



**UNIT DESCRIPTION**  
**BS970 Management Consultancy**

**University of Ballarat**  
**School of Business**

**and**

**Bristol Business School, UK**

University of Ballarat  
**Unit Description**

<b>Unit Code/Title:</b>	BS970 Management Consultancy
<b>School:</b>	University of Ballarat – School of Business
<b>Year:</b>	2005
<b>Semester(s):</b>	1 or 2 and overseas mode
<b>Prerequisite(s):</b>	Nil
<b>Corequisite(s):</b>	Nil
<b>Credit Points:</b>	15

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### **Organisation and Contact Details**

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### **Introduction**

- Welcome to the Management Consultancy unit. This unit is designed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to undertake critical analysis and strategic interventions in their own organizations, or, to act as an external consultant and to propose solutions and strategies for other organizations.
- The unit is taught face to face and is also partly web based – see [www.consulting-project.com](http://www.consulting-project.com). When you sign up for the program you will gain full access to our website and at the same time the on-line services and David Wornham, our consultant/practitioner and academic from Bristol Business School, UK.
- The unit is based around working in learning sets on real projects. Whilst there are a set of steps that can be taken in logical sequence; as with all

practice based learning, the most benefit is derived from working on a project and 'dipping' into the web based resources as and when is necessary.

- The unit leads on to the Management Consulting Project. Hence we treat it as a double unit. There is a separate Unit Description for BS971.

This program provides direct link to a number of our own resources and those from other authors and websites.

### **Background to unit content**

Work in organisations is increasingly carried out on a project basis. In addition there has been a rapid increase in the use of external, commercial and internal consultancy teams to work on specific issues and initiatives or strategic intervention.

This unit is designed to give you experience of working on this basis. You should not see the project simply as a consultancy exercise. As I say, much work is done by project rather than line managers and it enables you to understand how to make the kind of intervention which should add to your organisation's effectiveness. The unit will help you to adopt a consulting style of working when that is appropriate in your organisation and also put you in a strong position should you employ the services of a consultant at some point in your career.

In this unit you will be asked to:

1. Understand the basics of the consulting approach to strategic intervention outlined above and how these can be applied in practice
2. Carry out an intervention within organisation, probably your own or maybe a supplier / competitor or family business. You will prepare a contract or proposal and write a final report or presentation which will deal with a real issue within the organisation and result in recommendations to be acted upon by the client.

### **Unit objectives**

**The unit has the following aims:**

#### **Knowledge**

You should be able to....

- Demonstrate understanding of the key principles of intervention practice
- Demonstrate the ability to carry out a project intervention / consultancy assignment within an organisation

- Demonstrate the ability to scope and define a client problem or opportunity
- Be able to prepare a proposal to undertake a consulting project
- Demonstrate successful operation of a piece of consulting work with a specific client
- Lay down the basis for change in an area of an organisation's operations, routines or processes.

## **Skills**

You should be able to....

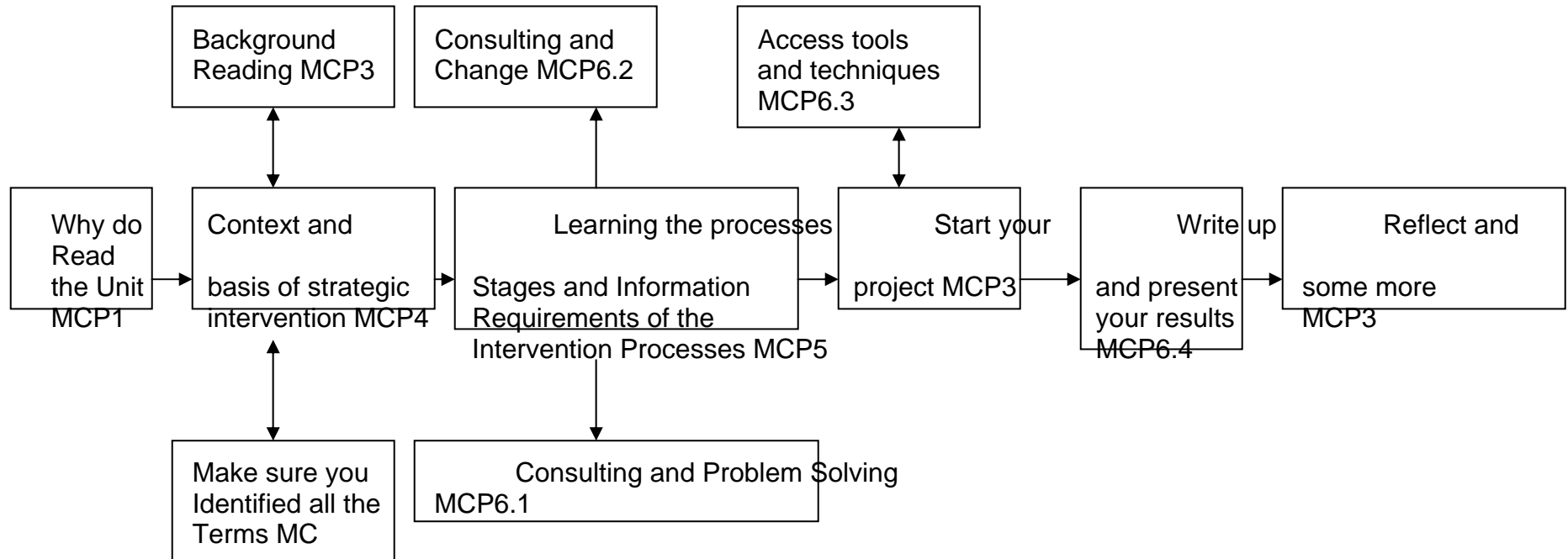
- Negotiate and communicate effectively in the course of the engagement
- Develop skills associated with data collection, analysis and presentation.
- Demonstrate personal skills associated with the management and operation of a piece of advisory work.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the organisational context in which consultancy takes place
- Show an ability to be able to reflect upon progress throughout the project and to evaluate its outcomes
- Demonstrate general project management skills.

