

Using Live Cases in Problem-Based Entrepreneurship Learning

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial education can span a mix of learning modes. The traditional approach would be to study the different facets of starting a new enterprise or organization, write papers, and take quizzes. The problem-based learning (PBL) approach includes students doing entrepreneurial tasks, developing business analysis skills, and taking steps to launch a new product, service, or venture. This paper reviews how students entering the Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor handle a live entrepreneurial challenge called the “Live Case” in the first core course of the minor (ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership). The Live Case approach brings an entrepreneur or business person into the classroom to present a current real world problem, and student teams have approximately nine days to understand the problem, gather information, develop alternative solutions, and present their recommendations back to the entrepreneur. In addition, the paper reviews how ENGR 310 evolved to include the Live Case approach, examples of Live Cases, and a ten-step process to help other educators who would like to use this teaching and learning approach.

Introduction

One of the challenges of teaching and learning entrepreneurial skills and knowledge is that the classroom environment is by nature “academic” and is typified by silo knowledge delivery, performance graded with “A” through “F,” controlled time tasks, lectures, and tests to evaluate knowledge gained. This is quite the opposite from the business environment in which the entrepreneur uses broad knowledge bases, often deals with non-predictable time events (fire drills), there are definitive winners and losers, and success is defined by bottom-line results or getting the product or service to market in a timely fashion. The challenge is how to create an academic environment that more closely resembles the entrepreneurial business environment so that students experience and understand the problems they will face if they choose an entrepreneurial or intrapreneurial career path.

One way to bring the realities of entrepreneurship into the classroom is to have an entrepreneur bring a business challenge into the classroom as a “Live Case.” The Live Case approach is defined by having an entrepreneur or business person come into the classroom and present a real world problem his or her com-

pany faces. In approximately a nine-day period, student teams must provide detailed recommendations to solve the problem.

Over approximately a three-year period, the faculty of Penn State University's Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor has used this approach in the first core course (ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership) of the minor. For non-business majors, the minor consists of four three-credit required courses (ENGR 310, ENGR 407 – Technology Based Entrepreneurship, ENGR 411 – Business Basics, and ENGR 497A – E-SHIP Capstone) and six credits of electives. For business students, a course named Introduction to Engineering Design Process (QMM 492) is substituted for the Business Basics course. Figure 1 shows the Minor core course sequence.

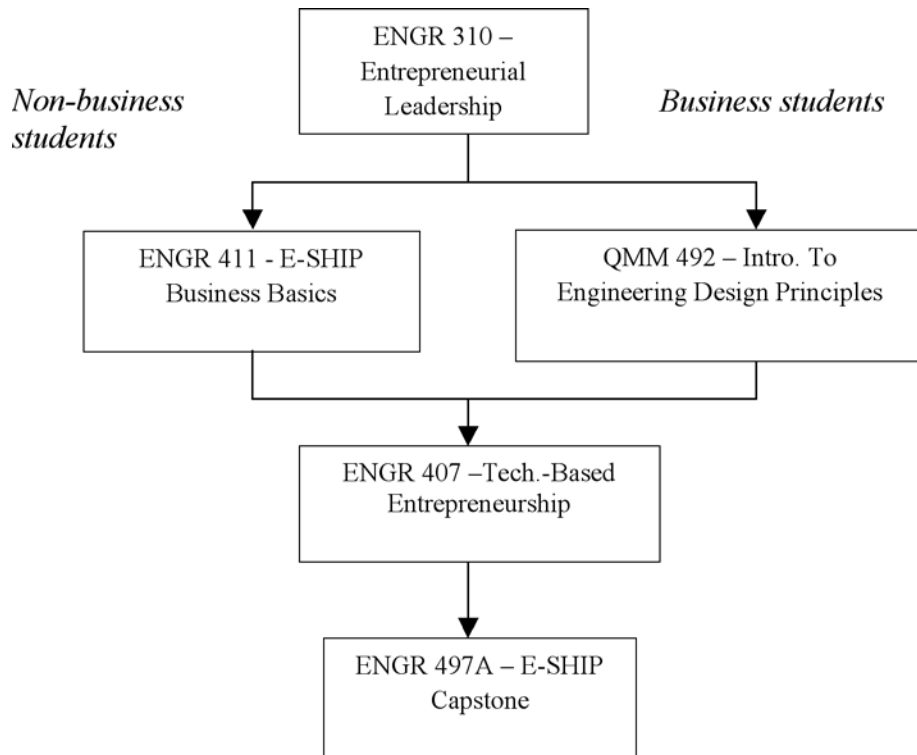


Figure 1. E-SHIP Minor core course sequence begins with ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership (more information at <http://e-ship.psu.edu>)

