

IDSN 525: Business Essentials

Units: 3.0

Summer 2021—Thursday—7:30 pm – 9:05 pm

Location: Online

Instructor: Aswin Pranam

Office: Online

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: apranam@usc.edu

IT Help: 2U Student Support

Hours of Service: Available 24/7, 365 days/year

Contact Info: studentsupport@design.usc.edu, 1-855-487-3504

Course Description

“Business Essentials” is a general management course designed for students in the online Master of Integrated Design, Business and Technology degree program. The course provides students exposure to the various functional disciplines found within a business: (1) building theoretical and analytical fluency through the introduction of core concepts, methods, and frameworks, and (2) initiating a discussion about how those disciplines are integrated and/or interdependent. Developed to provide students with a view of the common leadership and managerial challenges found in firms at various points in the organizational life cycle—from prelaunch through maturity—the course uses a variety of methods to enhance students’ flexibility and adaptability in a dynamic business world characterized by uncertainty. The course focuses students’ attention on the robust quantitative and qualitative analytic skills proven, over time, to support sound decision-making and managerial action—skills in (1) adopting strategies to support long-lived, competitively strong business organizations; (2) choosing and deploying a marketing mix that will generate awareness, trial, and ongoing purchase of those organizations’ products and services; (3) understanding how to best allocate and manage financial and other resources to support ongoing operations; and (4) identifying, evaluating, and selecting new opportunities appropriate to business growth or new venture launch.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

The high-level goal of this course is to introduce students to an array of basic concepts and tools useful in various organizational settings. Students will:

- Gain a basic understanding of business strategy, accounting, marketing, operations, organizational management, and entrepreneurship
- Understand interdisciplinary and cross-functional interactions within established and emerging firms
- Gain an appreciation for decision-making complexity within organizations and organizational networks
- Apply learned theories and frameworks across a variety of business situations
- Develop critical-thinking skills across an array of business disciplines

Recommended Preparation: IDSN 510: Integrative Practices Residential

No prior business knowledge is required or expected for this class. Those with extensive prior business education are encouraged to complete IDSN-530 Technology Essentials or IDSN-520 Design Essentials in lieu of this course.

Course Notes

This course will be conducted online, using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students must provide their own laptop. The laptop specifications take into consideration that students will be creating, streaming, and downloading audio and video; communicating using video conferencing applications; and creating and storing large multimedia files.

	Apple	Windows PC
Laptop (Minimum standards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or 2.0 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 • Minimum 13" display • 250 GB SSD or larger • 16 GB memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intel Core i5 or Intel Core i7 • Minimum 14" display • 250 GB SSD or larger • 16 GB memory
Warranty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage (Apple Care) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage
Operating System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mac OS X 10.13 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows 7, 10 operating system or higher
Peripherals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD webcam, speakers and microphone (Most newer laptops have built-in webcam, speakers and microphone) • Headset • Digital camera (Cameras on newer smartphones are acceptable) • External drive for cloud account for backup and storage 	
Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign) • Adobe Acrobat Reader • Microsoft Office Suite • Sophos Endpoint Security (antivirus) • Browser: Most recent version of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, or Internet Explorer 	
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable modem, DSL, T1/T3 or higher 	

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required reading will be drawn from textbooks, articles, papers, cases, and online publications (e.g., articles, op-ed essays) available through a host of available outlets; in all instances, the material will be delivered via computer. Students will also be required to view online videos; complete web-based, interactive exercises; and respond to peer and faculty comments (within an online discussion forum or group discussion). Lectures, readings, and viewings will be supplemented with current articles and audio/video content.

Note: The course requires students to purchase 8-10 HBR cases for classroom discussion & learning. The total cost to be paid out-of-pocket by the student will be ~\$55.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

MARKETING ASSIGNMENT – MODULE ASSIGNMENT (Individual)

Students will be asked to (1) identify two products with differing marketing campaigns, and (2) develop an explanation and comparison of the outcomes and success/failures of each product as a result. Products can be picked or identified through public lists, marketplaces, or crowdfunding sites (such as Product Hunt, Quirky, Kickstarter).

