



**BMBA 540 MBA BUSINESS PROJECT:
CLIENT BRIEF**



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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1. WHAT IS THE BUSINESS PROJECT?

The *BMBA 540 MBA Business Project* is the cornerstone of the Otago MBA. It is the major in-company project undertaken by all Otago MBA students. The project is positioned in the final phase of study when students have completed the Otago MBA core of 13 post-graduate level papers covering all areas of business.

2. THE PURPOSE

The MBA Business Project demonstrates a student's ability to work within a real business environment. The purpose is for students to:

- add value to a business by identifying and resolving a real business issue facing the client
- apply the knowledge gained over the core taught programme in a real business environment.

3. BENEFITS TO THE CLIENT

There are a number of benefits of hosting an Otago MBA Business Project. These include:

- Receive the expertise of an Otago MBA Student trained in all areas of general management. MBA students are therefore equipped to handle a wide range of potential projects.
- In researching and undertaking their project, Otago MBA students may access the full research and academic resources of the University of Otago School of Business throughout the consultancy period.
- All projects benefit from a University-appointed supervisor who assists the MBA student throughout the project, meeting with them regularly to discuss issues as they arise.
- Receive a detailed report and presentation showing the outcome of the project including recommended solutions to the business problem.

4. WHO ARE OTAGO MBA STUDENTS?

Typically the Otago MBA student is a mid-career high-achiever who is seeking to round off his or her training and experience with a degree in general management. With an average age of thirty, Otago MBA students typically have several years of work experience behind them. A wide range of professions, including accountancy, engineering, finance, information technology, medicine and marketing to mention but a few, are represented by our students who have previously worked in the manufacturing, retail, wholesale, finance, service and non-profit sectors.

The Otago MBA experience places an emphasis on teamwork by people from diverse backgrounds and of varying personalities. The focus is very much business oriented rather than academic.

5. YOUR BUSINESS PROBLEM

The *BMBA 540 MBA Business Project* typically involves an analysis followed by recommendations for action with regard to a specific business problem or opportunity within the client organisation. This does not, however, prevent other business related projects being undertaken.

Recent examples of MBA Business Projects undertaken by Otago MBA Students include: a strategic review of a distribution system; an analysis of expansion opportunities; the development of a marketing strategy; a study of the consequences, causes and control of employee turnover; the development of an activity based costing system; and the design of a machine maintenance and replacement programme.

Students' final mark is obtained from the assessment of the report and, to a lesser degree, the presentation (as discussed below). Projects involving a great deal of implementation, which will not in itself lead to the generation of a report, are not ideal projects. Some form of feasibility report, which examines a problem, evaluates potential alternatives, and proposes and justifies a client solution is much more closely aligned with the requirements of the *BMBA 540 MBA Business Project*. Thus this form of Project is welcomed.

6. SIZE AND DURATION

Whilst all Projects are unique and specific to the client, the *BMBA 540 MBA Business Project* is worth 45 academic points; this translates to an expectation of about 450 hours of work for the student. Working for 40 hours per week, this would translate to about 11 to 12 weeks of full time work, including writing up the final report.

In this period student's will typically be working within the client organisation for up to half this time (5 to 6 weeks), the rest of the period being dedicated to researching literature and writing up the final project report.

The scope of the final project is developed and agreed with the student's project supervisor, and signed off by the Director Executive Programmes or the Academic Leader to ensure it is achievable within the above timescales.

7. WHAT YOU GET

The two primary deliverables received by the client organisation are the Project Report and the Presentation. These outline the definition and analysis of the business problem, and detail support and justification for a proposed solution or course of action. Whilst each Project will require a different approach to the design, structure and presentation of the Report, typical Reports are not normally expected to exceed 18,000 words in length, excluding appendices.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

We do respect the highly sensitive nature of some projects and we can assure complete confidentiality in this regard. A client confidentiality agreement is signed between the programme and the client organisation at the commencement of the project.

With a confidential agreement in place, the submitted Business Project report is held securely with no or limited access for up to five years.

9. REGISTER YOUR PROJECT

If an organisation or business is interested in hosting an MBA Business Project, there are a couple of ways this may be initiated:

- a. A potential Business Project may either be submitted via the online form on OtagoMBA.com; or
- b. an MBA class member may proactively approach an organisation to offer their expertise in the context of a Business Project for their Otago MBA qualification.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the Business Project, the Otago MBA, or the recruitment of students, please contact the programme's Academic Leader, Dr Richard Greatbanks on richard.greatbanks@otago.ac.nz or 64 3 479 8658.