ENGR 310 presents student teams with real-world business problems that have incomplete information. The teams are expected to determine what they don't know, collect information, derive a solution, and professionally present that solution to the entrepreneur in approximately a ten-day period. In addition, the entrepreneur or business leader evaluates the teams' solutions and declares the "winner" and the "losers." The ENGR 310 teaching team has found that the approach provides numerous benefits, including helping students build skills in identifying and filling information gaps to make decisions, creating and delivering a quality presentation, and working under a tight timeframe. Also, the opportunity for students to get to know the entrepreneur and his/her company is invaluable in creating networks and understanding the personality of the entrepreneur.

We have also learned that Live Cases can be quite challenging for the faculty and the entrepreneur, including selecting the problem, providing students sufficient background information, managing the informa-

tion flow between the entrepreneur and student teams, and creating a fair grading rubric that doesn't violate the spirit of the entire effort. The rubric defines that the Live Case project is a results-based outcome determined by the entrepreneur who selects the team that they believe provided the solution that will do the most to solve the problem.

This paper examines examples of successful and unsuccessful live cases. In addition, templates, such as a "Live Case Outline" (to be provided to the entrepreneur), and a grading rubric are provided in the Appendices. In some instances, participating entrepreneurs are leaders of larger established businesses with innovative business structures, and therefore are not technically entrepreneurs. For simplicity, they are also referred to as entrepreneurs.

Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor: Background

In April 2002, the Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor was academically approved at Penn State/University Park. The impetus for the minor came from a desire to better prepare undergraduate students to be innovation leaders, and be aware of the rewards and challenges of creating a job or a new product. We were extremely confident that Penn State was providing students with a world-class education, but little was being done to prepare them for what life would be like inside a Fortune 500 company or to develop one of their own ideas into a successful start-up. In fact, we received direct feedback from companies who routinely recruited Penn State Engineers, asking us to focus on developing students' entrepreneurial skill sets. This included General Electric, who provided initial funding in 2000 to develop entrepreneurship courses that became core courses in the minor.

With the overriding objective of providing students from across Penn State with real world business experiences, we developed a set of supporting objectives, which included:

- **Cross-Functional Teams** – We decided that much of the work would be team-based, rather than individual efforts, and actively recruited engineering, business, and information science & technology (IST) students, as well as students from other majors. Our underlying assumption is that successful entrepreneurs must be able to function within and manage cross-functional teams.
- **Problem-Based Learning** – We wanted students to be continuously exposed to real-world, business oriented problems and have them develop analytical and decision making skills that can help them solve multifaceted problems with ambiguities and unknowns.
- **Experiential Learning** – We felt to maximize learning, students needed to experience the problems firsthand as much as possible. The more they got their "hands dirty" in terms of working through new product/process/venture problems and dealing with the consequences of their decisions, the greater the learning experience.

Knowing what needed to be achieved, the leadership of the College of Engineering determined that to effectively deliver the planned curriculum, experienced entrepreneurs must be involved. Several individuals with this background were recruited to lead and teach within the minor, including the authors of this paper. Their experience included starting technology based companies, developing and introducing new products, including handling IP issues, and building and leading the organization. These individuals were complemented with more traditional academic faculty who had experience working on their own ideas toward a commercial end.

Engineering Entrepreneurship Minor: Early Days

As you would expect, the ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership course content in the first few years of the minor was heavily influenced by the experiences of the participating entrepreneurs who were now instructors. These individuals created case studies based upon their personal entrepreneurial experiences.

