

**BA 506****Summer 1999****Business Projects**

The following are brief descriptions of the available projects for the BA 506 class for the summer term. Unlike in prior terms, projects cannot be officially chosen until the first class session. However, students enrolled in the class are encouraged to identify projects that interest them and begin the process of assembling 3- to 4- person groups. These efforts should facilitate the process of choosing projects. Please do not try to contact any of these organizations in advance of the first class. When official group assignments are completed during the first class session, the name and phone number of the appropriate contact person will be provided. The following projects labeled (T) are acceptable for the MIT Option.

**1) ENVOY GLOBAL (T)**

Envoy's business model leverages development in the field of Internet Conferencing services. This new medium provides clients with a means to deliver high-impact, interactive and immediate communications to remote communities. Envoy is positioned to create a new paradigm which may replace or augment traditional communication mediums including road shows, seminars, advertising and other direct marketing initiatives.

This research project is designed to validate the volume and revenue potential represented by "large scale marketing related events among the top software publishing companies in America."

The following research is expected from this project:

- Determine the number of companies in the high-tech market
- Determine the average number and scale of marketing events undertaken by target segments
- Determine the expense/budget associated with marketing events
- Determine the % of marketing events that can be replaced or augmented by Internet Conferencing in 1999 and 2000.
- Obtain contact information about marketing managers within the segment
- Determine the value propositions that resonate most effectively with prospects in the high-tech market

**2) FEDERAL CAPITAL MORTGAGE CORPORATION**

Federal Capital Mortgage Corporation proposes a marketing study of the greater Seattle and Tacoma areas for use in the expansion of Federal Capital to Seattle in late 1999. The study would be conducted of residential builders who have their own sales and marketing resources.

Federal Capital develops LLC partnerships with builders to ensue builders to bring mortgage financing origination and home coverage insurance in house.

**3) INNOVATIVE COMPOSITE ENGINEERING (T)**

Innovative Composite Engineering (ICE) is a small company of fewer than 10 people located in Bingen, Washington across the river from Hood River. Among its products, ICE markets high end snowboards under NOLIMITS brand name ([www.nolimitz.com](http://www.nolimitz.com)). The snowboard market is currently flat and ICE needs a marketing plan for this product line. This project would probably require several trips to Bingen, which is about an hour drive from Portland.

#### 4) LIGHTWARE (T)

Lightware sells LCD projectors. It is interested in research data on unique niche projector markets that could appropriately be marketed and sold to using its new "direct" sales model. The following information would be required:

- What niche markets lend themselves to direct projector sales and why?
- What niche markets tend to not need a demo of this type of technology?
- How do we most effectively reach these markets?
- What are their purchase decisions based on? (size, price, weight, functionality)
- Is their sales cycle different than what it is used to seeing?

#### 5) OREGON EMERGING BUSINESS INITIATIVE (OEBI) (T)

The Oregon Emerging Business Initiative is a partnership between industry, education and state government with an overall goal "To make Oregon into one of the top three places for emerging businesses by the year 2008." OEBI would like to have research conducted in the following area:

Economic Impact: In order to get the attention of policymakers and the public about the importance of emerging businesses to Oregon's economy, we must be able to quantify the impact of these businesses. As such, we need objective data in a variety of areas which reflect the contribution of emerging businesses. Such areas would include investments, jobs, taxes, philanthropy, etc. (currently and over the past 10 years)? What if any, trends are emerging? And what will the projections be if we do nothing and if we make changes to improve the business climate?

#### 6) OREGON EMERGING BUSINESS INITIATIVE (OEBI) (T)

The Oregon Emerging Business Initiative is a partnership between industry, education and state government with an overall goal "To make Oregon into one of the top three places for emerging businesses by the year 2008." OEBI would like to have research conducted in the following area:

Comparison with Other States/ Regions: What have other states/regions done to foster early stage investment communities? What networks and structure work best? What educational programs are available for investors in other states/regions? How have others communicated the availability of early stage capital? How have others utilized the knowledge/experience of early stage investors to assist start-ups?

#### 7) PACIFICORP, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (T)

ESD has recently completed a departmental business plan (5-year strategic plan) collaborating with the Portland State University (PSU) MBA program. As follow-up to the initial planning process, ESD is instituting a market/financial analysis to assess optimal positioning (costing) for a technical service group supporting internal corporate customers, needs, and goals. Secondly, the analysis should continue to prepare ESD for direct billing (via internal rates in SAP) of internal customers (currently ESD costs are part of internal customers corporate overheads) precipitating competition with external markets. The analysis should identify means to achieve ESD's vision and core purpose: *To enhance the company's competitive edge by influencing the balance between corporate operations, compliance, and the environment.* It also should consider ESD's philosophy of a team/collaborative-based organization with an integrated, multi-disciplined structure in its findings. ESD envisions the analysis to include:

- inventory (bench marking) of financial structure/costing of other utility service groups and outside consultants
- evaluation of ESD's standard rate, overheads, and the pricing systems within SAP
- assessment of ESD competitive position (cost, value-added, etc.) to outsourcing

Recommendations and measures to leverage financial aspects for achieving overall business plan goals.

### **8) PLATT ELECTRIC (T)**

Platt, established in 1953, is an electrical distributor that has conventionally sold to electrical contractors and industrial/OEM customers in the Pacific Northwest. Platt is now reaching out to customers beyond the Northwest via [www.Platt3d.com](http://www.Platt3d.com) which will allow customers from anywhere in the United States to purchase from Platt.

This website will include products that are considered "A and B" major turn items which can be shipped same day anywhere in the U.S., all sales final. (no returns other than for defective or warranty items) Future business plan should only allow for one-half, full-time employee to administer the site with new products and to handle claims.

Platt would allow the PSU project group access to the current inventory of products on the AS 400/Mincron system and interaction with regional sales managers, customers and sales people for input to surveys on what type of products need to be on this web page. Platt currently handles 65,000 SKUs in its 180,000 square foot Beaverton facility in which they would allow 1000 of the most common "A or B" items that would make sense for this application based on usage and physical size. Platt would also give PSU access via video conferencing to other noncompeting electrical distributors in the US to discuss similar web based sales initiatives.

### **9) VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA**

In 1987, a member of the advisory board for the Bargain Station thrift store operated by VOA Oregon offered to take the operation over as an independent contractor. VOA was to be paid a percentage of gross sales. The contractor has notified VOA that he will be closing the store effective February 2000 because of loss of market share and margin.

VOA is confronted with the critical decision on how to proceed. If VOA continues the operation, significant start-up costs would be incurred. The report should consist of the following:

- Market Feasibility study
- Start-up costs
- A listing of competition
- Business performance
- Location recommendations
- Niche marketing
- Recommendations for or against
- Use of clients for staffing ideas
- Number of locations
- Methods for collection
- Marketing ideas

### **10) WESTERN FAMILY FOODS, INC.**

Western Family Foods, Inc. is a private label food manufacturer located in Tigard, Oregon. The company's objective with this project is to obtain benchmark data regarding consumers' perception and experience with Western Family Food products, packaging and its overall program through a consumer satisfaction survey.

The company envisions a relatively simple and unobtrusive survey that would be administered at retail, either as shoppers enter or leave the store. All surveys could be administered in the greater Portland

area.

Areas of exploration for the survey include:

- Product selection
- Product quality
- Favorite product
- Least favorite product
- Packaging quality
- Price/value
- Overall rating
- Comparison to competitive store brands