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Overview of the Purpose: Self-Assessment and Planning for Professional Development

In this initial Purpose, you carry out the first stage of your development as a business professional. This involves a number of activities:

1. Acquiring the foundation of knowledge and skills which is essential for understanding your own capabilities and improving your performance as an effective business professional in the service economy;
2. Initiating career development plans which realistically match your interests and abilities to the specific present and future requirements of the business sector in which you are involved;
3. Taking the first concrete steps to carry out this career plan and then evaluating your progress toward achieving your goals;
4. Learning the Constructive Action® process: a systematic method for using knowledge to develop comprehensive, realistic plans, for carrying them out and evaluating what has been achieved.

The Constructive Action

The Constructive Action for the first semester requires that students carry out and document a planned strategy of personal development addressing a need or problem in their own professional environment. This strategy must be charted within the context of a career plan.

Dimensions

The Values and Ethics Dimension examines the development and application of values, work ethics, and codes of conduct to address individual differences and major ethical issues. Topics include: a historical review of value systems; work ethics and human nature; the implications of value systems on the development of careers, work life, and business organizations; how different ways of thinking can be used to enhance judgement and decision making.

In the Self and Others Dimension, students will study applications of business research to areas of management and decision making; students engage in application of primary and secondary research to business problems; students learn to develop and implement research strategies, and learn to analyze and present their finds.

The Systems Dimension covers an introduction to business organizations and principles of management. Included are an examination of the current economic structure of the United States and the business

functions within the organization.

The Skills Dimension: An introduction to Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access. Students are encouraged at the end of the course to seek Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certification. Students also become familiar with the use of the Internet for research.

The Communications Dimension: Basic methods of presenting, transmitting, and disseminating information.

The Purpose Dimension

In this first semester of study, the performance area or focus of study is *Self-Assessment and Planning for Professional Development*.

Self-assessment is the beginning for all effective action, especially for planning career choices. Self-assessment can be thought of as personal stock-taking, that is, reflecting on your goals, qualities, skills, values and capabilities as a business professional. Through your classes, this knowledge is combined with more in-depth knowledge about service industries and business functions. Therefore, understanding your own wants, priorities, resources, skills, and style assists in finding the most appropriate match in a job, company, and lifestyle.

In your Purpose class, you will learn to apply this knowledge and carry out a Constructive Action. The Constructive Action demonstrates your progress relative to the performance area—in this case, a personal plan of action. Its implementation furthers your development as a professional and assists you in formulating appropriate career plans.

The Purpose classes provide a weekly work group in which the Constructive Action is planned, implemented, and evaluated, and through which you begin to apply the theories, concepts, and experiences of the classroom to actual job situations. This leads to increased self-confidence and increased effectiveness at work. The Constructive Action is both a planning tool and a problem-solving method.

Reading through the outline on the following page will give you an idea of the specific tasks and activities you will be documenting in relation to the implementation of your Constructive Action.

In the other Dimension classes (Values and Ethics, Self and Others, Systems, and Skills), you will explore your own values and those of our society; examine basic psychological theories as they apply to work and career choices; and develop specific knowledge and skills relating to management and business.

Therefore, in this first semester, the focus is on you—what you need to consider, to know, and to do, to get where you want to be, short-term and long-term. In the second semester, the focus is on professional relationships; the third on working in groups; semesters four through eight concentrate on specific functions within business. The curriculum is viewed as a progression in performance—from personal to interpersonal performance, from planning action to undertaking it, always with a view to improving yourself as a professional in business.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on their use of the Objectives in a well-planned and executed Constructive Action to achieve the Purpose. Special attention will be given to the following:

1. The integration of theory in the Constructive Action.
This is part of describing how you are using knowledge.
2. The quality of the written document.
This is part of communicating effectively.
3. Timely submission of work to permit monitoring and supervision.
This is part of monitoring your progress.
4. Class attendance.
This is part of building effective relationships.

Planning Phase

a. Explore opportunities to improve the world.

During the first part of the semester, you will identify and evaluate the ways in which you, as a business professional, can improve the environment in which you operate.

These are some of the questions you should address:

- What are the principal characteristics of the United States economy, the private and public sectors, and the corporation as systems? How can one demonstrate an understanding of the activities and operations of the various segments of the United States and the global economy? How can one evaluate the impact of systems on oneself as a business professional?
- How can I establish and maintain professional relations with others conducive to the achievement of the Purpose?
- What are my values and ethical beliefs as they impact on my professional life? How do my values compare to those of my colleagues in the business world?
- How can I use the mathematical processes found in quantitative measurement as a basic source of business information? How can I analyze and interpret tabular and graphical representations of basic business information? How can I apply mathematical principles as appropriate to my self-assessment as a business professional, and to my work in moving to the achievement of my professional goals? How can I understand and use the basic concepts of proper exercise and good health habits in achieving my self-assessment goals? How can I know and apply interest inventories and other tools for self-assessment?
- How can I identify and evaluate the ways in which I, as a business professional, can improve the environment in which I operate?