Course content also included classic Harvard Business Review (HBR)-type cases, selected literature based upon ongoing research in the field, and analysis of real-world events as they occurred. This approach worked well, and the minor quickly developed an excellent reputation. Students were certainly getting a much greater exposure to the real world of business and specifically entrepreneurship. Also, because the instructors had just left the business world, their personal cases were “current” and students viewed them more as entrepreneurs/business people than academic instructors.

ENGR 310 Evolution Step 1: The Speaker Series

Over the next few years, a concern began to grow that some of the “personal cases” were becoming dated and were becoming similar to any other case study being delivered in a business or MBA type program. They no longer reflected a “current” problem. Also, though the ENGR 310 instructors were still involved in the real world of business as consultants, they were increasingly being identified as academic instructors because of their years of involvement with the program. It is important to emphasize that we do not believe that this is a bad thing. Academic instructors can play a critical role in teaching entrepreneurship, but we believed that the initial determination to get active entrepreneurs involved in delivering course content was correct and we needed to find a way to make sure that continued.

Our first pass at solving the problem was the development of a “Speaker Series” with active entrepreneurs coming on campus to give a talk to a large group of students. Speaker Series events were scheduled during non-class hours so that, in theory, the most students possible could benefit. The Speaker Series lasted for approximately three years, with two to three events per semester. Though many entrepreneurs participated, with the great majority providing a truly valuable benefit to our students, this approach didn’t really solve the problem. Attendance was always an issue: students are so tightly scheduled that they often can’t or won’t find the time to attend events of this type, unless it is mandated as part of an entrepreneurship class. As with many colleges and universities, the number of events/activities that are available to students is large, students work part-time jobs, and some students commute to college. Also, because the Speaker Series events are given in a larger venue than our typical class size of 25-30, it does take on more of a lecture format and it certainly doesn’t lend itself to the type of direct interaction that we wanted to provide. The university, and the minor, continues to offer a great Speaker Series that features business leaders and specifically successful entrepreneurs, but this approach did not address our objectives in terms of delivering compelling course content that actively engaged students in solving real-world business problems.

ENGR 310 Evolution Step 2: Entrepreneur in the Classroom

The Speaker Series did validate the value of having active entrepreneurs directly involved with students, including students hearing their personal stories. To make the entrepreneur/student interaction more direct, we made the decision to have entrepreneurs come and speak to individual ENGR 310 classes to tell their stories. For the most part, this approach was and continues to be successful. However, it is a continuous challenge to get compelling speakers in the quantity we need to cover the classes in the minor and, unfortunately, some students “take the day off” during these sessions, sitting back, listening but not really engaging.

Though the individual class approach was an improvement over the Speaker Series, it did not address our objectives to the full extent. But it was during one of these sessions that the Live Case idea came to light. In 2005, the president of a State College, PA-based electronics firm spoke to one of the ENGR 310 classes. As he was asked to do by the instructor, he talked about why he had started his own company, what his life as an entrepreneur was like, etc. About twenty minutes into his talk, he stopped in mid-stream and said to the students, “I appreciate the opportunity to be here but frankly I am really focused on a big problem that we are having at the company right now and maybe you can help me.” He proceeded to explain that his com-

pany was dealing with a problem related to roll-out of a new software package that would replace the an existing product, and that some of his customers were very unhappy that they would no longer receive the company's full support for the older version. He then engaged the students in brainstorming out different potential solutions, including discussing the pros and cons of each idea from the customer's perspective and from his company's perspective. The students, regardless of major, were immediately engaged and it was by far the most active, productive class session of that type in many years. Not only were the students excited about what had happened, so was the entrepreneur, who genuinely felt that he had received some ideas that he could act upon. The use of Live Cases in the ENGR 310 course sprang from this spontaneous experience.

Live Cases: Who Has Been Involved

We have been using Live Cases in our ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership class for approximately three years. ENGR 310 is the first class in the core course sequence in the minor and we believe that students need to have this experience early in their career to gain an understanding of the entrepreneur's life and the challenges they may face. Live Cases are sometimes used in other classes in the minor, but there are a number of challenges in delivering them effectively that unfortunately limit their use. Those challenges are discussed subsequent sections of this paper.

