

## Catalyzing Social Impact (Spring 2011)

BUS 535 – Monday/Wednesday, 11:30-12:45, Goizueta 234

### Course Description and Objectives

In this course, Goizueta MBA students gain valuable experience developing creative solutions to the complex challenges currently faced by individuals and organizations striving for meaningful social impacts. While conducting structured, detailed and systematic research that addresses real-world problems faced by our client partners, students are exposed to the many experiments and ideas that relate to their projects. They then apply the skills that they are learning in business school to develop innovative solutions that, when applied, address the assigned problems and therefore make visible contributions to the lives that are touched by our clients and their projects.

Our clients benefit from exposure to this research, as well as the insights and recommendations that emanate from our students' accumulated business acumen.

### Projects

Client partners specify a project and are promised a minimum of 400 pro-bono "billable hours". These projects are staffed by five to seven Goizueta MBA students. Projects launch on first day of the spring semester and findings and recommendations are presented to a (high-level) audience of key stakeholders and interested individuals on the last days of the semester.

*Each engagement begins with and is guided by a clear understanding of the commitment we are making to our clients. In this respect, projects have regular deliverables (see the schedule below).*

#### **Client Obligations**

To maximize the odds of successful projects, we require the following commitments from our client partners:

- The assigned project must be of considerable importance;
- The client lead must be willing to work with the team during the first week of the engagement to develop a common understanding of the client's specific needs and expectations;
- The client lead must have the time to participate in the various contact points outlined in the following project schedule; and
- The client lead will assemble a group of interested individuals (from within the organization, from its board, from its community partners) to attend and give feedback on the final presentations.

### ***(Project 1) Scaling Businesses in Atlanta's Disadvantaged Communities: Developing a Program to Shift the Balance of Demand for and Supply of Mezzanine (Growth) Financing***

One of the most pressing social and economic challenges in Atlanta relates to impediments to establishing viable businesses (and therefore employment opportunities) in Atlanta's distressed neighborhoods. We have been engaged by Ralph Cleveland, Executive Vice President of Engineering and Operations for AGL Resources and President of the Capital Formation and Enterprise Development Foundation, to develop a holistic, place-based program that will identify, mentor and ultimately secure financing for scalable businesses in these neighborhoods so that they can reach their growth potential and generate much-needed employment opportunities.

Students engaged in this project should expect to:

- a) Research and identify gaps (i.e., market imperfections) that characterize the status quo in the affected neighborhoods. This will include:
  - o Researching "best practices" in this area by surveying and incorporate insights from other related programs (both those that have succeeded and failed) that have been attempted in other cities;
  - o Researching and documenting (in order to leverage or incorporate) the various related initiatives that are currently underway across the city; and
  - o Interviewing leaders of Atlanta's Historically Black Colleges to get their insights and perspectives and to assess their potential contributions to the program.
- b) Develop an effective, feasible and financially sustainable program that will encourage businesses in targeted neighborhoods to become larger and more impactful employers. This will include:
  - o Looking closely at how to attract the necessary partners/resources; and
  - o Ensuring that the viable ventures that matriculate from this program are able to attract the requisite financing for their growth plans.
- c) Develop a detailed implementation plan that documents the roles that various organizations (both in and around the targeted neighborhoods) will play.

### ***(Project 2) Realizing the Potential of Early-Stage Social Entrepreneurial Ventures: Strategic Analysis and Input to one Village Capital Investee***

Village Capital ([www.vilcap.com](http://www.vilcap.com)), run by First Light Ventures, "improves entrepreneurial success with social ventures and accelerates the impact investing space by building peer support organizations for entrepreneurs in cities throughout the world. Inspired by early microfinance lending groups ... VilCap crowd-sources the most investable companies for investor partners." Through its Village Capital program, First Light is currently invested in the following companies: New Avenue Homes; Rainsaucers; TerViva; Liga Masiva; Kopo Kopo; Drop the Chalk; Sabras; Under the Mango Tree; Jack and Jake's; Cooler, Inc. They have also invested indirectly in BookBox; CO2Impact; V-Shesh; Promethean Power Systems; and Windhorse.

