

SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO



Sault College

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: Problem Solving & Decision Making

CODE NO. : BUS 231 **SEMESTER:** Four

PROGRAM: Business & General Education

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DATE: 2008/01/02 **PREVIOUS OUTLINE DATED:** 07/01/02

APPROVED:

	_____ CHAIR	_____ DATE
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TOTAL CREDITS: 5

PREREQUISITE(S): N/A

HOURS/WEEK: 4

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School of Continuing Education, Business and Hospitality

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Problem Solving and Decision Making are viewed as integral components of the Strategic Management Process. This course will integrate concepts and theories studied throughout the Business Diploma program. Students will use the case analysis method to develop planning, problem solving, and decision making skills. The intent of this course is to give the student the opportunity to gain managerial problem solving and decision making skills by including a variety of case study exercises and assignments.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **Provide details of the management process and the primary functions of management as they pertain to problem solving and decision making.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain what managers do in relation to other workers.
- Write an appropriate definition of management.
- Discuss each of the four primary functions of management.
- Distinguish between vertical and Horizontal co-ordination.
- Outline the sources of power.
- Briefly review leadership theories.
- Identify barriers to effective communication and how to overcome them.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

2. **Identify and explain various strategies some major companies have used in search of excellence.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Discuss the role of values in achieving success.
- Outline the differences between old and new techniques of managers.
- Explain how do the new and old techniques impact the problem solving and decision making process.
- Describe how people (employees, customers, suppliers, etc.) are treated in successful organizations.
- Name and explain eight basic practices that are characteristic of successfully managed companies.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

3. **Provide a definition for problems and be able to use processes to identify and deal with various problems through the decision making process.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain when many managers make decisions and when they should be making decisions.
- Outline the two meanings of problems for the decision making process.
- Briefly discuss the blended characteristics of problems.
- Explain four major types of problems.
- Discuss the importance of properly identifying and describing problems.
- Outline how a person's and an organization's values, perceptions, role, etc. impact on identifying and describing problems.
- Explain the significant role information plays in the problem solving and decision making processes.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

4. **Discuss the flows of information in a poorly operated organization and a successful organization.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain why managers are often referred to as information workers.
- Discuss the sources managers use to obtain information.
- Outline why people withhold information.
- Explain what managers must do to overcome the withholding of information.
- Outline how values, corporate cultures, systems, structures, and mission statements impact the flow of information.
- Detail the process of active listening.
- Explain the cardinal rule of information.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

5. **Examine corporate culture and organizational values and how they affect problem solving and decision making.**

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Explain corporate culture and its functions.

- Define values and their impact on organizations.
- Outline the five areas that are affected and how they are affected by organizational values.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

6. Detail the Case Analysis process in problem solving and decision making.

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Discuss the case analysis methods.
- Outline what significance there is to using case analysis as a learning tool in a classroom setting.
- Detail the steps involved in the case analysis process.
- Explain the characteristics of effective decisions.
- Discuss, in detail, the steps required in decision making.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

7. Discuss the characteristics of teams, their activities and their states.

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Name five common characteristics of teams.
- List the qualities of the most successful teams.
- Outline the three core activities of an effective team.
- Explain, in detail, the stages of team development.
- Discuss the role of the leader in each of the stages of development.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

8. Engage in the case analysis process by completing one or more cases.

Potential Elements of Performance:

- Read the case to get a general idea of the subject.
- Identify the key issues in the case.
- Determine the symptoms and root cause(s) in the case.
- Develop alternatives for a possible solution.
- Evaluate the alternatives with certain criteria.
- Choose an alternative(s) and explain it was chosen and others discarded.
- Implementation of the chosen alternative(s).
- Write the completed case study in an appropriate format.

- Present and defend the case analysis.
- Asking and answering appropriate and relevant questions concerning the various cases presented.
- Explain the major terminology in this section.

Marks for the above outcomes will be distributed approximately equally.

III. TOPICS:

1. Rational Management in problem solving and decision making.
2. Success strategies.
3. The problem solving and decision making processes.
4. The flow of information in successful organizations.
5. Corporate culture, values and decision making.
6. The case analysis process for problem solving and decision making.
7. Characteristics of teams.
8. Completing cases.

IV. RESOURCE MATERIALS

1. G.G. Dess; G.T. Lumpkin; and T.P. Peridis; (2006) Strategic Management: Creating Competitive Advantages; McGraw-Hill
2. Charles H. Kepner and Benjamin B. Tregoe, (1997) The New Rational Manager: An Updated Edition for a New World; Kepner – Tregoe Inc.
3. David H. Jones-Delcorde & Philip C. Wright, (1994) Business Case Analysis, Prentice – Hall Canada Inc.
4. D. Neil Ashworth, (1985) Cases in Management: Examining Critical Incidents, Reston Publishing Company Inc. (PHC)
5. Marvin T. Brown (1996) The Ethical Process: A strategy for Making Good Decisions, Prentice – Hall.
6. Other appropriate material from a variety of sources.