Over the three-year period (2006 to present), we have had more than a dozen different entrepreneurs/ companies involved that reflect a wide range of industries, technologies, and sizes of business. One of the largest companies that has participated frequently is Oldcastle, Inc., a multi-national corporation and one of the world's leading suppliers of building materials. Their interest in participating is similar to General Electric's original objective of finding more entry-level engineers who are knowledgeable about business and think and act in an entrepreneurial manner. Oldcastle was also interested in getting help with solving various problems related to marketing and logistics.

On the other end of the spectrum is a State College, PA restaurant named the "Waffle Shop" that has several locations near the University. The Waffle Shops are all extremely successful and known to the entire student population. One of the Waffle Shop's top managers asked for help in recruiting a more stable student workforce and exploring the potential of expanding to more locations. Other companies/ projects that have been presented as Live Cases include:

- NPC – This large custom design and print shop located in a rural PA town was having a problem attracting top-notch entry level talent to their company.
- Affinity Connection – This media company wanted help in determining the best approach to acquire a new customer base.
- Blue Mountain Quality Resources – This software qualification company wanted advice about how to phase in a new product without alienating users of the existing installed product.
- Videon-Central – This electronics company wanted advice as to what would be alternative markets for its existing products.
- Blue Swarf – This company was helping out PSU and its Dance Marathon charity related to children who have cancer and wanted help on how to promote a special raffle event.
- LionMenus – This on-line food ordering company, used in several college and university towns across the county, wanted help in developing a "viral marketing" campaign.

Live Cases: How It Works

The following provides a description of the basic steps in delivering a Live Case from the perspective of the course instructor. This same list will be addressed in the section to follow which covers lessons learned and

recommended best practices.

- 1) Find an entrepreneur that is willing to come to two ENGR 310 class sessions about 2 weeks apart and has a specific, bounded business problem that students from any major can understand.
- 2) Explain the process, with heavy emphasis on the time commitment.
- 3) Work with entrepreneur to develop the background information that students will need.
- 4) Divide students into teams of approximately five students, and provide background information prior to first session with the entrepreneur.
- 5) Entrepreneur makes his or her first appearance in class, provides background information on himself/herself, the company, and describes the Live Case challenge.
- 6) Establish rules of communication between the entrepreneur and students and discuss the grading rubric.
- 7) Entrepreneur makes second visit to class approximately nine days later, when the students deliver presentations in a five- to seven-minute format.
- 8) Entrepreneur determines the winner immediately at end of class or within a 24-hour period and provides detailed feedback for each team's solution and presentation quality.
- 9) Gather peer reviews from all students.
- 10) Grade students using established rubric and place emphasis on the selection made by the entrepreneur. Get formal feedback from the class and bring closure to the case.

Live Cases: Lessons Learned & Recommended Best Practices

The ten-step process outlined in the previous section has come about through intelligent trial and error. We have encountered our share of challenges over the years and believe that we are much closer to “getting it right” than ever before. The following sections expand on each step in the process and review successes, mistakes we have made, and what we believe are best practices in delivering Live Cases.

- 1) Find an entrepreneur that is willing to participate and has a problem that will work.

It has been relatively easy to find entrepreneurs who are interested in our minor and want to get involved. It hasn't been as easy to identify entrepreneurs who can commit to following this process. The first challenge is determining if the entrepreneur has a problem that the students can reasonably tackle in a nine-day period. It is common that the course instructor needs to talk through a number of problems with the entrepreneur until they find one that will work. The more that the problem requires “inside knowledge” of the company, its technology and processes, the more difficult it is for the students to experience positive outcomes. Typically, marketing, organizational development, and even some product management oriented problems do not require as much specific knowledge and work well. The best way to determine if the problem won't work is by how much background information you feel must be provided to students. If the required amount of background information is significant, course instructors may be setting themselves up for failure or significant work to support the Live Case. This is a critical issue. The basic premise of Live Cases is that the students grasp the problem within days and can offer solutions of actual potential use to the entrepreneur. If that isn't possible, you are better off finding another entrepreneur or defining another Live Case.

- 2) Explain the process, with heavy emphasis on the time commitment.