OPERATIONS ASSIGNMENT – MODULE ASSIGNMENT (Individual)

Students will use market research techniques (taught within the Marketing and Operations module) to evaluate and write up a description and analysis of the operational processes and systems deployed at a retail or manufacturing organization.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS STRATEGY – MODULE ASSIGNMENT (Individual)

Students will evaluate a case in which they identify key elements of the functionality of the business, including primary and secondary industry, market, and customer research.

BUSINESS PLAN ASSIGNMENT – FINAL PROJECT (ENTREPRENEURSHIP, MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, OPERATIONS, ACCOUNTING) (Team)

Students will submit and present a business plan in which they identify the central problem faced by a business model and are required to address the relevant strategy concepts in the context of developing a business plan.

PARTICIPATION (Individual)

- Provide substantive and thoughtful feedback to questions posted, by peers and instructors, in specified online forums.
 - Participate in discussion forums based on prereading assignments and case readings.
 - Provide written and verbal responses during live, synchronous sessions.
 - Complete, after the delivery of each team assignment, individual Peer Feedback reports.
- Guidelines regarding assessment of contributions will be provided separately.

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Grading Breakdown

Including the above detailed assignments, how will students be graded overall? Participation should be no more than 15%, unless justified for a higher amount. All must total 100%.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation in Class Discussion	20	8%
Contribution to Discussion Forums	60	24%
Module Assignments 1-3	90 (30x3)	36%
Final Project	80	32%
TOTAL	250	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

- A 95-100
- A- 90-94
- B+ 87-89
- B 83-86
- B- 80-82
- C+ 77-79
- C 73-76
- C- 70-72
- D+ 67-69
- D 63-66
- D- 60-62
- F 59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments and labs must be delivered, per instructor guidelines to be distributed, by **11:59 p.m. Pacific Time** on the date that deliverable is listed as due. No exceptions. (Early submissions are, of course, encouraged!)

- Upload only one file per assignment. If assignments include images, spreadsheets, etc., merge all into one professional document.
- Deliverables that exceed maximum page or time length requirements will only be assessed up to (and not beyond) that limit.
- Read and heed supplementary assignment details, distributed when each assignment is launched, carefully.

All assignments must be completed in order to pass this class.

Late Submissions

Assignments will be accepted after the deadline with the following grade penalties. Do not ask for extensions.

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|---|----------------|
| • Submission in the 24 hours after the deadline | 10% deduction |
| • Submission between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline | 20% deduction |
| • Submission between 48 hours and 3 days after the deadline | 50% deduction |
| • Submission more than 3 days after the deadline | 100% deduction |

Keep copies of all your files and emails until the end of the semester.

Correcting a Grading Error or Disputing a Grade

If you don't inform the instructor of missing or incorrect grades within two weeks of those grades being posted, the grades will be assumed correct. Do not wait until the semester's end to check or appeal any grades. If you feel a grade merits re-evaluation, you are encouraged, within one week of the instructor providing a grade and initial feedback, to send the instructor a memo in which you request reconsideration. The memo should include a thoughtful and professional explanation of your concerns. Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative. (Note: Complaints on the date of a graded assignment's return to you will not be addressed; it is essential to wait one full day prior to raising a concern.)

Academy Attendance Policy

The Academy maintains rigorous academic standards for its students and on-time attendance at all class meetings is expected. Each student will be allowed two excused absences over the course of the semester for which no explanation is required. Students are admonished to not waste excused absences on non-critical issues, and to use them carefully for illness or other issues that may arise unexpectedly. Except in the case of prolonged illness or other serious issue (see below), no additional absences will be excused. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by $\frac{1}{2}$ of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, and A- will be lowered to a B+, etc.). In addition, being tardy to class will count as one-third of an absence. Three tardies will equal a full course absence.

Students remain responsible for any missed work from excused or unexcused absences. Immediately following an absence, students should contact the instructor to obtain missed assignments or lecture notes and to confirm new deadlines or due dates. Extensions or other accommodations are at the discretion of the instructor.

