks of mediocrity and are setting the pace for new “best practices” that may be characterized as non-traditional, radical, unorthodox or visionary.

Course Objectives:
This course is intended to stimulate students’ thinking and possible analysis of his current work environment / experiences by presenting concrete, cogent and encouraging examples of alternate forms and new norms of performance excellence.

Specifically, a student who meets the objectives of this course will:

❖ Become familiar with the organizational concepts that transformed several notable US firms from mere competence to performance excellence.

❖ Become acquainted with current wisdom on “best practices” in successful business operations.

❖ Gain an appreciation for how company ownership and control (i.e. publically or privately held) likely constrains or shapes operations, practices and growth.
Gain valuable experience in conducting research and communicating how certain successful business leaders construct a framework of strategy, policy, practices, resources and culture to achieve their intended business objectives.

Gain useful experience in observation, reflection, analysis and communicating ideas in a group discussion.

**Special Requirements**

This course requires the student to write and submit two papers for credit during the term. Each is ten to twelve pages in length (double spaced in APA format). The first paper is due at the end of Week 9 and is a position paper describing how companies combine innovative strategy and “best practices” to achieve their business goals. The second paper is a research paper on a company that is considered to be an “expert” or leader in their market. It is due at the end of Week 12. The instructor will provide a list of companies from which to choose and no two students will report on the same firm. More detailed instructions and templates are provided on the MGT 586 course website within eCollege.

**Schedule**

The following is a general outline of the anticipated 15 weeks that will comprise the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Topic Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Freedom Inc. Chapters 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Freedom Inc. Chapters 5-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Freedom Inc. Chapters 9-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Freedom Inc. Chapters 12-14 Company for Research Paper selected &amp; approved by instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Mavericks at Work Intro &amp; Chapters 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Mavericks at Work Chapters 4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Mavericks at Work Chapters 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Mavericks at Work Chapters 10-12 plus Maverick Messages &amp; Maverick Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Small Giants Intro &amp; Chapters 1-2 Position Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Small Giants Chapters 3-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Small Giants Chapters 5-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Small Giants Chapters 7-8 Research Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Current Case #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Current Case #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Summary Exam - - in essay format</td>
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**Grading:**
Final grade will be determined as follows:

- **100 points**  Position Paper – Innovative Strategy & Best Practices
- **100 points**  Research Paper – An Expert Company
- **140 points**  Class Participation – (14 Discussion Sessions with Multiple Questions)
- **160 points**  Comprehensive Final Exam

500 points

Letter Grades will be earned in accordance with the following methodology:

A: 450 – 500  
B: 400 – 449  
C: 350 – 399  
F: Below 350

**Special Notes : (Rubric - - How the instructor scores your work)**

*Class Participation* - Class participation for this on-line course refers to postings in response to a “threaded discussion”. Each week the instructor will pose multiple questions that students will respond to with analysis, elaboration, evaluation, examples that characterize a point of view, insight, reflection, relevant personal experiences and informed opinions. There are a maximum of 10 points available each week for class participation. The quality of your comments is what is being graded. Students may respond to the questions directly or may expand the dialogue by responding to postings from other students. Every comment you post is scored on a scale of 0 – 5 points. "Me too" and "I agree" responses that do not add anything new to the discussion are of no value and receive 0 points. Hollow responses that miss the point or express an uninformed opinion receive 1 point. Responses that merely echo what another student has already expressed receive 2 points. Responses that communicate an understanding of behavioral concepts, management principles, or the unique aspects of a business practice that underlies the discussion question receive 3 points. Responses that provide cogent analysis, evaluation or examples that characterize a point of view receive 4 points. Responses that demonstrate exceptional insight, cogent reflection, emblematic personal experiences or informed (expert) opinion receive 5 points.

It is important to make quality postings every week since your score in this dimension is being accumulated throughout the duration of the course. The weekly discussion board closes at midnight on Sunday night. You may work ahead and post discussion comments early if you choose. However, once the discussion board is closed, your score for that week will be assessed - - do not get behind. As a rule of thumb, four or more high quality posts a week will assure full credit (10 points).

*Position Paper* - Quality over quantity is also important for the position paper. Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression certainly count (Hint: use the spell checker on your computer). To get 100 points credit you will need to produce at least 10 pages of quality text that is cogent, coherent and professionally presented. Ten (10) points will be deducted for any paper submitted after the deadline.
The position paper must conform to the APA style guide and contain a title page, an abstract, a body of text, and a references list. An appendix may be provided if you wish to augment your narrative with charts, graphs or figures. In scoring the paper the abstract is worth 10 points, the narrative is worth 80 points and the references section is worth 10 points. Scoring is assessed as follows:

Abstract: 0-5 points if abstract is missing or superfluous, meaning it does not communicate the purpose and central argument of the paper. 6-8 points if the abstract communicates the purpose and central argument of the paper. 9-10 points if the abstract also makes a persuasive statement of how the reader might benefit from reading the paper.