V-Shesh ([www.v-shesh.com](http://www.v-shesh.com)) is a "livelihood exchange"; it is essentially a job placement agency for low-income, first-time job seekers in India. In India, there is a significant demographic divide. There are far more young people than older, but far fewer jobs for these younger people (especially low-income people) than employers. Most of the new jobs in India are in the service sector (e.g., loan officers at banks, cashiers at grocery stores, or waiters). V-shesh tries to build relationships with companies that are looking for employees while recruiting younger Indians to fill these jobs.

To date, V-shesh has had most of its success within the exploding Indian microfinance industry. However, in the past few months, microfinance has hit some rough patches, as Ross Baird writes about in his recent blog post [[www.vilcap.com/top-trend-7-for-2011-microfinance-regroups](http://www.vilcap.com/top-trend-7-for-2011-microfinance-regroups)].

V-shesh is now looking for help finding alternative revenue streams, as their revenues from the microfinance sector have essentially dried up. The Emory team will help V-shesh identify specific ways that it can rebound from the setbacks it has experienced in the microfinance sector.

### **Project Milestones**

Project Summary – Although each project launches with a high-level summary, it is imperative that the team develop a more complete account of the client's expectations and how they will be addressed over the engagement. Each team will meet with its client, and will conduct relevant background research, in order to deepen its understanding of specific client expectations and project needs. They will then prepare a detailed 2-3 page Project Summary on or before the assigned date (see below). This document provides a consensus overview of the specific issue(s) that will be addressed, and a timeline for accomplishing the requisite research. It also documents all resources that are expected from the client, including access to relevant individuals inside and outside the organization. After consultation with the professor, this document will be presented to the client for final approval.

Examples and Exemplars – To be effective in its analysis and recommendations, each team must develop a deep and thorough understanding of all of the many previous examples of efforts that relate (directly or indirectly) to their

project. This fosters an appreciation of the cause-effect relationships that pertain to the focal problem space. It also provides potential (partial) solutions that might be implemented as part of the team's final recommendations. The team will conduct an exhaustive survey of related prior initiatives and document what has been learned so far. By the assigned date (see below), they will gather these insights into a single presentation that summarizes what prior experience is relevant for the current project.

Project-Specific Insights – The team must gather and understand project-specific information and insights that will inform their research and recommendations. Building on their initial background work and from the insights gained from prior experience, each team will design and implement a process for gathering and analyzing all relevant information (from, for example, interviews, surveys, or archival data sources). By the assigned date (see below), they will gather their insights into a single presentation that summarizes what project-specific insights will have what implications for the project and its recommendations.

*(The above two presentations do not represent end-points for the historical and project specific analyses. These processes continue on an as-needed basis through to the completion of the project.)*

Tentative Conclusions – At the roughly the 2/3 mark of the project's time-line, each team will turn its attention away from analysis and toward its list of (tentative) conclusions. While these will be modified over the final third of the project's duration, it is critical that each team comes together with its client to ensure that there are few surprises and that the fine-grained analysis and implementation work that follows is maximally effective. Tentative conclusions will be shared and discussed with the class, professor and mentors on the assigned date (see below) before being discussed thoroughly with the client.

Implementation Issues – The final task is to help the client appreciate all of the nuances that pertain to implementing the proposed set of recommendations. Here, it is imperative that the client appreciates not only the full value of the proposed solution, but also feels ready and able to take the first steps toward realizing this value.

