
THE WHARTON SCHOOL
University of Pennsylvania

Media and Entertainment Field Projects
MKTG895

Course Syllabus (Fall 2007)

Class Time: Wednesdays 3:00-6:00 p.m.
 September 5 – December 20th

Course Instructor: Nelson Gayton
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Office and Office Hours: By Appointment.

Experiential learning as a learning technique dates back to the work of John Dewey in the late 1930s. Dewey claimed that valuable education engages the learner in an active manner, and that knowledge is linked to practice. The media and entertainment industries are no strangers to this mode of learning, with apprenticeship arrangements being the traditional means of professional development in the business.

The Media & Entertainment (M&E) Field Projects course is designed to reinforce the experiential learning values of the Wharton School and the media and entertainment industries, but also to complement the School's classroom offerings in other disciplines important to the management of media and entertainment companies. It is a full credit course comprised of "high impact, team projects in media and entertainment. The course embodies a "co-production" approach, which anticipates that students will be partners with the School and Project Sponsors in driving results and shaping Wharton's culture in the industry and community at large.

Project sponsors have included profit and non-profit companies within and beyond Philadelphia Metropolitan area.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To offer students high impact, "real world" professional learning opportunities where they can apply marketing and management frameworks of thinking and develop professional relationships in media and entertainment.

- To provide students with an understanding of the dynamics, structure and strategies that shape media and entertainment companies, helping them to develop industry skills and experience.
- To take students out of the comfort zones of classroom instruction, providing them with a hands-on, team project that will challenge them to explore the qualities of effective individual and team leadership.
- To foster strategic thinking, effective communication and sound decision-making, nurturing thought leadership in the industry and creating a vibrant hub for business knowledge and application in the industry.
- To offer students professional learning opportunities in media and entertainment where they can test their skills and forward management ideas that will aid them in identifying career opportunities in the industry.

COURSE FORMAT and GRADING

The course will consist of individual team meetings with me and the project sponsor, as well as select class meetings for team presentations and give-and-take discussions. **Some meetings will be conducted via gotomeeting.com, so please prepare your laptop with the appropriate software.** Please see Class Schedule for dates of each. Students should be versed in the latest news and events by reading the industry trades regularly.

M&E Team Field Projects

The focal point of the course is a high impact, team project that provides students with hands-on experience in the media and entertainment industries. The objective of the project is to help produce leaders in the industry who understand the impact they can have on others, an organization and the community at large.

TEAM PROJECT

Project teams will be organized into teams of 3-5 students and will interact directly with me and a senior representative(s) from their Project Sponsor. Each project will provide students with the opportunity to use management and marketing techniques in a decision context, requiring them to examine and define real problems and recommend solutions. That is, each project will provide a means for the student to apply his or her knowledge of marketing concepts and methodologies to a meaningful management problem.

Project teams must establish a very high level of excellence.

Typical Project Timeline

Each student in a team must commit approximately 5-10 hours a week for 14 academic weeks, generally conducted as follows:

Weeks 1: Team thoroughly examines and investigates the sponsor organization itself; conducts preliminary meeting with sponsor contact; identifies project focus and scope; conducts preliminary internal and external environmental analyses; establishes reporting procedures and expectations; creates and presents Project Engagement Plan including deliverables, budget and time schedule.

Weeks 2-3: Team presents Project Engagement Plan to senior management of sponsor organization, including deliverables, budget and time schedule. Team also prepares a letter of understanding for sponsor, with all parties agreeing on specific parameters for the project.

Weeks 4-9: Team collects, analyzes and interprets data; develops and evaluates strategic options. During Week 8, team also provides sponsor organization with an Interim Progress Report. Team will create and present Interim Progress Report to class before such presentation is made to Project Sponsor.

Weeks 10-12: Team writes report including analysis, conclusions, recommendations and action steps. Team will create and present Final Project Report to class before such presentation is made to Project Sponsor.

Weeks 13-14: Team presents Final Project Report (written and oral) to senior management of sponsor organization.

The Project will require student teams to make the following presentations to the class and project sponsors (separately) during the semester:

1. A Project Engagement Plan and Presentation.
2. A Project Status Report and Presentation.
3. A Final Project Report and Presentation.

As an Addendum to this team report, each team will be required to submit a Final Project Timetable, complete with work-streams, milestones and deliverables. This timetable should also include a weekly “log” of each team member’s work on the project, including tasks and hours per task for each team member.

