

# Part-Time MBA Multidisciplinary Action Projects

## Sponsor Guide 2010-11



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 MBA students, 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; and
- Prepares students for successful careers by providing valuable professional development.

### The MAP Process

Since 1992, MAP students have completed more than 1,500 projects at more than 700 organizations worldwide. MAP is a 14-week course for Part-time 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 written report detailing their recommendations along with the data and analysis to support them.

### 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 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; and
- 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 Recent MBA MAP Sponsors

- DTE – Benchmark utility company costs in Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain
- Ford Motor Company – Undertake strategic development to leverage existing Ford IT services in India to take advantage of cost and process capabilities
- Coll-Med – Assess market potential for new burn dressing device and entry into the US market
- NuStep – Founded in 1987 with a focus on leading-edge, ergonomic wellness equipment – Develop a marketing plan to capitalize on opportunities in 3 major European markets and recommend a go to market strategy
- Siemens – Develop a business plan for an expanded technical training program
- Kumi Hospital, Kumi, Uganda – Identify methods, including metrics, to improve employee morale, monitor key activities, and provide guidance to staff

## Sponsor Benefits

Sponsoring organizations enjoy tremendous gains from participation in MAP including:

- Unbiased findings and recommendations from a team of MBA students at one of the world’s leading 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 latest business tools, techniques, and theories; and
- An action-oriented learning process for the team and the sponsoring organization.

<b>MAP Timeline 2010-2011</b>		
<b>Evening MBA</b>	<b>Weekend MBA</b>	<b>Team Activity</b>
July 15, 2010	Nov. 15, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor proposals are due</li> </ul>
August 15, 2010	Dec. 15, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams are formed; sponsor notified of team assignments</li> </ul>
September 11, 2010	January 8, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team meeting with sponsor to outline goals and expectations</li> <li>• Letter of engagement drafted and agreed upon</li> <li>• Travel identified and visa process begun as required</li> <li>• Begin research phase and identifies interview subjects</li> <li>• Develop interview outlines</li> <li>• Team may begin conducting local and/or telephone interviews</li> </ul>
October Travel: Oct. 24-30, 2010	February Travel: Feb. 28-Mar. 4, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research continues</li> <li>• Conduct travel portion of the project including in-person interviews and primary research</li> </ul>
November	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate research, begin analysis and identify initial conclusions</li> <li>• Identify gaps in research and follow up appropriately</li> </ul>
No later than Dec. 16, 2010	April 15-16, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize research and complete analysis</li> <li>• Team presentation to the sponsor toward the end of the month</li> <li>• Final report due the last Wednesday of the semester</li> </ul>

## Sponsorship FAQ

### Project Summary Form

Sponsors are asked to submit 1) a brief description of the company background and how this project fits with the long term goals of the company and 2) a project summary describing the business issue or problem and the location of team travel (if known). 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 organization 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 size of the team and travel destinations. 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 required travel for the MAP team

### Final Deliverables

The team provides an oral presentation 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 determines the student's grades with consideration of the sponsor's viewpoint.

### Contact Information

For additional information about becoming a sponsor, please contact the Part-time MBA Program Office.

Debbie Check  
Program Associate, Part-time MBA Programs  
Phone: 734.763.7233  
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Ross Part-time MBA Program  
[rossptmba@umich.edu](mailto:rossptmba@umich.edu)

**Project Summary Form** (Please complete this form using one form per project.)

Sponsor Information

Sponsoring Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Liaison Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below you agree to sponsor a project that will include payment of travel costs for the team.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Background (Attach company background and project summary as a separate form if you prefer)

Project Summary (Publicly available data; do not include any confidential information)

Country or Countries (if known):

Return this form via mail, email or fax:

Debbie Check  
Program Associate, Part-time MBA Programs  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business  
University of Michigan  
701 Tappan Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

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Fax  
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