During the process of exploration, examine your progress in achieving your objectives, and modify your strategies as required.

b. Choose the best goal.

Based on your analysis of various opportunities, choose the short- and long-term goals that will be best to carry out your self-assessment.

- Taking into consideration possible outcomes, time frame, resources, risks, constraints, and my own learning and career needs, which of the possibilities I have reviewed provides the best opportunity for a Constructive Action?
- What long-term goal am I working towards in my self-assessment and preparation for professional practice?
- What are my short-term goals in self-assessment and preparation for professional practice?
- What is my short-term goal for myself?
- What further information do I need in order to make my plan of action?
- What theories do I intend to use to support my plan and actions?
- What do I need to learn in order to engage in self-assessment and preparation for professional practice?

Examine your progress in achieving your objectives, and modify your strategies as required. Describe how you are using what you have learned to achieve your short-term goals and evaluate your progress towards reaching your long-term goals.

c. Agree on a plan.

Formulate a plan for reaching your goals and state your objectives and strategies.

1. Objectives: Break your short-term goal into specific measurable objectives.

It may be helpful to write objectives for each Dimension, depending on your goals.

2. Strategies/Actions: List the actions you will take to reach your objectives for the Purpose.

There should be at least one strategy for each objective. These actions should be as concrete and practical as possible. You may also suggest alternative strategies or multiple strategies for any one objective.

Analyze resources and constraints relevant to the accomplishment of each strategy.

3. Evaluation Plan

Describe the criteria or benchmarks to be used to monitor progress toward achieving the Constructive Action goal and objectives. That is, how exactly you will know whether or not your strategies have helped you to meet your objectives.

Describe the methods to be used for determining whether these criteria have been met. There should be at least one measure for each objective and each strategy. Measures should be both quantitative and qualitative. Evaluation criteria may be altered during the implementation phase.

Implementation Phase

d. Carry out the plan. Monitor progress and use of knowledge. Change plan as needed.

Maintain a record of all strategic progress with an evaluation of each recorded event to promote learning and facilitate revision of the plan if necessary.

Explain how your newly acquired knowledge is being used to achieve the Purpose.

Assessment Phase

e. Assess results and plan next steps. Determine to what extent you have achieved the purpose of making you a better business professional through self-assessment. Plan how to apply what you have learned to your future business endeavors.

Questions to be answered in this section include:

1. Did you achieve your task objective? If not, how far did you progress?
2. Were you successful in your task, action, participation, learning, etc?
3. What objectives were realistic? Were some abandoned? Redefined?
4. What strategies worked? Would you use them again? Which did not work?
5. What are your next steps in your self-assessment and preparation for professional practice?
6. By engaging in self-assessment, what did you learn about yourself and the process of preparing for professional practice?
7. Overall, how do you assess your ability to engage in self-assessment and preparation for professional practice?
8. What series of materials were most helpful/least helpful and why?

Formatting the Constructive Action Document

General Format: Typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margin on all sides, Times New Roman, 12 font.

When you have completed the Constructive Action, assemble the document.

At the beginning include:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Abstract

At the end add:

- References
- Appendices

The Values and Ethics Dimension: Introduction to Values and Ethics

Overview

The Values and Ethics Dimension seminar of Purpose I will serve as a general introduction to the history and development of value systems that normatively influence individuals and organizations in our society. The course will also address value differences and ethical issues that arise within a business setting. Topics to be explored include: a historical review of value systems; work ethics and views of human nature; the influence of value systems in the development of careers, work life, and business organizations; and how different ways of thinking can be used to enhance judgment and decision-making.

Objectives

In order to make career choices which are appropriate, an individual needs to become aware of his/her own values and their origins, and then make choices which will support a productive and satisfying future both in the context of one's work life and one's lifestyle.

The specific objectives of this introduction to values and ethics are to enable you to:

1. Clearly understand the meanings of values, ethics and attitudes as they relate to your professional advancement in our global economy;
2. Clarify your own values and work orientation through participation in exercises and discussions;
3. Articulate personal and cultural values and analyze their relation to business and organizational values;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between values, goals, and individual action as evidenced in the successful development and analysis of the Constructive Action.