## **Values/attitudes**

You should be able to....

- Appreciate the contribution of a specific intervention to the development of an organisation
- Appreciate client contextual factors (politics, structure, decision-making factors) as they impact project work
- Be able to integrate specific, technical skills from other modules within the generic consulting paradigm
- Appreciate key success factors in each of the main consulting stages.

## Management Consultancy Road Map (see website)



There are **6** basic sets of supporting material that can be found at [www.consulting-project.com](http://www.consulting-project.com). You will be supplied with username and password access to this site.

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Description and Use</b>
MCP 1		[This guide]
MCP2:	<b><i>The Project Assignment</i></b>	Sets out assignment and assessment requirements. Also has some information on how to set up the project.
MCP 3:	<b><i>Further references</i></b>	A list of books, including the main texts and useful websites. Websites for project resources also included.
MCP 4:	<b><i>The strategic intervention and consultancy context.</i></b>	Basic course in consultancy and interventions. Slides and accompanying notes.
MCP 5:	<b><i>The Intervention Toolkit.</i></b>	The main resource to use as you do your project: it takes you through the stages of the assignment and also includes exercises that you can do individually or in groups
MCP 6	<b><i>Supporting Modules</i></b>	
	<b>6.1 <i>Problem-Solving</i></b>	A short guide as to how consultants approach problem-solving for clients
	<b>6.2 <i>The Change process</i></b>	Some note on the intervention as a process through which some changes are achieved
	<b>6.3 <i>Tools and Techniques</i></b>	A pack of slides showing frameworks and presentation formats for communicating data...many from other units you have studied
	<b>6.4 <i>Communication</i></b>	Some notes on how to present written and spoken reports to your client

MCP 7: **Glossary.**

Definition of words and phrases which you may not understand.

First read the **student guide and also the assignment guide** [MCP 1 and 2] and make sure you understand the nature and requirements of the unit.

Then set up some learning groups of 5 to 8 students each. These will be used for support throughout the project.

Then go through the **basic material on consultancy / interventions** [MCP 4]. Use your learning groups to discuss generally this material together. The slides each have a notes page which will help you to understand the material.

If you want to have more information on any aspect of consulting projects at this stage, refer to [MCP 3] **books and other resources**. Three core texts are suggested...maybe you could ensure that between members of the learning group you have all three.

As you set up your project you will need to use the intervention toolkit [MCP 5]. At first open it up and view it as a PowerPoint slideshow and just get used to the structure. At each stage of the assignment you can refer to specific slides to guide you depending on your concern. Your learning group should carry out some or all of the exercises as you go through the project: these are at the end of MCP 5.

You may want to look at the different modules [contained in MCP 6] as you take on different parts of the project:

- **Problem-solving [MCP 6.1]:** this will give you a structured process for each step of the client problem-solving process [it can be applied to develop a business opportunity as well]
- **Change [MCP 6.2]:** when you are considering how you will get the organisation to act on your recommendations it may be worth reminding yourself of important points...you may want to refer to the notes from the course unit on managing change also
- **Tools and techniques [MCP 6.3]:** these can be very useful for organising and displaying information...if you do not want to organise data in your own way you may want to use a standard approach, as illustrated here

- **Communication [MCP 6.4]:** the project is all about how you get your important messages to your client. This short note gives some advice about writing and communicating findings to clients.

The glossary [MCP 7] will help you with some of the particular terms used in the world of consultancy and interventions. If there are any further terms you do not understand email me and I will add them to the glossary.