Entrepreneurs are very busy people. Typically, they are also very strong-willed, egocentric people who

may not follow directions that well. The course instructor needs to make the entrepreneur understand the time commitment involved: that they need to make two visits to the classroom and be available via email in between those visits. Because of the significant time commitment required, we have worked with companies that utilized more than one person to cover the in-class sessions. For example, the president of the company might make the first presentation, and then the VP of Marketing might attend the second class to judge the student presentations. This is not the ideal situation and should be avoided; something typically gets lost in translation between the two individuals. Make every effort to have the same person attend both class sessions. Also, the entrepreneur needs to understand that Live Cases is about the students working on a real-world problem for a significant grade in the class. We had one instance when the president of a division of a large company spent one hour and thirteen minutes talking about his background and the company, leaving only two minutes to describe the specific problem he wanted students to work on. This Live Case was effectively a failure: students were frustrated, the instructors had to fill in significant information, and the solutions presented by the students in most cases lacked depth and insight.

3) Work with the entrepreneur to develop the background information students will need.

Every problem requires providing the students with some background information. It may be as simple as providing direction to specific portions of the company's website or providing company literature. More often, it requires the development of specific company or business-segment information. The entrepreneur will typically develop the background information if the Instructor helps them determine a good problem and discuss what needs to be provided as background information.

4) Divide students into teams and provide background information.

There are many different and effective ways to divide students into teams. In ENGR 310, we make an effort to have the students work with all of their classmates during the course of a semester, so we are always putting together new team combinations. Our main recommendation is to limit the size of the team to six people (and ideally the number should be less). Teams with more than six students are more likely to be dysfunctional, with one or two students doing the bulk of the work and one or two doing very little work. Inform students that you will be collecting detailed peer reviews at the end of the competition to try and get everyone to participate as much as possible. With a class full of students interested in entrepreneurship, and with many seeing themselves as natural leaders, we have experienced several instances of team dysfunction that reflects the real-world. This includes a lack of communication, people not keeping their commitments, and in one case, an individual taking over and changing the entire group presentation without telling them. The look on the faces of his teammates as he made this new presentation was priceless, and the peer evaluation for the team was also memorable. Analyzing team dynamics and discussing it in the aftermath of the competition is a critical component of the learning process.

5) Entrepreneur makes his or her first appearance in class, provides background information on himself/herself, the company, and describes the Live Case challenge.

It is important that the entrepreneur spend time talking about his or her personal story; how and why he/she choose to start the business, the problems faced, and the failures experienced. This information is invaluable to students both in terms of their general education and in doing the work that will be required for the Live Case. But, as previously discussed, the emphasis has to be on the specific problem the students will be working on, including providing enough time to adequately explain the problem, review the background information, and answer questions both about the specific problem and the work to be done. To further the competitive aspect of the process, if possible, we set up time for each team to meet privately with the entrepreneur so that they can ask their specific questions without providing information to the other teams. We re-emphasize that this is a team competition, and there will be a single team selected as the

winner.

- 6) Establish rules of communication between the entrepreneur and students.

In the period between the two in-class sessions, students will have questions that should be addressed by the entrepreneur. In the first semesters of Live Cases in ENGR 310, we didn't always control the process well. The entrepreneur was deluged with emails and phone calls, and enthusiasm for the Live Case suffered. We now limit access to the entrepreneur between the two classes: each team can send no more than two emails to the entrepreneur between the two classes and the course instructor must be copied on those emails so that the communication can be monitored. Even with this approach, some of our more creative students have found ways to work around the rules. In one instance, students identified another person inside the company and contacted them to get information about the problem. The person contacted was more than happy to help and actually provided company shirts that the students of that team wore during their presentation. Unfortunately, the president of the company who had made the initial presentation often disagreed with his colleague and very much disagreed with the advice he provided to the students. The students believed they were sure to win because of the inside information they had, but it actually hurt them because of the relationship between the two individuals. It was a hard but valuable lesson for students to learn; they needed to know who they were really talking to and the influence that person might have or not have on the true decision-maker.

- 7) Entrepreneur makes second visit to class approximately nine days later, students deliver presentations in a five- to seven-minute format.