Last but not least, each team member will be required to submit an evaluation of the project, along with peer ratings for each members of his team. These ratings will be held in the strictest confidence, with the objective that your grade on the Team Field Project will also be representative of your individual contribution to your team project.

Project sponsor descriptions are attached.

Student Participation

Participation in individual team meetings and large class meetings is essential to each student's learning experience, not to mention it to your Field Project's outcome. To this end, student participation is embedded in the final grade of the M&E Team Field Project grade. My final assessment of this participation will also include peer ratings from your team members will be used to determine the student participation component of your final project grade.

The M&E Team Field Project (including Student Participation) is worth 55% of the final grade.

Individual Written Assignments

Each student will be required to submit three (3) Knowledge @ Wharton-like articles on any media-entertainment related topic of their choice regardless of management discipline (i.e. marketing, finance, management, etc.). Each article should be no more than 2-3 pages in length, single-spaced.

The student must approach these articles as if they are "stories" in much the same way an editor of a business publishing company approaches the development of editorial content for his publication. Please use this opportunity to contact and develop relationships with faculty and industry professionals that can further the development of your article but also your own professional career.

Students will also be required to blindly evaluate three (3) articles written by other students in the course, again as if they were editors in a business publication. These evaluations should be no more than 1-2 pages in length, single-spaced.

Please see Class Schedule for Due Dates.

The Individual Written Assignment are worth 45% of the final grade.

FALL 2007

CLASS SCHEDULE: Media & Entertainment Field Projects

Class 1

September 5: Introductions, Expectations & Course Administration - IP

1. Introductions (background and interests).
2. Discuss learning expectations of the course, peers and the instructor.
3. Discuss the course syllabus and learning objectives.
4. Discuss the Class learning environment.
5. Discuss sponsored projects, basis of selection and project administration.
6. Discuss course administration, including Guest Speak Presentations, Project Preferences and Networking Matching preferences.

Note: By Monday, September 10th, project assignments will be made.

Week 2

September 12: Individual Team Meetings - IP

Individual team meetings will usually be 30-45 minutes in length. Each team must decide on a contact person and a “leadership” rotation with project sponsors. Establish common meeting schedules and procedures for communicating with one another, the project sponsor and me (i.e. Skype, IM, email, etc.).

For the times we have individual team meetings, I will schedule a 30-45 minute time slot when I can meet with your whole team. Please have your team leader coordinate this with me. That person would plan the agenda and run the meeting to ensure you accomplish what you want. You are always welcomed to contact me by phone or e-mail if you think a meeting outside of class time is appropriate. You can do this on an individual basis as well.

****IMPORTANT****

This week, teams will also be expected to coordinate with me an initial “kickoff” meeting with their project sponsor. This will be coordinated with the project team leader.

Week 3**September 19th: Individual Team Meetings****Week 4****September 26th: Individual Team Meetings****Week 5****October 3rd: CLASS MEETING/Project Engagement Presentation - IP**

For this class, imagine your Project Sponsor IS considering commissioning your team for your field project and that you must impress them with a Project Engagement Plan.

To this end, you will be required to:

1. Make an Oral Presentation of your Project Engagement Plan (PEP) to the class, using visual aides to communicate your points efficiently and effectively. The length of your presentation should be 10 minutes, depending on the requirements of the project and how each team would present their Plan to their Sponsor. We will role-play by asking your team to present your PEP as if the class is your Project's Sponsor.
2. Submit a Powerpoint presentation of your Project Engagement Plan (in hard copy and digital form). Include the following elements:
 - a. Project Description and Objectives
 - b. Project Requirements and Implementation Plan
 - c. Deliverables and Timetable – Interim and Final
 - d. Roles and Scope of Responsibilities of Each Team Member
 - e. Statement of Learning Objectives

Your Oral and Power-point presentation of your PEP should be oriented to your Project Sponsor. Both should outline the process that your team will undertake to address your Sponsor's problems and objectives. Use visual aides. Organize them by highlighting (1) the problem, and then (2) the process your team will undertake to solve the problem. This is most effective if you describe your process of problem solving in detail, along with what findings you expect to discover in detail. Most of us are better at providing feedback when we are given specifics.

Note:

This class offers teams an opportunity to gain feedback from the class that might help in their project work and "real" presentations to Sponsors. The measure of success for this presentation is how many suggestions you can get from the other teams and, of these, how many you can act upon with your Project Sponsor.

Students will be asked to provide a Peer Review of each presentation, using a Peer Rating Form that will be distributed well in advance of class. This form provides for anonymous inputs and its objective is solely to provide positive and constructive feedback on team presentations.