V. Evaluation Process/Grading System

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

- Quizzes & Assignments 10%
- First Test 20%
- Final Test (semester work) 25%
- Formal Case submission 25%
- Case Presentation 10%
- Attendance, Participation & Attitude 10%

TOTAL	100%
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TESTS

The majority of marks on all tests will be based primarily of essay questions. Multiple choice (or other objective type questions) may be used to complement and extend the test areas. Dates of tests will be announced approximately one week in advance. **Students are required to write all tests and quizzes as scheduled.**

THERE WILL BE NO RE-WRITES OF INDIVIDUAL TESTS!!!!

Students must meet the following requirements to complete this course successfully:

1. Must complete, in a fashion acceptable to the professor, all projects and assignments.
2. Must write the tests and the final exam. If a student misses a test or the final exam and has not made appropriate arrangements as outlined below, he/she will receive a mark of zero for that test/exam.
3. Must have an overall mark of 50%. This mark includes all work in the semester.

The following semester grades will be assigned to students in postsecondary courses:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Grade Point Equivalent</u>
A+	90 - 100%	4.00
A	80 - 89%	4.00
B	70 - 79%	3.00
C	60 - 69%	2.00
D	50 - 59%	1.00
F (Fail)	49% or below	0.00
CR (Credit)	Credit for diploma requirements has been awarded.	

S	Satisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.
U	Unsatisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.
X	A temporary grade. This is used in limited situations with extenuating circumstances giving a student additional time to complete the requirements for a course.
NR	Grade not reported to Registrar's office.
W	Student has withdrawn from the course without academic penalty

Even though 50% is considered a passing mark for each subject, students require a minimum GPA of 2.0 to succeed in the program and graduate.

VI. SPECIAL NOTES:

Special Needs:

If you are a student with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, or learning disabilities), you are encouraged to discuss required accommodations with the Special Needs office. Visit Room E1101 or call Extension 2703, so that support services can be arranged for you.

Retention of course outlines:

It is the responsibility of the student to retain all course outlines for possible future use in acquiring advanced standing at other postsecondary institutions.

Plagiarism:

Students should refer to the definition of “academic dishonesty” in *Student Rights and Responsibilities*. Students, who engage in “academic dishonesty”, or attempt to engage in “academic dishonesty”, will receive an automatic failure for that submission and/or such other penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course/program, as may be decided by the professor/dean. In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the copyright of the material referenced, and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

Course outline amendments:

The Professor reserves the right to change the information contained in this course outline depending on the needs of the learner and the availability of resources.

Substitute course information is available in the Registrar's office.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Missed Tests/Exam:

If a student is not able to write a test/exam as scheduled, for medical reasons or some other emergency, that student is asked to contact the professor **prior** to the test/exam and provide an explanation which is acceptable to the professor. (Medical certificates or other appropriate proof **may** be required.) Following the student's return to the college, he/she must request, in writing, to write a makeup for the missed test/exam. This request will be in proper letter form (typed), hard copy, and (no e-mail) and must outline the reasons for requesting special consideration. Making such a request does not guarantee that the student will receive permission to make up for the missed test/exam. Such requests must be made within one week of the student's return to the college.

The professor will consider the request, and if permission is granted, the test/exam will be given at the end of the semester, or at some other time at the professor's convenience. This will allow time for the student to prepare for the test without missing important work and to provide time for the professor to prepare a new test.

In considering the request, the professor will take a number of factors into consideration. These will include, but not limited to, the student's attendance and participation in class, completion of other tests, quizzes, and assignments as scheduled and the professor's judgment as to the student's potential success.

In all other cases, the student will receive a mark of zero for that test.

THERE WILL BE NO SUPPLEMENTARY TESTS!!

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Attendance will be taken for each class on a sign in basis starting shortly after the semester begins. Students will be advised when the process is to begin. **Students must sign only themselves in!!** Signing for another student, whether the other student is present or not, will be tantamount to academic dishonesty. Students are advised to read the Students' Rights and Responsibilities for the consequences of academic dishonesty. While students are expected to attend all classes, it is understood that circumstances beyond their control may prevent them from doing so. Students who find themselves in this category should treat the classes as a job and take action accordingly.

In all cases, attendance of less than 80% of the scheduled classes is not acceptable and students will forfeit their marks for attendance, participation & attitude.