We will be creating a resource for data sources for students [giving details of where to find publicly available data] so please indicate sources found in your project presentations

I suggest that the learning groups meet to:

1. See that you all understand the unit requirements
2. Discuss the ideas you all have for projects and suggest changes where they may be difficult to carry out
3. Go through the exercises contained in the intervention toolkit. This is a good way of becoming more expert as consultants!
4. Meet from time to time to discuss particular issue that group members are facing in doing their projects.
5. Meet up a couple of months after the completion of the unit to see which of the clients seem to have put the recommendations into practice!

This unit is practical: there is not a great deal of academic or theoretical literature about consultancy itself. Most business schools are agreed that the best way of learning about this approach to management is by 'doing it'. Many students find this a very valuable exercise. Remember it is not like a dissertation: you are giving actual advice to a client in a commercial setting. I hope you very much enjoy the challenge of the unit.



## LEARNING TASKS AND ASSESSMENT

### Pre unit reading and tasks

1. Go to [www.consulting-project.com](http://www.consulting-project.com) and familiarize yourself with the material.
2. Choose a recent strategic initiative in your organisation. Write down your observations:
  - How was it initiated?
  - How was it implemented?
  - What people were involved at both stages?
  - What problems arose in developing the initiative and implementing it?
  - How well has the strategic initiative progressed?
3. Read case study for unit (to be posted separately on the website)
4. Come to the class with a major strategic issue in your organisation and be prepared to discuss it in class.

### Learning Tasks and Assessment

Learning Task	Assessment	Weighting	Due date
Case study: development of a proposal	Group Assignment	50%	Sat 20 Nov 04, before 1:45pm
Reflection on case assignment	Individual Assignment	10%	Sat 27 Nov 04, before 1:45pm
Proposal for consulting project	Oral and written test	40%	

### Interventions : Book References

#### Core texts

**Wickham P,(2004), Management Consulting, London:** Financial Times. Basic introduction to consulting (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)

**Markham C, (1998) The Top Consultant: Kogan Page.** Useful and basic context on consultancy

**Neumann, (1997), Kellner J and Dawson-Shepherd A, (ed) Developing Organisational Consultancy, London: Routledge.** Series of papers on interventions in the context of the change process.

**O'Shea J. and Madigan, C.(1997). Dangerous Company. London: Nicholas Brealy.** An insight into a number of consulting relationships; both good and bad...an interesting account of the industry.

**Other Resources: General**

Bennett R, (1990) Choosing and Using Management Consultants, London, Kogan Page

Biswas S., Twitchell D., (1999), Management Consulting: A Complete Guide to the Industry, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

<http://www.mca.org.uk/html/careers.html> Management Consultancies Association, (2000), What is a Management consultant?

Lippitt G. Lippitt R. (1986), The Consulting Process in Action, University Associates.

Markham C. (1996) – “Practical Management Consultancy” – Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Shapiro E., 1996.Fad Surfing in the Boardroom, Capstone,

**Resources: General consultancy topics**

Asher M, (1995) Getting Good value from Consultants: Stanley Thornes, Cheltenham.

Carucci R and Tetenbaum T (2000) The Value-Creating Consultant: How to Build and Sustain Lasting client Relationships: Amacom New York.

Dembitz A and Essinger J,(2000) Breakthrough Consulting (So you want to be a consultant? – turn your expertise into a successful consulting business), London: FT Prentice-Hall.

Poppe F, Fifty Rules to Keep a Client Happy: Harper and Rowe, 1987.

Schein E.H., (1987), Process Consultation Volume 2: Lessons for Managers and Consultants, Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Schein E.H., (1988), Process Consultation Volume 1: its Role in Organizational Development, Reading: Addison-Wesley.

## QUICK START

1. Understand why you should do this unit and what you will gain from it → MCPI.
2. Understand the basics of the context of strategic interventions and consultancy →MCP4.
3. Make sure you understand all the terms. See glossary →MCP7.
4. Learn the processes, information and requirements of making successful interventions. A step by step approach is given in the intervention tool kit →MCP5.
5. How do you communicate your ideas? This is given in MCP6.4.
6. Reviewing consulting and interventions as a problem solving process is given in MCP6.1.
7. Reviewing consulting and intervention as a change process. See MCP6.2.
8. Some tools and techniques you might want to use plus web addresses to find key references appear in MCP6.3.
9. Now start on the unit and keep dipping back into the materials See MCP3.
10. Keep up your reading. Reflect on how well you progress. See MCP3.

## **Conclusion and the way forward**

You have started on an exciting and different way of learning. The framework we have provided is:

- Disciplined and has structure
- Underpinned by theory and practice
- Provide tools, models and concepts to help you see what you are doing and organise your work.
- Add real value for your organization or your? organization by giving you the opportunity to make incisive and break through contributions
- Help you learn about strategy and making interventions through undertaking real projects

We hope you benefit from the program whether you are taking it as a stand alone unit or whether it is part of a MBA program. We also want to learn from your experiences. Tell us how you found the unit and how we might improve it.

**Christine O'Connor & David Wornham**