

Evening MBA Multidisciplinary Action Projects

Corporate Sponsor Guide 2009



The Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan is a pioneer of action-based learning. This approach to business education continuously creates relevant, challenging ways to connect students with the world of practice. For Ross MBAs, the cornerstone of action-based learning is the Multidisciplinary Action Project (MAP). Through MAP, teams of four to six students work closely with a partner company to address a high-level, wide-ranging issue of importance to that company. Projects are sponsored by private corporations and other institutions around the world, including the employers of Ross students.

MAP fulfills a dual mission:

- Delivers data-driven solutions to the sponsoring company's complex business issue.
- Prepares students for successful careers by providing valuable professional development.

Since 1992, MAP students have completed more than 1,260 projects at more than 640 organizations worldwide.

The MAP Process

Formerly known as the Interdisciplinary Project Course (IPC), MAP is a 14-week elective for Evening MBA students. Students conduct six weeks of preliminary research and analysis, gather primary data on site for one week, and continue with seven weeks of further data collection and analysis. At the end of the engagement, the team provides an oral presentation and submits a detailed written report.

What Makes a Good MAP Proposal?

Each year, we accept MAP proposals from sponsors looking to solve problems, identify new processes, or target opportunities for growth. Successful MAP proposals:

- address a real challenge or opportunity that has no existing or obvious solution;
- demand a set of actionable recommendations;
- are important to the company and have strong support from senior-level management;
- require a multidisciplinary approach;
- may be completed in 14 weeks.

Types of Projects

- Business strategy formulation and/or competitive analysis with industry
- Market entry, product line extension, or global expansion strategies
- Joint venture, merger, or acquisition process
- Business plan development
- Financial modeling and analysis
- Operations management and/or performance review
- E-business strategies
- Marketing plans
- Product launch and distribution
- Customer relationship management

Selection of Past Evening MBA MAP Sponsors

- **Cooper-Standard Automotive**—Evaluate options to further develop relationships with Japanese OEMs
- **DTE**—Benchmark utility company costs in Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain
- **Esperion**—Develop a business case for biopharmaceutical manufacturing, including capital requirements and market analysis
- **Ford Motor Company**—Undertake strategic development to leverage existing Ford-IT services in India and take advantage of cost and process capabilities there
- **Jervis Webb**—Create a business plan to market SmartLoader, a piece of equipment designed to automate warehouse operations, to a new customer base
- **Johnson Controls**—Develop a global strategy for the application of a new process opportunity across its business
- **Medivur**—Initiate a market-entry strategy for a disposable multifunctional catheter used in cardiovascular procedures and general anesthesia
- **Owens-Illinois**—Analyze future growth opportunities in contract manufacturing and assembly
- **Rajiv Gandhi Foundation**—Produce business strategies to supply affordable primary education for underprivileged children in India
- **Siemens**—Develop a business plan for an expanded technical training program

Sponsor Benefits

Sponsoring organizations enjoy tremendous gains from participation in MAP, such as:

- unbiased findings and recommendations from a team of MBA students at one of the world's elite business schools;
- a strengthening of the relationship between the sponsoring organization and the Ross School;
- an opportunity to work closely with future business leaders who have diverse skills, backgrounds, and experiences;
- exposure to the newest business tools, techniques, and theories;
- an action-oriented learning process for the team and the sponsoring organization.

MAP Timeline

July

- Sponsor proposals are due July 15.

August/September

- Teams are formed. Sponsor is notified of team assignment on August 15.
- Sponsor and team have initial meeting to outline the project's goals and expectations.
- Letter of engagement is written by the team with the sponsor's agreement.
- Countries of travel are identified, and the visa process is started.
- Team begins background research and identifies relevant interview subjects.
- Team may begin conducting local and/or telephone interviews.

October

- Background research continues.
- Team develops interview outlines and contacts interview subjects for the travel portion of the project.
- Local and telephone interviews continue.
- Team travels to relevant subjects to conduct primary research in late October.

November

- Team consolidates research, begins analysis, and identifies tentative conclusions.
- Team identifies gaps in research and conducts appropriate follow-up.

December

- Team finalizes research and completes analysis.
- Final team presentation to the sponsor occurs in mid-December.
- Final report is due the last Wednesday of the semester.

Sponsorship FAQ

Project Summary Form

Sponsors are asked to submit a brief project summary form describing the business issue or problem and the geographic base. The summary should contain a set of objectives and goals for the project that can be made publicly available. The form is located on the following page.

Project Scope

The student team will work with the faculty adviser and company liaison to further refine the project scope prior to starting the engagement.

Confidentiality

All projects are confidential unless permission for release is obtained from the sponsor. Non-disclosure agreements may be arranged at the sponsor's request.

Sponsorship Costs

In recent years, expenses have varied from below \$5,000 to \$15,000 per team. Actual expenses depend on the team's size and travel destinations. Evening MBA MAP costs include team travel, lodging, per diem, documentation, and communication expenses.

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Identify a dedicated and engaged project liaison.
- Supply relevant data, which may be proprietary, to the MAP team.
- Arrange for the MAP team to interview key personnel in the sponsoring organization.
- Reimburse project-related expenses, including travel, for the MAP team.

Final Deliverables

The team provides an oral presentation either at the sponsor's location or via audio/video conferencing. The written report is provided at the end of the term.

Faculty Role

Each team is assigned a primary faculty adviser. The faculty team determines the students' grades. The sponsor's viewpoint is considered in the grading process.

Contact Information

If you would like to find out more about becoming a sponsor, please contact:

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