Each team will be required to post drafts of your PEP Power-point presentation to webCafé and solicit feedback from your peers and me before and after your presentation. PEP Presentations should be 10 minutes in length/per team.

Due: Thought Leadership Article #1, by 3pm.

Week 6

October 10th: Individual Team Meetings

Week 7

October 17th: NO CLASS – MBA Recruiting Day

Week 8

October 24th: CLASS MEETING/Project Status Report Presentations - IP

Now, imagine that your Project Sponsor commissioned your team for your assigned field project and that you must now present to them a Project Status Report.

To this end, you will be required to:

1. Make an Oral Presentation of your Project Status Report (PSR) to the class, using visual aides to communicate your points efficiently and effectively. The length of your presentation should be about 15 minutes, depending on the requirements of the project and how each team would present their Report to their Sponsor. We will role-play by asking your team to present your PSR as if the class is your Project's Sponsor.
2. Submit a Power-point presentation of your Project Status Report (in hard copy and digital form). Include the following elements:
 - a. Project Description and Objectives
 - b. Interim Findings, Challenges and Learning Outcomes
 - c. Outstanding Project Requirements
 - d. Final Deliverables and Timetable
 - e. Expected Project Outcomes

Your Oral and Power-point presentation of your PSR should be oriented to your Sponsor. Both should outline the process that your team (1) undertook to address your Sponsor's problems and objectives, and (2) will undertake to address your Sponsor's outstanding problems and objectives. Use visual aides. Organize them by highlighting (1) the problems, and then (2) the processes your team undertook or will undertake to solve these problems. This is most effective if you describe your process of problem solving in detail, along with what findings you expect to discover in detail. Most of us are better at providing feedback when we are given specifics.

Note

This class offers teams an opportunity to gain feedback from the class that might help in their project work and "real" presentations to Sponsors. The measure of success for this presentation is how many suggestions you can get from the other teams and, of these, how many you can act upon with your Project Sponsor.

Students will be asked to provide a Peer Review of each presentation, using a Peer Rating Form that will be distributed well in advance of class. This form provides for anonymous inputs and its objective is solely to provide positive and constructive feedback on individual and team presentations. In addition, students will be asked how they think each M&E Field Project will turn out. It will be interesting to see how different people view the same project.

Each team will be required to post drafts of your PSR Power-point presentation to the course web site and solicit feedback from your peers and me before and after your presentation.

Week 9

October 31: Individual Team Meetings

Week 10

November 7: Individual Team Meetings

Due: Thought Leadership Article #2, by 3pm.

Due: Editorial Evaluation of Thought Leadership Article #1, by 3pm.

Week 11

November 14th: LARGE CLASS MEETING: Project Sponsor Presentations - IP

Week 12

November 21: Individual Team Meetings

Week 13**November 28: Individual Team Meetings****Week 14****December 5: LARGE CLASS MEETING/Final Project Presentations - IP**

Finally, your M&E Field Project is complete and now you must a Final Project Report to your Project Sponsor.

To this end, you will be required to:

1. Make an Oral Presentation of your Final Project Report (FPR) to the class, using visual aides to communicate your points efficiently and effectively. The length of your presentation should be about twenty minutes, depending on the requirements of the project and how each team would present their Report to their Sponsor. We will role-play by asking your team to present your PSR as if the class is your Project's Sponsor. In past courses, some teams have invited project sponsors to this presentation, thereby avoiding having to make a presentation to their Project Sponsor at another time.
2. Submit a Powerpoint presentation of your Final Project Report (in hard copy and digital form). Include the following elements:
 - a. Project Description and Objectives
 - b. Project Deliverables
 - c. Expected vs. Actual Project Outcomes (Findings)
 - d. Recommendations

Your Oral and Powerpoint presentation of your FPR should be oriented to your Sponsor. Both should outline the process that your team undertook to address your Sponsor's problems and objectives. Use visual aides. Organize them by highlighting (1) the problems, and then (2) the process your team undertook to solve these problems. This is most effective if you describe your process for problem solving in detail and what findings you expect to discover vs. what you actually did discover. Most of us are better at providing feedback when we are given specifics.

Note

This class offers teams an opportunity to practice their FPR presentations to Sponsors, but also to gain feedback from the class that might help in their "real" presentations to Sponsors. The measure of success for this presentation is how many suggestions you can get from the other teams and, of these, how many you can act upon with your Project Sponsor.