Assessment

1. Attendance;
2. Participation;
3. Exams and assignments on class content and its integration into the Objectives.

Evidence to be included in the Constructive Action Document:

1. Values Inventory;
2. Self-Assessment Statement regarding one's values, profession and career goals;
3. Self-Assessment Values Instrument/Essay.

Topics

- Defining values, morals and ethics
- Defining business life
- The meaning of work
- The personal side of business
- Happiness and success
- Fallacious reasoning: inductive/deductive reasoning
- The difference between ends and means
- Defining rules, roles and responsibility
- Understanding competition
- Conflict of interests
- Business life, ethics and "the good life"

Required Texts

Solomon, Robert and Kristine Hansen. *Above the Bottom Line: An Introduction to Business Ethics*, 3RD ed. NY: Harcourt Brace, 1994. (Mandatory Chapters: 1-4, 6-9, 13-15)

Required Reading (on reserve)

Anouilh, Jean. *Antigone* (play—can also be purchased in paperback collection of Anouilh's plays).
Plato, "The Allegory of the Cave."
Shelley, "Ozymandias" (poem).

Required Filmography

Twelve Angry Men

Your instructor may require additional readings, materials, and/or exercises.

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Brown, Marvin T. *Working Ethics: Strategies for Decision Making and Organizational Responsibility*. CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.
Buchanan, James M. *Ethics and Economic Progress*. OK: University of Oklahoma, 1994.
Castro, Barry. (ed.) *Business and Society: A Reader in the History, Sociology, and Ethics of Business*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1996.
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The Self and Others Dimension: Research in Business

Overview

The gathering and presenting of information is critical to all aspects of business, including the solving of problems, planning for the future, and meeting ongoing and everyday challenges that arise within a business setting. The Self and Others Dimension class will serve as an introduction to research in business. Students will become familiar with various research techniques and methodologies and their application within a business setting. Examples will be drawn from management, marketing, finance, accounting and other areas of business with the aim of showing students how to perform research and then effectively communicate research results for managerial/organizational purposes.

Objectives

By the end of this seminar, you should be able to:

1. Identify management uses of research;
2. Distinguish between primary and secondary research and select the most appropriate method of collecting data;
3. Understand the difference between basic and applied research;
4. Determine the research plan for the Constructive Action;
5. Design questionnaires as appropriate using both structured and open formats;
6. Define and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of business research techniques, such as case studies, focus groups, telephone surveys, and interviews;
7. Understand measurement and scaling concepts.

Assessment

1. Attendance;
2. Participation;
3. Exams and assignments on class content and its integration into the Objectives.

Topics

Business research—exploratory, descriptive or causal

Types of research: primary and secondary, basic and applied

Methods of collecting relevant data: problem definition, identifying key variables, research

objectives
Surveys, observation studies, and experiments
Logic of measurement and practical issues in attitude measurement and questionnaire design
Developing research strategy
Implementing a research study
Scientific methodology
Sampling and fieldwork
Data analysis and presentation
Types of bias
Estimating costs and the value of research information

Required Text

Berinstein, Paula. *Finding Statistics Online: How to Locate the Elusive Numbers You Need*. NJ: Information Today, 1998.

Kumar, Ranjit. *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 2005

Bolner, Myrtle S. and Poirier, Gayle A. *The Research Process: Books and Beyond*. 3rd Edition. Revised Printing. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2002.

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Hester, Edward L. *Successful Market Research: The Complete Guide to Getting and Using Essential Information About Your Customers and Competitors*. New York: John Wiley, 1995.

Journal of Advertising Research. (periodical)

Journal of Marketing Research. (periodical)

Katzer, Jeffrey, et al. *Evaluating Information: A Guide for Users of Social Science Research*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

Kinnear, Thomas C. *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill,

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Percy, Larry. (ed.) *Marketing Research That Pays Off: Case Histories of Marketing Research Leading to Success in the Marketplace*. New York: Haworth Press, 1997.

Pope, Jeffrey L. *Practical Marketing Research*. Updated ed. New York: AMACOM, 1993.

Public Opinion Quarterly. (periodical)

Rea, Louis M., et al. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Rossman, Marlene L. *Multicultural Marketing: Selling to a Diverse America*. New York: AMACOM, 1996.

Simon, Julian Lincoln. *Basic Methods in Social Science*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.

Sudman, Seymour and Norman M. Bradburn. *Asking Questions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982.

Thompson, Steven K. *Sampling*. New York: John Wiley, 1992.