The key issue on this day is to control class time. ENGR 310 class periods are seventy-five minutes. We typically have five or six groups presenting, and we must account for set-up time between presentations, evaluation time for the entrepreneur between presentations, and of course time for questions and feedback. In the early semesters of Live Cases, instructors were not strict time managers, letting some teams go longer than they should, and we would literally run out of time. Providing equal time for all presentations is absolutely critical so the students feel that the process is fair. To that end, we often hold questions from the entrepreneur until all of the groups have presented so that no team has an unfair advantage. Students need to learn that in the real world, they will make time-restricted pitches both to potential investors and customers, and that they must be able to communicate the value of their ideas efficiently and concisely. This is a critical skill that the successful entrepreneur must possess.

- 8) Entrepreneur determines the winner immediately at end of class or within a 24-hour period and provides detailed feedback.

If possible, the ideal situation is for the entrepreneur to ask questions, review notes, provide feedback, and tell the students which team did the best job before the class is over. If the entrepreneur doesn't feel it is possible to do all this before the end of the session, including announcing a winner, and wants time to review his or her notes prior to making a final decision, the instructor must agree. We do not want to force a premature decision from the entrepreneur. It is important that the entrepreneur respond quickly, so that the instructor can provide feedback to the students about the bottom-line results as soon as possible. We often ask the entrepreneur to respond within a 24-hour period, so that we can provide the results to students no later than the next class. Instructors should not inject themselves into the judging process. The decision about "best team" is, first and foremost, made by the entrepreneur. If the course has a teaching assistant, the entrepreneur and the teaching assistant may review the presentations for a few minutes. The teaching assistant's goal is to keep things as simple as possible for the entrepreneur. For example, much better results have been achieved when we ask the entrepreneur to identify the top two teams, explain why they

came to that conclusion, and make a final choice on the winner.

9) Gather peer reviews from all students.

It is critical to understand student interactions within a team: who did quality work, who did not, and what problems occurred. We accomplish this by asking each student to write a peer review that includes assigning a letter grade to each member of the team, including himself/herself. Students are not comfortable doing this type of peer evaluation, but it is something they must do in almost all employment arrangements, so it is beneficial to their general education. Peer evaluations are also critical in the Live Case process because the instructor needs to fully understand what really happened inside these teams, both in terms of working through the issues and determining individual grades for the assignment. There have been many instances when a specific student, because of their individual contribution, did not receive a good grade even though they were a member of a top team. Reading and analyzing all of the reviews, and then working through some of the problems, requires a significant amount of time by the instructor, but it is an important part of the total Live Case learning experience for each student and adds credibility to the grading.

10) Grade students using established rubric and place emphasis on the selection made by the entrepreneur. Get formal feedback from the class and bring closure to the case.

A critical part of the Live Case process is to establish a winning team. The real-world aspect of this element of Live Cases is that one business gets the contract and the other players don't. This win-lose proposition is often difficult for students to accept. Students are accustomed to being rewarded for effort and relative grades (A, B, C, etc.) more than bottom-line results, and as prospective entrepreneurs, they must learn this lesson. This "bragging rights" position of #1 should be reinforced by the faculty. To fairly determine grades, we have developed a rubric (Appendix A) with a wide range of variables to measure the performance of a team. It may be helpful to the entrepreneur to review the rubric prior to judging the presentations so that they understand what the instructor feels is important and how you will be judging the students in terms of assigning grades. Our caution would be to not unduly influence the entrepreneur in that their determination should be focused on which group provided a recommendation that could truly solve the problem.

Conclusion

Live Cases has made a tremendous impact in helping us deliver a more real-world experience to entrepreneurship students. It has also facilitated students' learning on a wide range of critical issues faced by entrepreneurs, including building effective teams, working under a tight deadline, not having all of the critical information required, and making a professional presentation. Live Cases also builds important bridges to a network of entrepreneurs that can be invaluable to the students and the entrepreneurship program. Live Cases do require disciplined management by the course instructor, but the potential benefits are worth the effort and we strongly recommend that this approach be considered as part of any entrepreneurship curriculum.

