

Practical Business Skills for the Earth-Based Vocation

Instructor: Donal Kinney
Tuesday 6-8 pm, Ecoversity

Course Description

The intent of this course is to lead each student through the development of a business plan, and to develop practical business skills along the way. This is not a theory course, so discussion of theoretical issues like sustainability, climate change, population growth, peak oil, etc., will be kept to a minimum. The focus will be on traditional business planning, and the application of your current values and ethics to enhance business planning.

Course Requirements

In choosing to participate in this course, you agree to attend class, share completed assignments and participate in discussions each week, and to present your business plan to all students during the final class. By agreeing to these requirements, you will enhance the learning environment for all students.

The use of word processing and spreadsheet software is recommended. Class participants who are planning for the same organization will be expected to work together to prepare and present the assignments.

Course Outline

Week 1 – August 30, 2005 – Topic: **Financial Business Planning**

- Choice of business entity. Listing and discussion of different legal forms of doing business.
- Chart of Accounts. Choosing a starting Chart of Accounts. Understanding the Balance Sheet and Income Statement.
- One Year Plan. Review of sample Budget spreadsheets.
- Five Year Plan. Review of sample Five-Year spreadsheets.
- Guidance for formulating a written Mission Statement.

Week 2 – September 6 – Topic: **Values in Reporting**

- Multiple Bottom Lines
- Natural Step Framework for Sustainability
- Permaculture Design principles in business planning
- Measuring Ecological Footprint
- Issues of Scale and Scope in Reports

To Be Turned In: Draft Mission Statement, Initial Chart of Accounts

Week 3 – September 13 – Topic: **Operations Strategy**

- Basic Production Budget. Describing and modeling Operations within a business plan.
- Reviewing business plan for Values based reporting.

To Be Turned In: Description of Values and plan for Tracking Key Indicators

Week 4 – September 20 – Topic: **Overhead Strategy**

- Choosing level of service provided.
- Listing of practical issues generally included in Overhead.
- Strategies for lowering Overhead.
- Lowering ecological impact of Overhead

To Be Turned In: Written Operations Strategy and Spreadsheet

Week 5 – September 27 – Topic: **Marketing Strategy**

- Sustainable Competitive Advantage
- Stages of Development along the Business Cycle
- Defining a Target Market
- Advertising and Promotion
- Networking and Alliances

To Be Turned In: Written Overhead Strategy and Spreadsheet

Week 6 – October 4 – Topic: **Financial Strategy/Long Term Planning**

- Ideas for financing the growth of Assets
- Minimizing Debt
- Raising Equity
- Fundraising
- Tax Strategies

To Be Turned In: Written Marketing Strategy and Spreadsheet

Week 7 – October 11 – Topic: **Student Presentation of Business Plans**

To Be Turned In: Written Financial Strategy, 5-year plan spreadsheet, and Executive Summary

Instructor Office Hours will be by appointment. Speak to Donal after class, call at 474-6733, or e-mail donal@beanplanter.com to schedule.

Assignments will be returned with written Instructor feedback, each week.