Automatically excused absences normally may not be used for quiz, exam or presentation days. Using an excused absence for a quiz, exam or presentation, such as in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, is at the discretion of the instructor.

In the case of prolonged illness, family emergencies, or other unforeseen serious issues, the student should contact the instructor to arrange for accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

Additional Policies

Add any additional policies that students should be aware of: late assignments, missed classes, use of technology in the classroom, etc.

Class notes policy: Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other non-commercial purposes that reasonably arise from the student's membership in the class or attendance at the university. This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated, or in any way displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via e-mail or otherwise on the Internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code, and may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings. Again, it is a violation of USC's Academic Integrity Policies to share course materials with others without permission from the instructor.

No recording and copyright notice: No student may record any lecture, class discussion or meeting with the instructor without his/her prior express written permission. The word "record" or the act of recording includes, but is not limited to, any and all means by which sound or visual images can be stored, duplicated, or retransmitted whether by an electro-mechanical, analog, digital, wire, electronic or other device or any other means of signal encoding. The instructor reserves all rights, including copyright, to his/her lectures, course syllabi and related materials, including summaries, slides (e.g., Keynote, PowerPoint), prior exams, answer keys, and all supplementary course materials available to the students enrolled in the class whether posted to the LMS or otherwise. They may not be reproduced, distributed, copied, or disseminated in any media or in any form, including but not limited to all course note-sharing websites. Exceptions are made for students who have made prior arrangements with The USC Office of Disability Services and Programs and the instructor.

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in this course. In an online forum, participation includes:

- Careful reading and viewing of assigned materials by the date due
- Regular, substantive contributions to discussions
- Active engagement with online content
- On-time attendance and full attention in synchronous sessions
- Significant collaboration with classmates and teammates

Course grades may be affected for students who do not contribute to the course through active participation. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class. Those unable to attend will be required to review the online recording for the session missed, and submit thoughtful feedback to the Instructor.

Contact Hours

This 3-unit course requires 1125 minutes of instructional time in the summer, which equals 94 minutes (1.55 hours) of instructional time each week. Instructional time may be further broken down into 47 minutes (0.78 hours) of asynchronous time and 47 minutes (0.78 hours) of synchronous time. In addition, it is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 188 minutes (3.1 hours) per week outside of class — on readings/viewings, homework assignments, field experiences, and individual or team projects. Synchronous class sessions will be offered as regularly scheduled evening or weekend classes, once each week.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Module 1: INTRODUCTION; LEADING AND MANAGING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Instructor Introduction • Different Kinds of Businesses 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (article): What's a Business For? https://hbr.org/2002/12/whats-a-business-for • Reading (article): "The McKinsey 7-S Framework." MindTools https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_91.htm • Video: Amy Kates. "What is Organization Design?" Kates Kesler, 2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41v3PENTEXw (5min) 	
Week 2	Module 1: LEADING AND MANAGING (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Role of Management • The Hierarchy of Management • Operational Effectiveness vs. Strategic Positioning 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (article): What Is Strategy— Michael Porter • Reading (article): Why Do Strategies Fail— Jan Rivkin • Reading (article): Discipline of Teams—J. Katzenbach & D. Smith • Art Kleiner. "The Cult of Three Cultures." Strategy + Business, 3rd Quarter 2001. https://www.strategy-business.com/article/19868 • Fritz Schumann "Houshi." Vimeo, 2014. https://vimeo.com/114879061 	
Week 3	Module 2: MARKETING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Concept of Marketing • The Corporate Structure of Marketing • The Concept and Value of Marketing Segmentation 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (article): Note on Marketing Strategy—R. Dolan • Reading (article): Market Segmentation, Target Market Selection, and Positioning—M. Sarvary & A. Elberse 	
Week 4	Module 2: MARKETING (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of Successful Marketing in Industry • Examples of Unsuccessful Marketing Campaigns • Four Ps of Marketing and Examples of Uses • The Concept of Branding • Marketing Simulation Exercise: "The 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (article): 30 Years Ago Today, Coca-Cola Made Its Worst Mistake https://www.cbsnews.com/news/30-years-ago-today-coca-cola-new-coke-failure/ • Reading (case): On Your Bike! Using Marketing Mix to Drive Successful Bicycle Sharing Programs in Europe— Nathalie Laidler-Kylander, Steven Strauss, Laura Winig • Reading (case): Eager Sellers & Stony Buyers—J. Gourville 	

