Semester Project for Engineering Management

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IMSE 905
Semester Project – Engineering Management

This is an *open-ended* project. **Due to the open nature of this project, when in doubt - ASK!**

**THE SCENARIO**

Most conference organizing committees are voluntary, with committee members juggling their every day work commitments against the demands of running a state, national and sometimes international event.

Our semester project is going to focus on planning a successful, professional, innovative and enjoyable conference. This is an activity that many of you will have the opportunity to be involved with during your career.

The term *meeting* is the generic name given to a number of events, including tutorial, workshop, symposium and conference. A symposium is a meeting, which covers a more specialized range of topics. It typically has less than 250 attendees and runs one or more days. A *tutorial* is taught by one or more instructors who are recognized experts in a specific field. The purpose of the tutorial is to educate a relatively small group of attendees on a selected topic. Research topics are generally excluded from tutorials. A *conference* is a major meeting, which covers a specialized (vertical) or broad range (horizontal) of set topics. Conferences typically accommodate more than 250 attendees and are of several days duration.

The program of a conference is designed to provide maximum opportunity for presentation of high quality topics to interested participants. This material is either of the form of a presentations of submitted papers and/or in combination with speakers and/or workshop presentations.

**ASSUMPTIONS**

Let’s make the following assumptions about your conference:

1. Your team has “volunteered” to lead the efforts in creating this new conference. All memo’s should be addressed to “Board of Directors, Nebraska Conference Initiative.”
2. This will be the first time your conference will ever be held.
3. Your conference will be held sometime in Omaha or Lincoln in the next 18 months.
4. You are expected to attract 275 participants to register and attend the conference. At least 175 of the participants are from out-of-state (and some are from out of the country).
5. Your goal is to make the conference a huge success so that it will continue for many years.

**GRADING OF MATERIAL**

Your project grade will based on the following criteria:

- Professionalism
- Completeness
- Accurateness
- Uniqueness
- Informativeness
- Conciseness
- Clarity
- Format
BLACKBOARD WEB SITE and PROJECT TASKS

You will post your resulting work (as a memo) onto the IMSE 905 blackboard web site. From the IMSE 905 web site, select “GROUPS”. Within here is a link to each of your groups. Click on the correct group/folder. In the file exchange, post your memo.

The project is divided into 9 different tasks – a task either consists of your team completing some work or performing a review of another team’s work. Specifically:

- Task 1 → Group Work
- Task 2 → Group Work
- Task 3 → Group Review
- Task 4 → Group Work
- Task 5 → Group Work
- Task 6 → Group Work
- Task 7 → Group Review
- Task 8 → Group Work
- Task 9 → Group Review

TASK 1

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

1. List major theme(s)/objective(s) of your conference
2. Draft conference title
3. Propose major speakers (i.e., keynote speaker)
4. Select format of the conference and identify major topics/tracks for your conference
5. Explain why one should attend your conference (i.e., benefits of your conference)
6. Explain who should attend your conference (i.e., who is the conference targeted to? – practitioners, academics, students, housewives, small business owners)

Task 1 Project Deliverable: Your group posts onto blackboard a memo (call it “task 1 memo” or something similarly self-explanatory) summarizing the above information regarding your conference. The goal of this memo is to provide a summary of the conference and highlight why a person should attend.

Suggestion: for some examples, look at conference literature you receive in the mail and/or conference sites available on the web

example: http://www.iienet.org/public/articles/index.cfm?cat=40#conferences
**TASK 2**

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

(1) Summarize and review similar conferences/events. Issues to consider include:
   - Names of your major competing conferences
   - The conference locations
   - Formats, products or services they offer
   - Their market share (size of attendants)
   - Current performance
   - Strengths and weaknesses
   - Names of competing conferences/events that have recently closed with reason

(2) What are the unique features of your conference? What will make your conference better than the competition? Also, given your goal is to create a long-lasting conference, describe how you are going to sustain your competitive advantage.

