Business Case Workshop

An Applied Learning Program

INTRODUCTION

Shouldn't all product and business investments provide a positive return? Of course, they should. However, when we look at the intended impact of business cases, the results aren't always obtained. Why? Often, the data or fact base on which the business case is created is not verified or valid. Or perhaps cross-functional support was lacking, or the forecast was miscast. From another standpoint, many "approved" strategic initiatives aren't fully analyzed for business impact, resulting in sub-par ROI. With this context, our research shows that more than half of all business cases fail to achieve their intended contribution, which impacts the ability to put available resources to the best use.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The methodology involved in creating business cases can be more deeply woven into the fabric of the firm if people understand what's to be done and how. That's why this workshop was developed. This workshop is designed to help designated teams to collaborate in the creation of business cases for major business investments, or product-related investments, which can include items such as:

- New products or major enhancements
- Product operational improvements
- Market expansion initiatives
- Cost-saving programs
- Business or market expansion initiatives

HOW IT WORKS

- Executives appoint teams (usually cross-functional) of 3-6 people to work on a business case for one or more explicit corporate initiatives. We meet with key stakeholders to review the program scope and ensure that teams are equipped to handle the pre-program data collection, as well as the actual work involved to prepare and present the business case. Usually, 3-5 teams participate in any one program.

- We facilitate an interactive, two-day workshop where the teams work on, and present various aspects of the business case. They follow a standardized template that helps them to orchestrate the flow and develop a cogent, believable story line (see next page).

- As an option, we can coach teams and review their evolving case with our facilitator. Two or three 45-60-minute coaching sessions are planned so they can prepare to present their case to management. We can also return to your office to facilitate the final executive presentation.

- The program leverages several resources, including the mini-book: How to Create a Business Case and The Product Manager's Desk Reference (3e).

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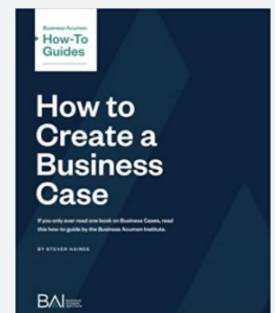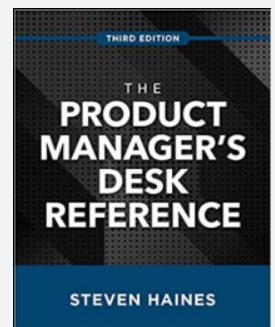
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WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The Business Case Workshop follows the format and flow represented in the diagram below. Each section is a module in the workshop, punctuated with interactive, team-based exercises designed to reinforce current knowledge, augment understanding, and offer a challenging environment to consider the company's investments and its strategy. The structure, while seemingly linear is far from that; it's iterative and dynamic. This means that the team might have progressed to a specific point but might have to re-explore various topics and assumptions as it proceeds.

OTHER OPTIONS

Because we work closely with our clients on these important initiatives, we may customize the program to include more in-depth focus on items such as pricing, customer or market analysis, forecasting, and other areas.

Background and History	Customer Context and Problems	Industry and Competitive Climate	Internal Environment Assessment	Solutions	Pricing Strategy and Pricing
1	2	3	4	5	6

Forecasts	Scenarios and Financials	Operations and Integration	Go to Market (Launch)	Risk Assessment	Success Factors
7	8	9	10	11	12

WORKSHOP BENEFITS

- Teams and leaders make better business decisions
- Creates a platform for consistency and productivity
- Integrates transparently with corporate business and portfolio strategies
- Raises the level of business and financial acumen across disciplines
- Produces auditable artifacts
- Assures effective implementation and integration with the company's operation

SEQUENT LEARNING NETWORKS is a global product management training and advisory services firm. Our clients operate as mid-to- large complex firms and participate across a number of verticals. Sequent's curriculum is designed to provide both foundational programs as well as a portfolio of workshops and coaching programs to embed key practices in the firm. Overall, we want to help our clients build a model for sustainable growth, with product management at the core.

Some of Sequent's clients also benefit from the services of Sequent's sister company, Business Acumen Institute, a training and advisory services firm focusing on building business acumen for emerging leaders and managers, across industries and around the world. Visit business-acumen.com to learn more.

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