The professor will use attendance in considering student requests for special consideration in writing missed tests, submitting late assignments, etc.

Submitting Assigned Work:

All assignments, projects, questions, etc. must be submitted to the professor at the beginning of class on the due date. Once the class starts, any assignment, etc. which has not been submitted will be considered late. If no class is scheduled on the due date, students are required to deliver the assignments, etc. to the professor's office, by the deadline time. Assignments, etc. may be submitted in advance; normally assignments, etc. will not be accepted after the stated deadline. If a student wishes consideration for a late submission, he/she must make this request in a formal typed letter, (hard copy) providing an explanation. If the assignment is accepted late, a penalty will be assessed. Assignments, etc. will not be accepted late once those which have been submitted on time have been graded and returned to students.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the professor gets his/her completed assignment, etc. Do not place the assignment in the Professor's mailbox. In such cases the assignment will not be considered submitted until the professor picks up his mail.

Return of Students' Work:

Tests, quizzes, assignments, etc. will be returned to students during one of the normal class times. Any student not present at that time must pick up his/her test, etc. at the professor's office within three weeks of that class. Tests, etc. not picked up within the three weeks will be discarded. End of semester tests, etc. will be held for three weeks following the end of the semester. If they have not been picked up within that three-week period, they will be discarded.

Tests, etc. will be returned only to the students to whom they belong. In limited circumstances tests, etc. may be given to another student, if the student to whom they belong provides written instructions in a formal letter (hard copy) to the professor requesting that the test, etc. be given to a particular individual.

Assistance is Always Available:

IT WILL BE TO THE STUDENTS' ADVANTAGE TO HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR PROBLEMS RELATED TO THIS COURSE RESOLVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, HAVE PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS, SEE YOUR PROFESSOR. HE WILL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HELP!!

Review classes will be held as deemed necessary by the professor. Tutorials held outside of class time may also be arranged at the mutual convenience of the students and the professor. These may be held during the week or on the weekends. These review classes and tutorials are not to be used as an opportunity to miss regularly scheduled classes.

Students are urged to ask questions and to participate in, and contribute to, the class discussion. **There must be no class answers. If a student wishes to speak her/she must first be recognized. Otherwise, we will get mass answers and not know where the came from.**

Students are also encouraged to read newspapers, magazines, etc. and to tune in to radio and television newscasts for business news. This will make the subject more understandable, interesting, and practical. It will provide students the opportunity to better apply the theory and to enhance his/her opportunity for success in this course.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT STUDENTS WILL ONLY GET OUT OF THIS COURSE WHAT THEY PUT INTO IT.

Classroom Decorum:

Students will respect the diversity and the dignity of those in the classroom. Students will respect the professor's right and duty to teach and students' right to learn without interference. Students who cause any interference with the objectives of the class will be given a verbal warning on the first occasion. If such behaviour continues, the student will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be permitted to return until he/she commits in writing, typed, (a formal letter) that he/she will conduct themselves appropriately in the classroom. This letter will be addressed to the professor

If a student is asked to leave the classroom a second time, he/she must make an appointment with the Dean (or designate) who will decide if the student will be permitted to return to class. At that time a copy of the above letter will be submitted to the Dean.

In the event that a student is asked to leave the classroom a third time, he/she will not be permitted back to the classroom for the rest of the semester. The Dean (or designate) will also decide if any other action needs to be taken.

Students attending this class do so to study Business Problem Solving and Decision Making. Therefore, no other activity will be permitted. Student's who wish to engage in other activities will be asked to leave the classroom, as described above.

Other inappropriate behaviour includes, but not limited to, sleeping in class, or appearing to be sleeping in class, putting feet (foot) on the furniture, writing on the furniture, talking or otherwise communicating in private conversations, etc.

Drinks such as coffee, tea, water, pop, and juices will be permitted in the classroom but not in labs. If a student spills a drink he/she must clean up the mess. This must be accomplished without disturbing the class.

No food (of any type) is permitted in the classroom. This includes during the class, before the class, and during breaks.

Do not leave garbage or other materials behind when you leave the classroom. If the material is garbage, place it in the garbage container as you exit the room. If the container is full, place the item neatly next to the container.

It is the professor' s intention to maintain proper classroom decorum at all times in order to provide the best possible learning and teaching environment.

VII. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT:

Students who wish to apply for advanced credit in the course should consult the professor. Credit for prior learning will be given upon successful completion of a challenge exam or portfolio.

VIII. DIRECT CREDIT TRANSFERS:

Students who wish to apply for direct credit transfer (advanced standing) should obtain a direct credit transfer form from the Dean's office. Students will be required to provide a transcript and course outline related to the course in question.