Students will be asked to provide a Peer Review of each presentation, using a Peer Rating Form that will be distributed well in advance of class. This form provides for anonymous inputs and its objective is solely to provide positive and constructive feedback on individual and team presentations. Students will also be asked how they thought each M&E Field Project turned out vs. what they expected. It will be interesting to see how different people viewed the prospects for the same project.

Each team will be required to post drafts of your FPR Power-point presentation to the course web site and solicit feedback from your peers and me before and after your presentation.

Due: Thought Leadership Article #3, by 3pm.

Due: Editorial Evaluation of Thought Leadership Article #2, by 3pm.

Week 14 thru 16

December 7 – December 20: Final M&E Field Project Presentations to Sponsors and Course Submissions

Please submit the following documents for course completion:

1. Final Power-point Deck submitted to Project Sponsor (via posting to webCafé).
2. Project Addendum, including Project Time Table and Weekly Log.
3. Sponsor Evaluation Form (Team): Each team must submit a Sponsor Evaluation Form, outlining your team's efforts and success with respect to the M&E Field Project. This form will provide Project Sponsors an opportunity to make statements about (1) what benefits have been attained, (2) what recommendations have been taken and what benefits are expected to be attained, (3) what recommendations plan to be taken, and (4) what recommendations are not likely to be taken plan and why. The Sponsor Evaluation Form summarizes what value your Project Sponsor gained as a result of your M&E Field Project.
4. Each team member must submit to me a Peer Ratings Evaluation Form.

Due: Editorial Evaluation of Thought Leadership Article #3, by 3pm.

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT FIELD PROJECTS

Project Considerations and Administration Tips

Learning means taking risks, trying new roles, and shaping your own experience, but also developing leadership skills by learning to work effectively with very diverse teammates. The test of teamwork and communication skills in this course is dramatic, but not as threatening as it would be in the workplace, because a mistake is not going to cost you your job. In anticipation of project management questions, I have highlighted some considerations and tips that might be helpful to making your project experience efficient and effective.

Project Costs: The largest and perhaps only cost of a Wharton M&E Project to the project sponsor is in management's time and attention. I've asked that sponsors contribute executive and staff time; supply needed information, financials and other internal data; and (if necessary) provide office space, communications and computing facilities should the students need to work on site during the project term. Additionally, if there are any out-of-pocket expenses related to the project, project teams should estimate them in their Project Engagement Plan and agree upon them with you during their Project Engagement Plan presentation.

Data and Confidentiality: Access to pertinent nonpublic information may be crucial to a successful project and, as such, I've asked sponsors to provide the student teams with any pertinent external and internal data related to the business and project focus, including detailed financial information as requested. Confidentiality of a sponsor's nonpublic information is important to all participants. All student teams agree to restrict disclosure of confidential information and may, indeed, be required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Project Sponsor.

Project Success Factors: A sponsor's willingness to have the team question the organization's assumptions and consider new avenues of exploration, I believe, is a key element to a project's success. Feedback is an important part of this process, including feedback between the team and the sponsor and faculty member, as well as feedback between the sponsor and the faculty advisor. Sponsors involve high-level executives in regular meetings with the team in order to provide ongoing feedback in a collaborative environment. During these exchanges, the sponsors evaluate the quality of the project's findings and recommendations and its progress according to stated objectives. In addition to this periodic oral feedback, partners complete a written evaluation at the project's midpoint and again following the final presentation.

Project Administration

1. A contact person should be chosen by each team so when the sponsor or myself needs to contact the team, they will know whom to contact. (This does not mean that the other students should avoid contact with the client and instructor... It just means use your judgment.)
2. Schedule a regular weekly meeting time with your team members outside of class and bi-weekly meetings with me and the project sponsor.
3. Call me any day. Please give me advance notice when you want to schedule meetings outside of class time.
4. In the real world, consultants keep a log of the time spent on the project with a description of what they did. I suggest that you do this and make it available for the members of your team and me if needed.
5. Put drafts of your reports on the course website, starting as early as possible. The website should have a private section (for review by team members) and a public section (to obtain feedback from the peers, sponsors and me).
6. Conference calls must be schedule more than 24 hours in advance and should be held at the MBA Conference Room in Hunstman Hall... Details to follow.