The Systems Dimension: Introduction to Business and Management

Overview

The Systems Dimension of Purpose I will serve as a general introduction to the field of business management. The course will emphasize management as a process that includes planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling for establishing and accomplishing business objectives. The interrelationships that exist in various businesses will be examined. The economic structure of the private sector will be examined and students will be introduced to major concepts in finance, marketing, and other functional management areas. This course will serve as a foundation for advanced work in subsequent Purposes (semesters). This background will aid students in making a self-assessment about their future role as a businessperson (managerial career development).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this dimension, you should be able to:

1. Use the principles, processes and functions of management to assist you in your Constructive Action;
2. Understand the similarities and differences between public and private sectors, goods and service organizations, and other major business sub-categories;
3. Identify and describe the process of management;
4. Identify and describe the major functional areas in a service-oriented business;
5. Read and interpret basic business and financial information in newspapers and periodicals.

Assessment

1. Attendance;
2. Participation;
3. Exams and assignments on class content and its integration into the Objectives.

Topics

Types of business organizations
Structure of the U.S. economy
Basic financial data
The major functions and roles of management
Management by objectives and other planning and control techniques
Management expertise in a service business
Principles of organization

Managerial career development

Required Text

Boone, Louis and David Kurtz. *Contemporary Business*, 11th ed. IL: Dryden Press, 2002.

Required Reading (on reserve)

Melville, Herman. "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (short story).

Required Filmography

Wall Street

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Boyett, Joseph H. and Jimmie T. Boyett. *Beyond Workplace 2000: Essential Strategies for the New Corporation*. NY: Plume, 1996.

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Business Week. (Periodical)

Drucker, Peter F. *The Effective Executive*. NY: HarperBusiness, 1993.

Drucker, Peter F. *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. NY: HarperBusiness, 1993.

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Hammer, Michael and James Champy. *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*. NY: HarperBusiness, 1994.

Harvard Business Review. (Periodical)

Herzberg, Frederick. *The Managerial Choice: To be Efficient and to be Human*. Olympus Pub. Co. 1982.

Hodge, B.J., et al. *Organizational Theory: A Strategic Approach*. MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.

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Morrison, Ann M., et al. *Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of Americas's Largest Corporations?* MA: Addison-Wesley, 1987.

Nichols, Nancy A. (ed.) *Reach for the Top: Women & the Changing Facts of Work Life.* MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Swiss, Deborah J. *Women Breaking Through: Overcoming the Final 10 Obstacles at Work.* NJ: Peterson's/Pacesetter Books, 1996.

White, Jane. *A Few Good Women: Breaking the Barriers to Top Management.* NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992.

The Skills Dimension: Technical Computer Applications for Management

Overview

This course will introduce students to Microsoft Office Suite, including Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access. Students are encouraged at the end of the course to seek Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) certification. Students also become familiar with the use of the Internet for research.

Objectives

1. Efficiency in using computer hardware and software as a research and communications tool;
2. Mastery of end-user computing skills;
3. Mastery of software and microcomputer vocabulary;
4. Mastery of word processing, spreadsheet, data base skills, computer graphics and internet access.

Assessment

1. Attendance;
2. Participation;
3. Exams and assignments on class content and its integration into the Objectives.

Topics

Essential Introduction to Computers
Windows '97, '98 and Microsoft Office 2000
Microsoft Word 2000
Microsoft Excel 2000
Microsoft Access 2000
Microsoft PowerPoint 2000
Microsoft Outlook 2000
Microsoft Office User Specialist Certification Program

Required Text

Beskeen, David W. et al. *Microsoft Office XP : Enhanced Edition* Cambridge, MA: Thompson 2003.

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The Communications Dimension: Fundamentals of Business Writing

Overview

This course will cover basic forms of business writing. Students work on a variety of materials and techniques, which support their learning of the skills necessary for effective communication in business, especially basic written forms of presentation and analysis. The course will also cover essential elements of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics of usage essential for effective business writing.

Objective

Activities are specifically designed to help the student accomplish the Constructive Action and produce its supporting documentation, as well as improve research and writing skills needed for professional communications in the business world.

Assessment

1. Attendance;
2. Participation;
3. Exams and assignments on class content and its integration into the Objectives.

Evidence to be included in the Constructive Action Document:

1. Resume;
2. Job description;
3. Setting, situation and need/opportunity/problem analysis;
4. Long- and short-term goals.

Topics

Types of business communication
The business resume
The job description
Library research
Writing long- and short-term goals
Data Development: setting, situation and needs analysis

Required Textbooks

Hacker, Diane. *A Writer's Reference 4th edition*: St. Martin's, 2003

Smalley, Ruetten and Kozyrev. *Refining Composition Skills: Rhetoric and Grammar, 5th Ed.*. Boston. Heinle & Heinle, 2002.

