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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
- Format
- Conciseness
- Clarity

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 why
- (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 4 → Team 5
Team 2 → Team 3	Team 5 → Team 6
Team 3 → Team 4	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 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

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.

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 4 → Team 5
Team 2 → Team 3	Team 5 → Team 6
Team 3 → Team 4	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 4 → Team 6
Team 2 → Team 4	Team 5 → Team 1
Team 3 → Team 5	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.**

