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Pilot project:

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

No. 2016-1-CZ01-KA203-023873

CASE STUDY

Authors:

Tomas Bata University in Zlín

JA Czech

JA Europe asbl

The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship



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1. CREATE A GOOD TEAM

The failure to create a well functioning team is an obstacle to promote changes and the successful implementation of the methodology.



Create a team of skilled problem solvers that are ready to deal with unexpected situations when implementing the business subject into the academic curriculum.



When starting this project, it was vital to put together a team that was able to implement a new accredited subject into the teaching of the faculty or the university as well as have the relevant competencies and personality characteristics that integrates well in the team environment. The team, with the inclusion of the Dean of the Faculty and Vice-dean For Studies and Lifelong Learning as well as the director of the Department of Business Economics, guarantees and ensures that the business teaching at the faculty and that of the other team members maintains the importance of the successful implementation of this project till the very end. Team members were carefully screened and chosen based on continued cooperation and on their ability to work with complex processes while still remaining level-headed to avoid significant disagreements within the team.



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2. ACCREDITATION OF THE BUSINESS COURSE TO THE CURRICULUM THAT IS AVAILABLE TO ALL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The unavailability of a business course for all interested students but who have not been included in the curriculum of the relevant study programs.



It is very important for the research to be diversified by ensuring that the business course is available to all students with every specialization.



It was necessary to accredit the business course to the curriculum of all faculties of the university right from the beginning of the project implementation. Past and current experience with courses aimed at business, has led to the need to interconnect students with different knowledge and experience to improve their work while building a business plan that they could potentially implement in practice. In the first year of the project running, the university introduced a so-called modular learning concept that is based on the principle of the availability of courses for all students, this made the situation much easier. It was very important to seize this opportunity and integrate the business course into modular teaching. The course was included in the bachelor's and master's degree study programme, always as a two-semester course. During the first semester, students were

familiarized with the aspects of business and basic areas needed for preparation of business plan including Lean Canvas as the basic tool for developing a business plan. The follow-up course further developed their business plans into a practically applicable form. Within each semester, the course participants received two ECTS credits for the successful completion of the course.



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3. NAME THE COURSE SO THAT THE TITLE REPRESENTS THE CONTENT OF THE COURSE AND IS ATTRACTIVE FOR STUDENTS

Course title cannot be out of date and rigid to study curriculum.



Students have been involved in naming the course in order to create a name that would have been attractive at first sight and that would lead them to seek for more information about its content.



Students were involved in the naming process of the course focused on creating an eye-catching name that would attract the interest of student enough to want to get more information on the content.

One of the most important aspects was the naming process of the course. The aim was to create a name that would be attractive enough to leave student curious about the actual content and encourage them to actively seek out more information about the course in annotations and study curricula. Students working on their business plans within similar business-oriented courses were invited to discuss the title of the course as these students have already had a similar experience. The proposals were discussed during brainstorming sessions by various parties involved in the project. These included students who took part as participants, academics working on the implementation of the project at the faculty and mentors-coaches, who participated in the practical implementation of the course.

These three groups created and agreed on the title of the course “Business Academy 1” and “Business Academy 2” which was included in the curriculum of bachelor and master programmes of faculties and also in the modular teaching of the university. The supervisor of the course is the director of the Department of Business Economics of the Faculty of Management and Economics at Tomas Bata University in Zlín.



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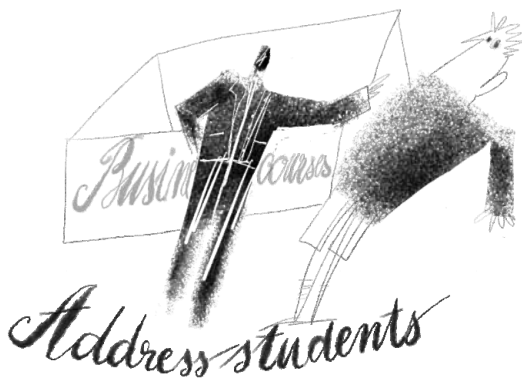
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4. ADDRESS STUDENTS WITH BUSINESS COURSES OFFER

Students may not have sufficient information about the course and the implementation in the selection of optional subjects.