Required Reading (on reserve)

Foucault, Michel, "The Theory of the Verb" (essay).

Kafka, Franz, "Before the Law" (parable).

Woolf, Virginia, "Shakespeare's Sister" (essay).

Bibliography

Adler, Ronald B. and George Rodman. *Understanding Human Communication*, 6th ed. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1996.

Adler, Ronald B. and Jeanne Marguardt Elmhorst. *Communicating at Work: Principles and Practices for Business and the Professions*, 5th ed. NY: Random House, 1996.

Argenti, Paul A. *Corporate Communication*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

Barker, Larry Lee and Deborah A. Barker. *Communication*, 7th ed. NY: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.

Barrack, Martin K. *How We Communicate: The Most Vital Skill*. CO: Glenbridge Pub. Ltd., 1989.

Benjamin, James and Raymie E. McKerron. *Business and Professional Communication: Concepts and Practices*. MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993.

Booher, Dianna Daniels. *Communicate With Confidence: How To Say It Right The First Time and Every Time*. NY: McGraw-Hill, 1994.

Brown, Claire and Joseph Pechman. *Gender in the Workplace*. Washington, DC: Brookings Inst., 1987.

Butler, et. al. *Correct Writing*, 6th ed. MA: DC Heath, 1995.

Daniells, Lorna M. *Business Information Sources*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Ellinor, Linda. *Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation*. NY: John Wiley, 1998.

Gray, John. *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus: A Practical Guide For Improving Communication, and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships*. NY: HarperCollins, 1992.

Johnson, H. Webster, et al. *The Business Library and How To Use It: A Guide To Sources and Research Strategies for Information on Business and Management*, 6th ed. MI: Omnigraphics, 1996.

Krisco, Kim. *Leadership and the Art of Conversation: Conversation as a Management Tool*. CA: Prima Publishing, 1997.

Leathers, Dale G. *Successful Nonverbal Communication: Principles and Applications*, 3rd ed. MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.

McCormack, Mark H. *On Communicating*. GA: Dove Books, 1998.

Muller, Gilbert and Alan Crooks. *Major Modern Essayists*, 2nd ed. NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.

Noonan, Peggy. *Simply Speaking: How to Communicate Your Ideas With Style, Substance and Clarity*. NY: HarperCollins, 1998.

Roane, Susan. *What Do I Say Next: Talking Your Way To Business and Social Success*. NY: Warner Books, 1997.

Tannen, Deborah. *Talking From 9 to 5: Women and Men in the Workplace: Language, Power, and Sex*. NY: Avon Books, 1995.

Thompson, George and Jerry Jenkins. *Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion*. IL: Quill, 1994.

Van Der Heijden, Kees. *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation*. NY: John Wiley, 1996.

Vitale, Joe. *Cyberwriting: How To Promote Your Product or Service Online (Without Being Flamed)*. NY: AMACOM, 1996.

Zeuschner, Raymond F. and Raymond B. Zeuschner. *Communicating Today*, 2nd ed. MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.

Definitions

Purpose

Every semester of your education at Metropolitan College of New York is organized around a specific Purpose whose achievement benefits you (the professional-in-training) and those you work for and with. Each Purpose represents a particular way to help people become empowered and calls for particular kinds of knowledge and action.

Empowerment

Metropolitan College of New York teaches that the empowerment of citizens should be the aim of all human service. By empowerment we mean the ability of people to act purposefully to manage their lives, meet their needs, and work with others in mutually empowering relationships to make a better world.

Dimensions[®]

The five Dimensions are lenses for looking at knowledge and performance and for understanding people and the environment. In every semester, you have classes in all five Dimensions. You make use of knowledge from the five Dimensions in your Constructive Action[®]. The Dimensions provide broad guidelines for assessing your performance in the classroom and the field.

The Values and Ethics Dimension[®]

Values are the beliefs that guide people's decisions and actions. Ethics refers to the study and adoption of principles to govern one's conduct. Human service professionals need to be clear about their own values, respect the values of others, deal productively with ethical issues, and act ethically.

The Self and Others Dimension[®]

The Self and Others Dimension is concerned with people (including oneself), their individual identity and their relationships and interactions with others. It is also concerned with exploring the human condition.

The Systems Dimension[®]

A system is a group of interacting parts that forms an entity. Examples of systems that human service professionals need knowledge about are families, communities, the human body, human service agencies, political systems, the global economy. Systems often serve as resources.

The Skills Dimension[®]

A skill is a technique for doing something, and the ability to do it competently. Every Purpose requires its own particular kinds of skills. Communications, math, accounting, economics and finance are among the skills for which business professionals have a recurring need.

