Business Consulting is an innovative final-year subject within the University of Melbourne’s Bachelor of Commerce. An opportunity for your organisation to host a student consulting team and add value to your business.

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**Business Consulting** is a final-year Bachelor of Commerce subject that brings high-achieving students and industry professionals together. Student consulting teams work on a 10 week project to apply their skills and collective knowledge in completing business projects of strategic importance for industry, community service and government organisations. Teams produce a professional consulting report analysing the business challenge and proposing courses of action for the client organisation’s consideration.

Melbourne Bachelor of Commerce students are some of the best undergraduates in Australia. They bring powerful analytical capabilities derived from their commerce studies and a knowledge of research-proven strategic and operational responses to business challenges and opportunities to the project.

Previous clients have reported that student teams have performed exceptionally well: the quality of their work is high, their analysis is strong and their proposals are often implemented. Many clients request student teams on a regular basis.

**HOW BUSINESS CONSULTING WORKS**

After your project proposal has been accepted, your organisation will be assigned a team of students who will spend one half day per week at your organisation over a ten week period during a semester. Extensive time is also spent conducting research and analysis as their platform for the formulation and presentation of recommendations. Placements commence in March and August of each year.

The project work forms part of the students’ studies. It is undertaken at no cost to the client organisation. The University’s insurance policy covers the students whilst on placements. The students are supported in their work by the Subject Director through a series of lectures and seminars on topics such as extended research methods, consultancy and project management, and best practice business presentation.

**BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANISATION**

You gain access to additional resources to address an issue or an idea that has strategic or significant operational implications and which needs focus and commitment by staff who may not easily be redeployed. A team of high achieving students offers that focus and commitment, as well as an energetic and analytical approach to the project.

In addition to having specific projects completed at no cost, client organisations have an ideal way to identify talented potential employees, as well as experiencing the quality of analytical skills and work attainable from University of Melbourne students.

Intellectual property in the project report is owned solely by the client organisation. Confidentiality is seriously regarded, with written agreements often being established by all parties.

**THE CONSULTING PROCESS**

Students consult with a wide range of people within and outside the organisation (as necessary) to gather and analyse information prior to the preparation of a professional level consulting report of their findings – including the information on which their recommendations are based.

The team usually requires access to one or more senior staff who are ‘championing’ the project.

The comprehensive report forms a major component of the subject’s assessment and is delivered to the client organisation at the conclusion of the semester.

Students are assisted in the consulting process by the Subject Director who provides counselling, advice and direction regarding the project. The subject is administered by the Capstone Studies Coordinator.

**EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS PROJECTS**

- Strategic marketing of service products
- Technology and biomedical commercialisation
- Business strategy formulation
- Business planning
- Human resource policy and procedures analysis
- Supply chain management and evaluation
- Research/analysis of training packages
- Market research and analysis
- Marketing communications planning and analysis
- Financial management and performance measurement
- Business software research and evaluation
- Product range expansion analysis and recommendation
CLIENT REQUIREMENTS
Having identified and proposed a suitable business project, a client should provide:

- work space for the student group (approx. half a day each week for ten weeks)
- allocation of a senior executive as a facilitator to assist the student group in working effectively within the organisation and with sourcing internal information. Please note that the facilitator’s role is a limited one, as students are expected to be self directed.
- a briefing for students on your organisation’s Health and Safety procedures.

Many clients choose to provide written references for the students on completion of the project.

FEATURES OF A SUITABLE PROJECT
It is important that the projects be of strategic importance to the future of the organisation or have a significant and valued operational impact. Projects are most often based around a single question and must be achievable in the timeframe allowed.

The Subject Director discusses the project scope, definition and skills required with the host organisation to determine the suitability of the project.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS
Students selected for this subject have attained excellent academic results, demonstrating a broad range of skills to support them in undertaking the projects. These include:

- research (including social and market research) and analysis
- problem solving
- evaluating information and developing informative literature
- report writing.

Students will provide a brief CV which, in conjunction with information about their previous studies, are matched to the skills and experience required. Flexibility and negotiation between students, the organisation and the Subject Director are essential to establish availability and expectations.

By successfully completing this subject, students gain invaluable experience in learning how to operate effectively within the workplace environment.

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS
“It has been a pleasure to have the students this semester. They have been extremely organised, motivated, polite, well presented and totally reliable. They have produced an excellent report which they presented to a group of Committee for Melbourne Board Members and member organisations. Congratulations team on an excellent job!”

Susan Vale
Policy Director, Committee for Melbourne

“The work that went into sourcing information and bringing together this report was outstanding. The students started from a zero level and the way they organised themselves, the approaches they made to people they’d never met and the information they unearthed was brilliant. It was a delight to have these students here. They worked well as a team, they each carried their fair share of the work load and I sense that they really leveraged off each others’ strengths.”

Peter Deliopoulos
General Manager, GS Group Pty Ltd

“The recommendations were outstanding and the presentation content and style matched this. The best I have seen. I would have been thrilled if I paid a consultancy for it and I told them in front of the Board!”

Bruce Anderson
Managing Director, Australia, Lee Hecht Harrison (Adecco Group)
Board Member, Kildonan Uniting Care

“The team’s work was incredibly thorough, absolutely relevant, fiercely useful and on brief. This report will be an asset to Taboo and on behalf of the whole company I thank the team for their dedication to the task, investment of time and critical evaluation. We will use the findings in this study to collaborate with Marketing and Brand Managers alike to better implement our social media activities and demonstrate the value our campaigns can bring to the greater communications mix.”

Richard Hack
Strategy Director, The Taboo Group
Further information

To become a client organisation, or to find out more about this exciting program and how it can benefit your organisation, please contact:

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