Project Management Advice

1. Prepare a schedule (with deadlines) upon your initial meeting wit your Project Sponsor. Do this once the scope of your project is agreed upon and do it with your Sponsor.
2. Start working on the project early or it will get out of hand. Force yourselves to meet your deadlines.
3. Communicate effectively during large class meetings. Use transparencies or PowerPoint to help the rest of the class. This provides an additional opportunity to get their input and make your project most effective.
4. Schedule appointments with your Project Sponsors well in advance and meet as often as necessary.
5. Communicate with me as often as necessary, so you don't go astray.
6. Start computer work early.

7. You may not use Wharton stationery or imply that your project is "a Wharton study" (which implies administrative consent). You may identify yourselves as Wharton students doing a class project for a sponsor. You must say it is for a sponsor; to do less misleads the respondent. This will cut down cooperation, but anything less is unethical. Avoid giving the sponsor's name as this may bias responses. If pressed, you may state: "I'm not in a position to say."
8. No matter what your problem, it is likely that someone has done relevant research. Please do literature reviews. The library's reference area is useful for that. On occasion, Google searches are useful.
9. Start writing your reports and planning your presentations EARLY. Writing will help you to formulate the problem, aid group communication, and get feedback from others.
10. Try to set up a process or procedure to explicitly monitor your task completion and your accomplishment of objectives.
11. Experiment with your ideas and debate them with your team members and your project Sponsor. Be creative and energetic in your approach. Focus on the progress that you have made in trying new things, not on what might go wrong. Mistakes are a natural part of the process.

Project Meetings

1. **Please do not come late to individual meeting and class meetings. Attendance is required, although on days when we have "Individual team meetings" – I am flexible about when and where to meet within reason.**
2. **If you must miss an individual team meeting or a class meeting, please let me (and your team) know well beforehand.**

Basis of Project Evaluation

Project evaluation for each team member will be based on:

1. Sponsor, Faculty and Peer evaluation of Project Engagement, Status and Final reports and presentations. Forms will be provided to complete after each presentation, with the weighting of the evaluation as follows: Sponsor (50%), Faculty (35%), Peer (15%).
2. Team Member Evaluations of Individual Contributions: Each student will be asked to evaluate the performance of his/her peers by completing a peer rating

form that will provide for written evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of team members. This evaluation is optional.

3. Instructor Evaluation of Project Engagement, Status and Final reports and presentations. Each team will be provided detailed feedback throughout each stage of the course.

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT FIELD PROJECTS

Important Dates and Guidelines:

Class begins on Wednesday, September 5th from 3-6pm.

Final project teams will be formed by Friday, September 7th. Each team will have a designated team leader who will be provided sponsor contact information and arrange with sponsor contact all relevant meetings. I will discuss resumes and interests of team members with sponsor contacts to ensure skills meet project needs and also the project satisfies team members' interests.

Project lasts 14 academic weeks, ending no earlier than December 8th and no later than December 19th, and requires executive involvement in at least four key meetings:

1. An **initial kickoff meeting**, sometime during Week 2 of the course – ideally, the **Week of September 10th**. Each team meets with the sponsor in the first week, along with the faculty advisor, to become acquainted with the organization, its industry, products, services and culture. Participating executives give an introduction to the company and discuss the prevailing issues. This may be a two-hour meeting, depending on the agenda.
2. A **Project Engagement Plan Presentation and Meeting**, during Week 2 or Week 3 of the course – **ideally on Wednesday, October 3rd**. The team presents a detailed letter of understanding that summarizes the project focus, research plan, time schedule, expenses, information needs and other resources needed to complete the project. The meeting is a venue for the negotiation of detailed parameters for the project. All parties must agree upon this letter of understanding.
3. An **Interim Progress Report**, during Week 8 of the course – ideally **on Wednesday, October 24th**. The team presents to senior management a progress report detailing the status of their project, including outstanding project requirements.
4. **A Final Project Presentation** during week 14 of the course – ideally **on December 5th**. The team delivers its findings and product strategy recommendations.

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Fall Semester 2007

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Tentative Project Sponsors - 2007

- 1. MySpace (Santa Monica, California)**
- 2. Warner Bros. Online (Burbank, California)**
- 3. Wynn Resorts, LP. (Las Vegas, Nevada)**
- 4. Turner Broadcasting, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia)**
- 5. Variety Magazine (Los Angeles, California)**
- 6. Jib-Jab Media, Inc. (Venice, California)**
- 7. Ruckus Network (New York, New York)**
- 8. United Talent Agency (Beverly Hills, California)**
- 9. WXPB (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)**
- 10. The William Morris Agency (Beverly Hills, California)**