The Purpose Dimension®

The Purpose Dimension is concerned with bringing together knowledge from the five Dimensions in an organized and thoughtful way to achieve a given Purpose.

Constructive Action®

You achieve your Purpose by performing a Constructive Action to benefit yourself and others. You follow the Constructive Action Method, which is a thoughtful, systematic process of planning, carrying out, and assessing the effort to achieve the Purpose.

Working Outline: Constructive Action Documentation

Overview

Producing a written documentation of your Constructive Action is a separate endeavor from carrying out the Constructive Action itself. The process of Constructive Action is described in the earlier sections: "Constructive Action: An Overview" and "Purpose." This section provides you with specific guidelines for the documentation of your efforts. This documentation covers:

1. Presentation of the Abstract
2. Exploratory Phase
3. Planning Phase
4. Background Research
5. Implementation Phase
6. Final Assessment Phase
7. Formatting Your Constructive Action Document

1. Presentation of the Abstract

Although this section appears first; it is completed at the **END** of your Constructive Action. It includes a brief overview of the Purpose, your own objectives and why chosen, and what you learned and accomplished.

The Final Abstract (1 page, typed, single-spaced) is composed of three parts:

*Part I - Purpose: What is the Constructive Action and how does it relate to the Purpose of this Semester?

Background: What was the need for the Constructive Action?

Part II - Objectives and Methodology: What is your long-term goal? What were the objectives? What were the methods and strategies employed?

Part III - Conclusions: Assessment of the outcomes. What will be the follow-up?*

*Begin with a topic statement: This statement will eventually become the first paragraph of your abstract. Formulate or state your short-term goal.

2. Statement of short and long-term goals.

- A. Your short-term goal is what you hope to achieve by the end of the semester.
- B. Long Term Goal – State the Length of Time.

3. Exploratory Phase

The background for much of this part comes from:

- your own experience and knowledge;

- material covered in Dimension seminars;
- job-related sources;
- readings and discussions in Purpose class.

After you have written your topic statement, proceed to your Work Setting, Situation and Needs Analyses.

A. Analysis of Work setting as it relates to this specific Purpose Semester

An analysis of the work setting takes these factors into account:

1. design of the work area;
2. how design promotes or impedes communications, work flow, and morale;
3. how design reflects promotes or impedes productivity.

B. Analysis of the Situation or Problem Description

An analysis of the situation takes these factors into account:

Part I:

1. How different macro environments affect your venture: economic, legal, or socio-cultural
2. a description of the industry in which your company operates or venture takes place
3. an overview of your company, its products, services, structure, philosophy, and goals;

Part II:

4. a description of your department/function;
5. your formal job description and role in venture at hand.

Part III:

6. An extensive description of the problem or circumstances; use examples and illustrations which have motivated this undertaking.

The basic questions to be answered by A and B, then, are:

- What is the environment in which you work? What is its physical setting? What are its professional and psychological conditions?
- How does your environment and/or your position in it support or limit your purpose or opportunity to act and to develop professionally?
- What values are communicated through non-verbal channels (e.g. use of space, size and placement of objects, desks, etc.)?

Setting and situation provide the relevant ground-rules and opportunities for your plan, and the factors which may constrain your actions (i.e. limiting factors or variables).

C. Need or Opportunity: Solution Statement

This section contains the rationale and analysis of a solution to be undertaken as related to the Purpose to be achieved.

This need also should apply to your own professional development. Resolving the need should benefit yourself and significant others and contribute to productivity on the job.

The Need, Opportunity or Solution Analysis should include (but need not be limited to):

1. description of the solution you will be undertaking;
2. a rationale for why this solution at this time.
3. a narrative description of objectives and strategies to be undertaken.

4. Planning Phase

A. The Plan of Action consists of a four section chart:

1. the goal(s) of the Constructive Action (short term - by the end of this term; long term - the next goal to follow from the short term goal);
2. proposed objectives (mini-goals);
3. strategies (how to get there);
4. evaluation criteria (how will you know you got there).

Goals

- Your goals should be appropriate to the Purpose performance area.
- The Short Term Goal: what you hope to have achieved by the end of the Semester.
- The Long Term Goal: the goal to follow from your short-term goal. Set a realistic time frame as part of your long term goal statement.

Objectives

In this section, you write the specific, short- term objectives which you hope to accomplish during this Semester. These objectives should be as specific as possible in terms of obviously measurable changes.

The objectives should be related to:

- the Purpose to be achieved,
- the analysis of the needs and setting in which you currently work, and
- the support of your long-term development.