Address students through appropriate communication channels such as social network, email and viral marketing campaign.



After finding an appropriate name for the course, the next milestone in the project was how to reach out to students with the offer and what appropriate communication means to choose. This became a key question since students did not have experience with modular learning and therefore it was necessary to acquaint them with this form in the appropriate way. The students invited to participate in this task were those who have created marketing campaigns to include all forms of communication and deadlines for the courses that followed the terms of candidates' registration at individual faculties as well as follow the requirements of modular education. These students also designed leaflets and posters for the course "Business Academy" and they participated in the promotion and distribution to all TBU buildings. The aim was to ensure that the information reached the maximum amount of students. With the help of the study departments of individual faculties, students were reached by and further distribution of information was shared through. The leaflets with information on the websites, which were specially

created for this course, were distributed to individual faculties. The website provided candidates with all available information including the schedule of modular teaching, where the course would be held, opportunity to participate in the competition that focused on the best business plan as well as contact information for the supervisor that was available for all questions and more. The selected marketing campaign was aimed at students of both bachelor and master studies and new students in the first year of their studies were invited, too. The email campaign was planned in accordance to the different registration dates for first-year students at different faculties. During this registration period, university personnel from the study department of individual faculties were enlisted to help make sure that potential participants got leaflets with basic information about the course. The campaign also included the distribution of information posters placed on notice boards in public areas of the university.

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5. CHOOSING THE RIGHT CANDIDATES FOR THE BUSINESS COURSE

The participant of the course should be a candidate interested in doing business with the intention of potentially starting and building his/her business, not just the interest in earning credits at the end of the course.



Candidates' application is done directly on the course's website and accompanied by a motivational letter explaining why they should be accepted to attend the course.



The ideal candidate for this course should be a student genuinely interested in going into business. Therefore, the aim of the marketing campaign was to reach out to those students who have a real interest in attending the course and who would like to start their own business idea. Thanks to the modular learning system, that allows all university students to enroll in the given course, the necessary credits for graduation were assigned. It was necessary to distinguish between candidates who are really interested in doing business and those whose only interest was to obtain relatively available credits. Based on these facts, the team decided to screen candidates through applications submitted through the courses websites and base their decision on the required motivation letter. Candidates were instructed to explain why they thought they would they should be accepted as a student for this course. The supervisor then contacted each successful applicant and this

started the mutual communication. Thus concluding that this course was conceived as a selective one.



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6. WELCOME EVERY STUDENT INTERESTED IN BUSINESS EVEN THOUGH THE BUSINESS PLAN IS NOT CLEAR

Not every student interested in going into business has a clear idea of the niche that he/she wants to start his/her business.



Develop the potential of students and help them to prepare their business plans in preparation to start their business.



The appropriate method of selection of students based on the condition of sending motivation letter eliminated students who did not have too much interest in doing business and perceived the course more as a relatively easy source of attaining credits. The second group of potential candidates were those, who were not convinced they really wanted to start a business and they wanted just to test their abilities and their business skills. This did not directly exclude the mission of the course that focused on enrolling students who actually want to do business but also to get those students who are not entirely convinced about their life path as entrepreneurs. Under the supervision and mentoring of experienced coaches they can develop their business plans in acceptable form and if applicable, also try the business. These students were also likely candidates to be accepted to

the course and within multidisciplinary teams, this proved to be a good step. The course was attended by 44 students divided into several teams and these teams prepared 12 viable projects. These projects were defended before a commission composed of both representatives of the academic sphere as well as the business sector. During the discussion, students received feedback on their projects to help them bring ideas to a successful end. All successful course participants received an internationally-validated certificate.



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7. LET STUDENTS TEST THE PERSONALITY PREREQUISITES THAT THEY HAVE FOR DOING BUSINESS

The course also registers those students who want to test whether they have prerequisites for doing business but they do not think about starting their own business plan.