Narrative: The narrative is scored based upon the quality of the research, clarity of definition, persuasiveness of the argument/position taken, and writing style (flow, grammar, spelling & punctuation). Each of these four dimensions is worth 20 points.

20 points. Quality of research is the instructor’s assessment of the relevance of the works cited and the degree of diligence evident in the resources located.

20 points. Clarity of definition means how well the paper describes the “best practice”. This is done by explaining the processes (policy & practices), organizational culture and leadership styles that foster employee and/or customer engagement and commitment. The paper should describe how management integrates the practice into the operating strategy of the firm.

20 points. Persuasiveness of the argument/position taken means how well the paper makes its case that the practice generates competitive advantage for the company. Examples of various firms who have implemented the practice should be provided. An explanation of how the practice enhances employee performance or customer loyalty should be provided.

20 points. Writing style means how well the narrative is organized and professionally presented. Style also means how well the paragraphs transition, connect to the themes and flow smoothly. Points will be deducted for typographical errors, improper grammar and “conversational” or “stream of consciousness” writing style.

References: 0-5 points if references are missing or superfluous, meaning the works cited are entirely websites and blogs - no peer reviewed scholarly works researched and referenced and/or no practitioner journals (e.g. Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Harvard Business Review). 6-8 points if, in addition, the references include relevant professional business books (such as the three textbooks for this course). 9-10 points if, in addition, the references list is formatted correctly in accordance with the APA style guide.

The papers must be:

Typed (submitted in Microsoft Word format)
Margins: one inch on the top, bottom, and both right and left sides
Double spaced
Font: Times Roman 12-point
Expert Company Research Paper - Quality over quantity is also important for the company research paper. Grammar, spelling and clarity of expression certainly count (Hint: use the spell checker on your computer). To get 100 points credit you will need to produce at least 10 pages of quality text that is cogent, coherent and professionally presented. Ten (10) points will be deducted for any paper submitted after the deadline.

The company research paper must conform to the APA style guide and contain a title page, an abstract, a body of text, and a references list. An appendix may be provided if you wish to augment your narrative with charts, graphs or figures. In scoring the paper the abstract is worth 10 points, the narrative is worth 80 points and the references section is worth 10 points. Scoring is assessed as follows:

Abstract: 0-5 points if abstract is missing or superfluous, meaning it does not communicate the purpose and central argument of the paper. 6-8 points if the abstract communicates the purpose and central argument of the paper. 9-10 points if the abstract also makes a persuasive statement of how the reader might benefit from reading the paper.

Narrative: The narrative is scored based upon the quality of the research, clarity of definition, persuasiveness of the argument / position taken, and writing style (flow, grammar, spelling & punctuation). Each of these four dimensions is worth 20 points.

20 points. Quality of research is the instructor's assessment of the relevance of the works cited and the degree of diligence evident in the resources located.

20 points. Clarity of definition means how well the paper represents and analyzes the expert nature of the company. This is done by explaining the processes (policy & practices), organizational culture and leadership styles that differentiate the company from its direct competitors. The paper should describe how management integrates radical, non-traditional, maverick or visionary practices into the operating strategy of the firm.

20 points. Persuasiveness of the argument / position taken means how well the paper makes its case that the company is expert and somewhat unique in its industry. An explanation of how management enables employee performance or customer loyalty should be provided.

20 points. Writing style means how well the narrative is organized and professionally presented. Style also means how well the paragraphs transition, connect to the themes and flow smoothly. Points will be deducted for typographical errors, improper grammar and "conversational" or "stream of consciousness" writing style.

References: 0-5 points if references are missing or superfluous, meaning the works cited are entirely websites and blogs - - no peer reviewed scholarly works researched and referenced and / or no practitioner journals (e.g. Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Harvard Business
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The papers must be:

Typed (submitted in Microsoft Word format)
Margins: one inch on the top, bottom, and both right and left sides
Double spaced
Font: Times Roman 12-point
Page size is standard US letter; 8 ½ by 11 inches
APA 6th Edition format (a Web search will provide ample examples, a format manual is available in the University bookstore, and I will place a template in the eCollege folder)

Disability Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Halladay Student Services Building
Room 303 A/D
Telephone: (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
FAX: (903) 468-8148

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www.tamu-commerce.edu/studentlife/guidebook.htm

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relevant sources and make clear the extent to which such sources were used. Words or ideas that require citation include, but are not limited to, all hard copy or electronic publications, whether copyrighted or not, and all verbal or visual communication when the content of such communication clearly originates from an identifiable source. Please see the Texas A&M University-Commerce Graduate Catalog for more information about academic honesty, including consequences of academic dishonesty.