Strategies/Actions

These are concrete, real life actions you will take to achieve each individual objective:

1. List each action you will take. There should be at least one strategy for each objective. These actions should be as concrete and practical as possible. You may also suggest alternative strategies or multiple strategies for any one objective.

2. Analyze resources and constraints relevant to the accomplishment of each strategy. Decide whether you want to include organizational or external resources. Do you want to include your self-assessment of skills and abilities? Areas for development? Other?
3. After you are at your midpoint assessment phase, ask yourself if you want to change any strategies and implement new ones.

Evaluation Plan

Describe the criteria or benchmarks to be used to monitor progress toward achieving goals and objectives during the Semester; that is, how exactly you will know a) whether or not your strategies have succeeded and b) if these strategies will help you meet your objectives. Also describe the methods to be used for determining whether these criteria have been met.

There should be at least one measure for each objective and strategy. Measures should be both quantitative and qualitative. Evaluation criteria are part of the plan of action and are set out before you begin to implement your plan. They may be altered if the reality of a critical incident so demands. Assessment of learning (Part III) is done after implementation.

5. Background Research - [In this semester you must do a major research paper. See [Purpose Overview](#)] Here is your opportunity to explicitly demonstrate the theoretical or conceptual underpinnings of your Constructive Action—the ways in which you have drawn upon theoretical sources and corroborative references.

In applying class content to the Constructive Action process, you will have to sift and filter facts, data, theories, and hypotheses. Decide which sources, illustrations or pieces of evidence are useful towards the conceptualization, implementation and assessment of your specific Constructive Action.

You may choose to write a background essay or a review of the literature on a selected topic or create an annotated bibliography of sources consulted. Targeted sources should be referenced in your document to help you:

- clarify terminology and theories,
- suggest problem solving approaches, and
- enhance analysis of learning.

You must provide footnotes/endnotes and bibliographies for each research paper or project submitted.

6. Implementation Phase

In this section of the document you will record the actual step-by-step implementing of your Constructive Action.

Recording Critical Incidents

In recording critical incidents, you are asked to describe specific occurrences or interactions based on the implementation of strategies which pertain to your Constructive Action. This written "log" or summary tells: what happened, how you dealt with it, and how you felt and reacted. You can analyze the challenges you encountered, and whether or not you have succeeded. A critical incident report briefly details the following information:

- a. When and where did it happen?

- b. What happened? (What did you see and hear?)
- c. What did you say? Do?
- d. Who else was involved? How did they affect the way the situation went or how you responded?
- e. How did you feel? (Be specific - don't just say "good" or "bad".)
- f. How did it turn out? Why?

When you describe what happened, be sure to give specific behaviors. Include non-verbal action(s) as well as quotations from you and any other person(s) involved. Provide sufficient information so that another reader has a clear picture of the situation or so that the situation can be role-played. You must give careful thought to what information is relevant. Select and focus on what is significant. Each specific situation is different, so no absolute rules can be given.

When you reflect on your personal analysis of the incident, give your inferences, interpretations, feelings, and assumptions about the interaction. You must then state what strategic decision you made to move the interaction along while trying to achieve your purpose.

For your Constructive Action, monitor those incidents, which involve the issues, and/or relationships which are the focus of the Constructive Action. In addition, each incident should illustrate either progress or lack of progress toward the goal(s) you are working to achieve.

Logging or written monitoring is the process by which you record the development of your Constructive Action. It cannot be rushed in the last few weeks; it must be developed over the course of the semester. The material in the recordings, when appropriately detailed, becomes a major part of your analysis. It demonstrates how well you planned and implemented your Constructive Action, and how well you were able to integrate academic learning into "live" situations.

A chart for recording critical incidents is included at the end of this section.

7. Final Assessment Phase

The final phase of the Constructive Action process provides the last major section of the written report. That is, you have researched and planned your goals and objectives, your strategies and evaluation criteria (all in relation to your needs and your current position on the job) and you have spent several weeks acting on your plans (i.e., implementing them).

In the final weeks of the Semester, then, you reflect and assess what has happened, what worked and what didn't work and why, what you learned from your class readings and actions, and their applicability to the Constructive Action.

A. Assessment of Goals

1. Did you achieve your short-term goal?
2. Was your goal realistic? Explain.
3. Did you reach your objectives? How do you know?
4. Which objectives were redefined, if any. Explain why?

B. Assessment of Strategies

1. Which strategies worked? Why? Cite references to specific materials to support your discussion.
2. Which strategies did not work? If any, why not? Cite references to specific materials to support your discussion.
3. Would you use these strategies again in similar situations?