## **Saturday Training Day – New Consultant Training Boot Camp**

(with Bain & Company)

**Saturday, January 22, 9:30 to 5:30**

Bain & Company  
3280 Peachtree Rd. NW  
24th floor  
Atlanta, GA 30309

This session will help launch the projects by covering the basics of Bain’s in-office introductory training program, which is designed to provide its consultants with an overview of the core elements of Bain’s approach to its engagements (and to the engagements in the Catalyzing Social Impacts course). Topics to be covered include:

- a) Answer-First
- b) Work-planning
- c) Bain Analytical Toolkit
- d) Communicating for Results
- e) Experience sharing

Tentative Schedule for the Day:

9:30 - 10:00	Breakfast and Settling in
10:00 - 12:30	Morning Session
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch and Sharing Experience
1:30 - 3:00	Afternoon Session
3:00 - 4:30	Break-outs and “Answer First” Brainstorming plus Group Review
4:30 - 5:30	Happy-hour

- Parking is available in the adjacent parking deck on site.
- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

*In addition, a team of Bain consultants will continue on as mentors for Project 1. A team from Gray Ghost Ventures will serve as mentors for Project 2.*

## **Evaluation**

Class Discussion/Participation/Attendance: 20%

Contributions to the other Project: 10%

Team Work: 70%

- Interim Deliverables (20%)
- Final Deliverable – Presentation and Report (50%)

*(Students agree to commit to eight (8) hours per week over the weeks of the engagement and submit bi-weekly time sheets that document their hours. Students who do not meet their time commitments or whose contributions are judged to be inadequate by the rest of their project team will have their grade reduced accordingly.)*

## Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Task / Reading</b>
12-Jan	Projects Commence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students introduced to course and projects</li> </ul>	
19-Jan	Class Discussion	with Client 1
24-Jan	Working Session – Developing <i>Project Summary</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preliminary discussions with client</li> <li>Background reading</li> </ul>	
26-Jan	<b>Project Summary Due</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 to 3 page summary</li> </ul>	Discuss with professor / mentor and then confirm with the client. <sup>1</sup>
31-Jan	Class Discussion	with Client 2
2-Feb	Working Session – <i>Examples and Exemplars</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey prior related experiences</li> <li>Summarize what has been learned (successes, failures), document best practices</li> </ul>	
7-Feb	<i>No Class</i>	
9-Feb	<b>Present Examples and Exemplars</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief presentation of progress, insights</li> </ul>	Discuss with professor / mentor and then share with client. <sup>2</sup>
14-Feb	Working Session – <i>Project-Specific Insights</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access and analyze relevant archival data</li> <li>Interview individuals with relevant insights</li> <li>Conduct surveys (as necessary)</li> </ul>	
16-Feb	<i>No Class</i>	
21-Feb	Working Session – <i>Project-Specific Insights</i>	
23-Feb	<b>Present Project-Specific Insights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief presentation of progress, insights</li> </ul>	Discuss with professor / mentor and then share with client. <sup>1</sup>
14-Mar	Class Discussion	“Bridgespan Case”
16-Mar	Working Session – Develop <i>Tentative Conclusions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze and synthesize</li> </ul>	
21-Mar	Class Discussion	“Village Capital Case”
23-Mar	<b>Present Tentative Conclusions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present set of tentative conclusions</li> </ul>	Discuss with professor / mentor and then share with client. <sup>2</sup>
28-Mar	Working Session – <i>Implementation Issues</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine required resources</li> <li>Address potential impediments</li> </ul>	
30-Mar	Working Session – Preparing <i>Final Report</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure flow from analysis to recommendations</li> <li>Identify final gaps that need to be closed</li> </ul>	
4-Apr	<b>Discuss Outline of Final Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a detailed outline of the final report</li> </ul>	Discuss with professor.
6-Apr	Working Session – Preparing Final Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the final presentation and report</li> </ul>	
11-Apr	Class Discussion	“Reflections on the Process”
13-Apr	Working Session – Preparing Final Report	
18-Apr	<b>Present Final Report to Client 1</b>	
20-Apr	<b>Present Final Report to Client 2</b>	

<sup>1</sup> For Project 1, mentor discussion to be held on Friday at Bain office.

<sup>2</sup> For Project 1, mentor discussion to be held on Friday via conference call.