Live Case Evaluation

Case Study:

Due Date:

Group # _____

Your group will develop a strategic plan to address the main questions of:

Group/Team Members

Scoring Rubric

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
Members present and dressed appropriately	0	6	8	10
Opening graphics and “hook” for presentation	1	6	8	10
Creativity/Solutions	1	6	8	10
Strategic Elements clearly identified	1	6	8	10
Effective Market Research	1	6	8	10
Owner receptivity	1	6	8	10
Flow of Presentation	1	6	8	10
Creativity and call to action	1	6	8	10
Overall Presentation	10	16	18	20

- A. Missing team members, incomplete work, disjointed, zero creativity, and presentation was last minute.
- B. Missing two or more team members, elementary work, missing or lacks continuity, little or no creativity and call to action is weak, and the general presentation is poor and unorganized.
- C. Missing only one team member, presentation transitions are good but not great, the dialogue has some minor flow issues, creativity is good and there is a call to action, and overall presentation is marginally disjointed (some members didn’t participate).
- D. All members are present, presentation has a clear opening, message, and closing, it looks “professional” and organized, the dialogue uses appropriate phrases, the presentation has a distinct flow and pace, the presentation has great creative aspects and gets the wow factor, and the overall presentation is well rehearsed and entertaining (sold the client on the idea).

APPENDIX B

Sample syllabus for ENGR 310 – Entrepreneurial Leadership

ENGR 310: ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP Fall 2009

“Entrepreneurship – The lifestyle”

Meeting Information: Leonhard 103 Tuesdays & Thursdays: 4:15 – 5:30

Instructor: **Philip G. Boyer** Office 213-L Hammond

Email: PGB10@psu.edu

Telephone: PSU Voice: (814) 863-1550

Cell: (717) 649-0797

Office Hours: 9:00 – 11:00 Mon. & Wed.; 1:00 – 3:30 Tues. & Thurs. Also by appointment

Teaching Assistant: **Ravi Patel** rqp5013@gmail.com

Course Overview

The course is the first class in the Entrepreneurship Minor. It provides you with an introduction to the primary concepts and principles related to starting your own business, as well as applying these principles within a large organization or company. The course aspires to help you become a successful entrepreneur/intrapreneur.

This is a problem-based learning course: learning-by-doing is the modus operandi. Class lectures are minimized: We will coach and mentor you as you work through various real-world problems and exercises.

This is an interactive, high-energy course that requires students to show-up every day for class ready to participate and contribute. Emphasis is placed on oral and written presentations, mastery of course material in a down-to-earth, practical way, and cooperative learning. As a student in this class . . . *you must assume personal responsibility for your learning.*

Course Goals

- Create a personal inventory of strengths and weaknesses.
- Create a vision for what you want to achieve both short and long term.
- Develop skills in terms of problem solving & decision making in a business context.
- Learn to build and lead a team in a competitive environment.
- Learn how to make professional presentations.
- Learn business basics as it relates to starting and running a new business.
- Understand how and why individuals become successful in the business world.

Course Texts

- Business Week, WSJ, NYT, Fortune, etc.
- Hand-outs of selected articles (to be provided by instructor).

Course Policies

Students must:

1. Participate in class.
2. Attend class – more than 3 unexcused absences and you lose a letter grade

Grading Guidelines: (subject to modification by the professor)

Participation/Attendance	90 points (additional 9 points available)
Small Class Assignments	100 points
Personal Business Plan	100 points
Case Study 1	100 points
Case Study 2	100 points

A	93-100%	456 to 490 points
A-	90-92.9%	441 to 455 points
B+	87-89.9%	426 to 440 points
B	83-86.9%	407 to 425 points
B-	80 to 82.9%	392 to 406 points
C+	77 to 79.9%	377 to 391 points
C	70 to 76.9%	343 to 376 points
D	60 to 69.9%	294 to 342 points

Expected Outcomes

- That the class will be a truly unique experience.
- That you will have learned the very basics about business and being an entrepreneur.
- That you will have learned more about yourself and what you want to do with your life.
- You will enhance your presentation skills and the ability to react to real-world customers.
- Your personal business plan will provide you a detailed roadmap of reflections, finances, goals, objectives, and time-frames for the future.