C. Assessment of Overall Learning

1. Explain what you learned from this experience. What do you know that you did not know before?
2. In what ways did the Dimension classes and their accompanying readings help you with you to achieve your goals? In what ways were they not helpful?

D. Conclusion

Write a statement of your plans for further action.

8. Formatting Your Constructive Action Document

General Format/Organization - Constructive Action Document

Typed, double-spaced

Margins: 1 - 1 1/2 inches all around

Parts of the Document

Title Page

Table of Contents

Abstract Short and Long-term Goals

Exploration Phase

1. Setting Analysis
2. Situational Analysis
3. Need/Opportunity/Solution Analysis

Plan of Action

1. Plan of Action Chart

Background Research

Research Essays including footnotes/endnotes, and bibliography for each essay

Implementation

Critical Logs

Minimum 5 logs [NOTE EACH LOG MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ABILITIES ASSESSMENT PAGE AND A "NEXT STEPS I WILL" SECTION]

with analysis by Dimension and Abilities.

Final Assessment

Appendices

Appendices and Other Supporting Documentation

These may include memos, letters, and/or reports relevant to the Constructive Action, as well as feedback from faculty, supervisor, peers, other company constituents, and personal assessment.

* At the discretion of the Purpose Instructor, this section may be placed before the plan of action or

incorporated into other sections. Background research and evidence of theoretical ground work must appear as part of the documentation.

Plan of Action

Name:	Purpose:
Date Prepared:	Date revised:

Long-term Goal:

Short-term Constructive Action Goal	Objectives	Strategies	Evaluation Plan
CHECKLIST			

CA GOALS:	OBJECTIVES:	STRATEGIES:	EVALUATION PLAN:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appropriate to Purpose of the semester - addresses Needs Analysis; - represents a logical step toward long- range goal; - Are challenging, doable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are observable; - are realistic within given time frame; - Are challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - define resources to be used, how and by whom; - describe how constraints will be handled; - Are appropriate to Needs Analysis, long- and short-range goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifies evaluation of each strategy - identifies method; - Is appropriate to Needs Analysis, long and short-range goals.

Constructive Action: Record of Critical Incident

Date:	Time:
Place:	Persons Involved:

Strategy Implemented:

Content - text	Interpretation-subtext
	<p>On this side, record your thoughts, feelings inferences, strategies, assumptions, etc.</p> <p>I was really nervous. My tone of voice was apologetic, but I asked for help anyway.</p> <p>Made me angry at being paid attention to; but later I was making him nervous because he doesn't know how to deal with the change I'm proposing.</p>

Analysis by Dimension®

Purpose:

Values:

Self & Others:

Systems:

Skills:

Assessment/Summary of New Understanding

What do you know now that you would not have known if this incident had not taken place?

Indicate whether you thought the situation went well or badly. Did it help you reach your goal or objective? Why or why not? (It went well because.../It would have gone better if...)

Next Steps:

I will:

Others (co-workers, supervisor, et al) will:

Academic Calendar for 2006**Spring Semester 2006 (January 9 through April 25)**

First day of classes	January 9
Martin Luther King Birthday (College closed)	January 16
President's Day (College closed)	February 20
College follows Monday schedule	February 21 (Tues)
Last day for student submit work from Fall 2005 incomplete*	February 28
*unless the work was requested earlier by the professor	
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Fall 2005 error	February 28
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Fall 2005 incomplete	March 21
Last day to withdraw for Spring 2006 semester	March 21
Easter (College closed)	April 16
Last day of classes	April 25

Summer Semester 2006 (May 3 through August 17)

First day of classes	May 3
Memorial Day (College closed)	May 29
College follows Monday schedule	May 31 (Wed)
Last day for student submit work from Spring 2006 incomplete	June 21
*unless the work was requested earlier by the professor	
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Spring 2006 error	June 21
Independence Day (College closed)	July 4
College follows Monday schedule	July 6 (Thursday)
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Spring 2006 incomplete	July 13
Last day to withdraw for Summer 2006 semester	July 13
Last day of classes	August 17

Fall Semester 2006 (September 5 through December 21)

First day of classes	September 5
Columbus Day	October 9
College follows Monday schedule	October 10 (Tues)
Last day for student to submit work for Summer 2006 incomplete	October 24
*unless the work was requested earlier by the professor	
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Summer 2006 error	October 24
Last day for instructor to submit grade change for Summer 2006 incomplete	November 14
Last day to withdraw from Fall 2006 semester	November 14
Thanksgiving (College closed)	November 23- November 24
College reopens	November 25 (Sat)
College follows Friday schedule	November 29 (Wed)
Last day of classes	December 21
Christmas Break (College Closed)	December 23- January 1