**Task 2 Project Deliverable:** Your group posts onto blackboard a memo summarizing the above information regarding your conference your conference. The goal of this memo is explain the competitive advantage of your conference – why is it better than the others that are out there and why is there a need for it

**Note:** If no other conference/event similar to yours exists, focus your discussion on why not?

**TASK 3**

On the blackboard web site, your team is to review a different team’s Task 1 and Task 2 memos. Below is what team you are to review (e.g., Team 1 reviews Teams 2):

- Team 1 ➔ Team 2
- Team 2 ➔ Team 3
- Team 3 ➔ Team 4
- Team 4 ➔ Team 5
- Team 5 ➔ Team 6
- Team 6 ➔ Team 1

**Task 3 Project Deliverable:** Your team is to post a single memo in the reviewed group’s Blackboard folder (call it “Task 3 response” or something similarly self-explanatory) offering an assessment of the plan and highlight good and bad components you saw. The goal of this memo is for the reviewed team to improve their plan.

**TASK 4**

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

(1) Make any updates or corrections to your Task 1 and Task 2 memos as a result of Task 3
(2) Determine the location in Omaha or Lincoln for your conference – describe its advantages and disadvantages compared to other facilities.
(3) Determine dates for your conference
(4) Develop a preliminary scheduled of events for your conference. Include both the technical components (key note address, speaker tracks, presentation times) and the social components (coffees, Lunches, Receptions, Banquets & celebrations, Tours & visits, Speakers breakfast)
**Task 4 Project Deliverable:** Post onto blackboard a memo summarizing the above information regarding your conference. The goal of this memo is to explain your location selection criteria and to highlight a preliminary summary of events for the conference.

**Suggestion:** The following web site gives an example of a schedule of events:
http://www.iienet.org/annual/schedule_glance.htm

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**Task 5**

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

1. Explain your publicity/marketing strategy plan for the conference (*i.e.*, how are you going to let people know about the event?)
2. Break down your costs for the above plan
3. How are you going to evaluate whether the conference is successful or not?

**Task 5 Project Deliverable:** Post onto blackboard a memo summarizing the above information regarding your conference.

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**Task 6**

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

1. What are your workforce projected for the conference? Develop a head count by function or department for a specified time period. For example, 10 people for 80 hours at the registration area.
2. Explain where the above people are going to come from – student volunteers, professional volunteers, hired staff, hotel staff
3. Develop a preliminary conference budget (revenues and costs) – itemize all expenses and projected income. Develop preliminary estimates/budgets for each item.

**Task 6 Project Deliverable:** Post onto blackboard a memo summarizing the above information regarding your conference.

**Suggestion:** Possible categories for you to explore:

- **Income:** Registration Fees (what are you going to charge – is there varying rates for different types of people and by date?); Conference Publication Sales; Exhibits; Social Functions.
- **Expenses:** Promotional/Marketing; Conference Publications; Exhibits; Social Functions; Speaker fees; Administration
**TASK 7**

On the blackboard web site, your team is to review a different team’s Task 4, Task 5, and Task 6 memos. Below is what team you are to review (e.g., Team 1 reviews Teams 2) – **review the same group:**

- Team 1 → Team 2
- Team 2 → Team 3
- Team 3 → Team 4
- Team 4 → Team 5
- Team 5 → Team 6
- Team 6 → Team 1

**Task 7 Project Deliverable:** Your team is to post a single memo in the reviewed group’s Blackboard folder (call it “Task 7 response” or something similarly self-explanatory) offering an assessment of the plan and highlight good and bad components you saw. The goal of this memo is for the reviewed team to improve their plan.

**TASK 8**

Address the following key issues in regards to your conference:

1. Make any updates or corrections to your Task 4, Task 5, and Task 6 memos as a result of Task 7

**Task 8 Project Deliverable:** No specific deliverable other than to update your previous memos.

**TASK 9**

On the blackboard web site, your team is to review a different team’s entire conference plan (Task 1, Task 2, Task 4, Task 5, and Task 6). Below is what team you are to review (e.g., Team 1 reviews Teams 3) – **different teams:**

- Team 1 → Team 3
- Team 2 → Team 4
- Team 3 → Team 5
- Team 4 → Team 6
- Team 5 → Team 1
- Team 6 → Team 2

**Task 9 Project Deliverable:** Your team is to e-mail me (psavory@unl.edu) a single memo offering an overall assessment of the entire conference plan. Highlight the good and bad components you saw. **The goal of this memo is to offer a critique of the plan and decide if it will be successful in creating a new and highly attended conference.**