Use OctoSkills or another evaluation tool for testing at the beginning and at the end of the course.

The OctoSkills evaluation tool of the Danish partner of the project was used to test the personality prerequisites of the students for doing business. The test was completely translated into the Czech language, adapted and innovated with regard to course requirements and also Czech business practices. Testing took place at the beginning of the course, the second test was carried out after the end of the first stage at the end of the first semester and the third test was done at the end of the course. Participants were able to compare their results throughout the year and track their own progress in each test area. OctoSkills test the area of creativity and generating ideas, business self-confidence, teamwork or leadership. Other tested areas included entrepreneurship, business skills and personality characteristics of potential entrepreneurs. Students were also asked about their

motivation, ambitions, perseverance, and attitudes. The tests were strictly anonymous and the results were available only to interviewees and teachers, collectively for the whole group.



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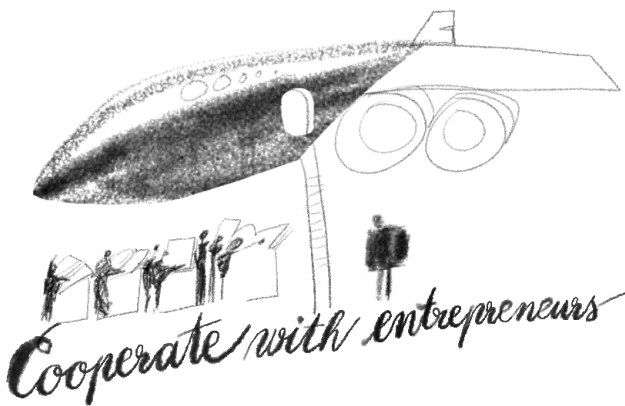
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8. COOPERATE WITH ENTREPRENEURS ON BUSINESS TEACHING

The concept of business courses is based on the direct cooperation of students with entrepreneurs. For this reason, it was a necessary prerequisite to attract entrepreneurs so that they would be able to dedicate time and deployment for these courses.



Invite entrepreneurs to join the team who will pass on practical experiences to the students and who will become their mentors.



It was agreed from the start of the project that entrepreneurs and people from business should be actively part of this course – people doing business who can help to pass on their experiences to participants of this course. This cooperation was based on the fact that entrepreneurs would be willing to devote their time to students and help them to work on their business plans so they get relevant feedback. We were able to start cooperation with mentors and coaches from the Technological Innovation Centre (TIC) as a significant place for generating start-ups as well as other important entrepreneurs from the Zlín region. Students worked on their business plans not only in the business incubator (TIC) but they could visit companies in the region in the form of excursions where they had the opportunity to draw inspiration and ask directors or business owners practical questions regarding business.



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9. ADAPT THE METHODOLOGY TO THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND THEIR COACHES

Business problems are perceived differently in different countries.



The methodology cannot be considered to be universal and unchangeable, it should reflect the specifics and the current state.



The constructed methodology was opposed by real experience based on the practical realization of the course “Business Academy 1” and “Business Academy 2” and therefore it fully reflects the needs of participants and their coaches. Given the fact that the problematics of business are perceived differently in different countries of the European Union, it is, of course, possible and desirable to adapt the methodology to the needs of the relevant institution so that it is fully functional. This means to adapt it to the students’ needs, which may vary in different countries, to adapt it to the age of participants, prerequisites for entrepreneurship of each individual, national customs in a given area of the given state, gained experiences and others.

One of the options of customization is, for example, to subject the successful completion of the course to the formal establishment of a new business subject, i.e. to prove its existence by a trade license or the ownership of a legal business entity (e.g. the creation of limited liability company or its equivalent). However, we did not find this step absolutely necessary in the Czech Republic because, in our view, it is not necessary to force students to establish or own a business entity immediately. The reasoning behind this is to ensure that no problems will come in the case of failure of the business project.