	Positioning Game” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business: A Technology Perspective 		
Week 5	Module 3: ACCOUNTING and FINANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Value of Financial Assessment • Integration of Finance into the Overall Business Structure 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (article): The 6 Essentials of a Basic Cash Flow Statement https://quickbooks.intuit.com/accounting/reporting/cash-flow/#about • Reading (article): Why the Volkswagen Phaeton Failed in the U.S. https://www.thecarconnection.com/news/1034260_why-the-volkswagen-phaeton-failed-in-the-u-s • Reading (article): Accounting Basics https://www.accountingcoach.com/accounting-basics/explanation 	Assignment 1 (Marketing) Due
Week 6	Module 4: OPERATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Concept of Supply Chain Management • Value of Supply Chain Management Innovation • Applicability of Supply Chain Management Including Little’s Law 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (case): Crocs: Revolutionizing an Industry’s Supply Chain Model for Competitive Advantage—Hoyt, Silverman, Marks • Reading (case): Supply Chain Management at Wal-Mart -- Johnson 	
Week 7	Module 4: OPERATIONS (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical Topics in SCM Including Shrink and Defensive Merchandising • Practical Topics in SCM Including Retailer and Manufacturer Coordination and Demand Projection • Industry SCM Decisions – P&G Tide Houston Project • Bullwhip Effect • Decision Hierarchy: Retailer, 	Weekly Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading (case): BMW of North America. Dream it. Build it. Drive it. • Reading (article): The Bullwhip Effect and Your Supply Chain https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/232953 • Reading (case): “Evolution of the Xbox Supply Chain”—Hoyt 	

	<p>Manufacturer, Distributor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Conflicts to Demand Projection – e.g., Sales Targets, Employee Incentives 		
Week 8	<p>Module 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial Examples in Tech Space – e.g., Facebook, Tinder, LinkedIn 	<p>Weekly Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading (case): AIC Netbooks: Optimizing Product Assembly—Wheelwright, Yong Reading (article): Startup Basics: How to Master the Fundamentals https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/223288 Reading: Ten Types of Innovation https://www.doblin.com/ten-types 	Assignment 2 (Operations) Due
Week 9	<p>Module 5: ENTREPRENEURSHIP (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of an Entrepreneur Types of Entrepreneurship Value of Innovation Value of Entrepreneurship Profiles of Successful Entrepreneurship 	<p>Weekly Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading (article): How to Be an Ethical Leader https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/272746 Reading (video): Zara: Masters of the Art of Retail https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhCMOF81vEg Reading (case): Zara: IT for Fast Fashion—McAfee, Dessain, Sjoman Reading (article): Hypothesis-Driven Entrepreneurship: The Lean Startup— Eisenmann, Reis, Dillard 	
Week 10	<p>Module 6: BUSINESS STRATEGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Strategy – Bringing All the Pieces Together 	<p>Weekly Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading (article): Types of Strategy: Which Fits Your Business?—Excerpt 	Assignment 3 (Entrepreneurship and Business Strategy) Due
Week 11	<p>Module 6: Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Business Plan Presentations 		Final Team Project Due
Week 12	<p>Module 6: Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Business Plan Presentations 		Final Team Project Due

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)
-213-740-9355 (WELL)

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking). (wording from the site)

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

USC Policy Reporting to Title IX (213) 740-5086

<https://policy.usc.edu/reporting-to-title-ix-student-misconduct/>

The university encourages individuals to report prohibited conduct to the *Title IX Office*. Individuals can report to the university *Title IX Coordinator* in the *Office of Equity and Diversity*.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.