

The Capstone Project

Introduction

The Capstone is project designed to bring together all the learning acquired during the first year of the MBA. It is a team-based project in which students have work on a real business problem provided by a company and suggest ideas & recommendations to company's executives. Each team is supervised by an IESE faculty member who help them go through the challenge and is also responsible for the company assigned to them. In a way, students act like "consultants", working on a consulting project during the whole length of the course.

Objectives

The main objective of the course is to bring real, general management problems/challenges faced by companies in order to give them an opportunity to put their learning into practice.

Learning Outcomes

- *Understand the importance of a good problem diagnosis before reaching a solution. Also, understand the real needs of the company at a specific moment in time.*
- *Frame the problem within the company's strategy and values.*
- *Thinking out-of-the-box. Companies are looking for creative solutions from outsiders.*
- *Problem-solving from a general management perspective.*
- *The need of high performance teams to obtain results.*
- *The decision-making process: flow of information, coordination, team dynamics, etc.*
- *Technical vs interpersonal skills. Both are required to present solutions.*
- *Prepare a good presentation to top executives.*

Competences

The competences to achieve during the course have to do with both the application of specific knowledge acquired during the first year ("hard" knowledge) as well as with leadership, interpersonal skills and team building capabilities ("soft" skills) as the dynamics of the project forces all these components to work together and simultaneously.

Thus, the expected competences to attain are:

- *Understand the challenge within the context of a given problem in a given moment in time.*
- *Understand the decision-making process, its constraints and requirements.*
- *Students should know how to apply the knowledge acquired and their problem-solving capacity in new and little-known settings.*
- *They should be able to integrate knowledge and deal with the complexity of making judgements based on information that is incomplete or limited, and time constrained.*
- *Diagnosing, dealing with and resolving interpersonal conflicts quickly and deeply.*
- *Performing critical analysis and interpretation of the information provided by the companies.*

Content

As the problems/challenges brought by the companies have a general management perspective, this multidisciplinary course covers topics from general management as well as different functional areas of a company, depending on the companies' needs.

Methodology

The course works as follows:

- *The first day, students are given information about the company and the project/challenge.*
- *One week later, the companies' representatives come to IESE to present the challenge and respond to some initial questions from the students.*
- *The teams have 2 weeks to work on the project, mainly to understand the company and the problem. The outcome of these first weeks should be a brief report describing the challenge and suggesting possible lines of action.*
- *At the end of these 2 weeks, the teams meet again with the company for a Q&A session.*
- *The teams have 2 more weeks to generate ideas and design a solution to the proposed challenge.*
- *At the end of these 2 weeks the students will work specifically on the presentation of the proposed solutions.*
- *A final day in which the teams present their solutions to the companies' representatives.*

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated both on the content of the presentation and the quality of the solutions/ideas presented. Their personal commitment will also be assessed.

- *Quality of the solutions/ideas suggested, implementation, etc.: 50%*
- *Presentation: 25%*
- *Personal commitment: 25%*