

HP LIFE is a free, online entrepreneurship and workforce development training program supported by the HP Foundation. The courses are modular, interactive and full of information and practical exercises that will give users the skills to create or grow their business.

HP LIFE e-Learning is accessed directly by self-paced learners, but is also used by educators, trainers, and mentors to enrich their curriculum and personalize their interactions with learners. There are currently 28 HP LIFE e-Learning courses available on www.life-global.org in the areas of startup/innovate, finance, marketing, operations, and communication. The platform is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Hindi, and simplified Chinese.

The HP LIFE Instructor Manual summarizes skills developed in each course, and also provides downloadable templates, additional discussion questions, activities, resources and tools that enable a deeper dive into course topics.

Sections of the course:

Start course: provides a brief overview of the course objectives and course components, along with a preview of next steps.

Story: presents a brief scenario of a fictional entrepreneur dealing with a common business challenge. This fictional character guides the learning for the remainder of the course. The story is presented as a photo novella with audio.

Business concept: explores strategies to respond to the business challenge featured in the Story. Here you can learn and demonstrate your understanding of important business definitions and concepts through interactivities.

Technology skill: teaches technology skills (associated with each course’s business concept) that can help you save time and money and tackle business challenges more effectively. This includes tutorials, interactivities, downloadable exercises, additional links, and support.

Discussion forum: provides an online forum to share ideas, advice, and tips with others in your community and around the world.

End of course survey: give us feedback on the course by completing a brief survey.

Certificate: celebrates what users have achieved in business understanding and skills. To receive the course completion certificate, users must complete the following:

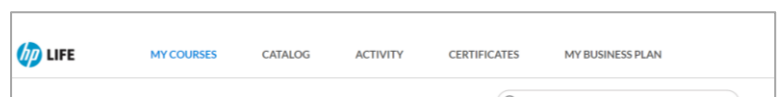
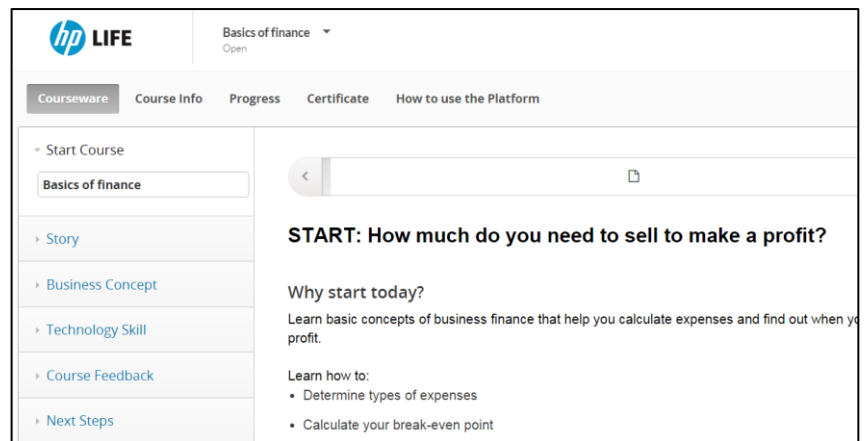
- business concept activity
- technology skill activity
- course feedback survey

When users complete the requirements of the course, they will receive an email to claim their course completion certificate. Have users check their Progress (top navigation) – they should have 100% total to receive a certificate. They will get the certificate in PDF format as well as a custom link to post on social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, etc).

Next steps: provides additional online resources related to the course just completed. These articles, tips, and tools enable users to strengthen their learning on the course topic. Related HP LIFE e-Learning courses are also listed.

Features

Dashboard – users can access My courses, Catalog, Certificates and My business plan
<https://hplife.edcastcloud.com/dashboard>

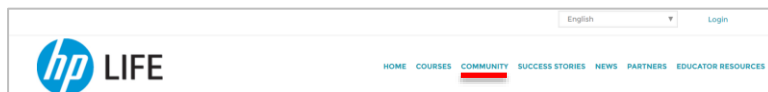


Certificate page – lists earned certificates and certificates can be downloaded
<https://hplife.edcastcloud.com/certificates>

My business plan – users can create and download a business plan
https://hplife.edcastcloud.com/business_plan

Profile page – users can provide information about themselves including a photo. The name on the certificate comes from the first and last name in the profile. If the name on the certificate is not correct, have the user correct their first and last name in Profile and then ask Support (support@edcast.com) to reissue their certificate. Please provide the course name and language to support.
<https://hplife.edcastcloud.com/profile>

Community – users can access timely business articles and tools. Currently the Community is only in English. We hope to build the Community in other languages
<https://hplife.edcastcloud.com/discover#news>



Please use the hyperlinked tables below to navigate to the learning materials for each course.

HP LIFE e-Learning Courses

Startup/innovate			
Starting a small business	Design thinking	Strategic planning	Social entrepreneurship
3D printing	Success mindset		

Finance	Marketing	Operations	Communications
Basics of finance	Social media marketing	Maximizing capacity	Effective leadership
Profit and loss	Unique value proposition	Managing contact information	Business communications
Finding funding	Selling online	Customer relationship management (CRM)	Effective presentations
Cash flow	Setting prices	Hiring staff	Business emails
Sales forecasting	Marketing benefits vs. features	Inventory management	Presenting data
	Your target audience	IT for business success	
	Effective business websites	Energy efficiency	

Additional HP LIFE information

[Summary of technology skills,](#)

[List of downloadable templates,](#)

[List of educator resources,](#)

Support: email support 24x7 (support@edcast.com). There is also a support icon in the upper right corner of each online course web page.

Contact us: in addition to support, you can contact the HP LIFE Team at life-global@hp.com

Starting a small business (Startup/innovate)

The course leads the user through the different ways to start a business and the basic steps including business ideas, market research, creating a business plan and using metrics to measure business success.

Story

Chet wants to start his own business. His sister comes up with a good business idea and will lead Chet through the process to research the business opportunity.

Business concept

- Learn about entrepreneurship including different ways of starting a business, low capital and high capital businesses.
 - My entrepreneurship inventory is provided so users can identify their skills, knowledge and resources that will be helpful in starting a business
 - Activity: The user fills out the skills, knowledge and resources they have and creates an action plan to acquire new or improve their skills and resources
- Learn the steps to start a small business including business ideas, market research, create and test a business model, name the business and create a business plan
 - Other HP LIFE courses are provided that will help the user create and test a business model
 - My business plan helps the user create a business plan



Terms defined:

Target audience, break-even point, fixed costs, variable costs, business plan, metrics, contribution margin, cash burn rate, lifetime value of a customer, customer conversion rate, net promoter score, inventory turns

Discussion questions:

1. Discuss the different ways to start a small business? Provide pros and cons.

Starting a business:

Pros: It is your idea and you are able to create everything – product, company name, branding, and marketing.

Cons: It may be harder to get funding. You have to create everything from scratch and get customers. Cash flow may be difficult in the beginning.

Starting an online business:

Pros: It is easy and cheap to start since the infrastructure is provided by the ecommerce platform (eBay, Etsy, Amazon, etc.). You have access to customers globally, 24x7.

Cons: It is crowded and hard to get customer's attention. You are competing with many other online sellers.

Buying a business:

Pros: You are buying the established product, marketing, operations and customers. It may be easier to get financing since there is an established customer base, revenues.

Cons: There may be hidden problems. You need to research the financials, products, customer base carefully to make sure it is a viable business for the future. You need to understand why the owners are selling the business and is the price fair.

Buying a franchise:

Pros: You are buying a business model that works and will receive training and guidance from the franchisor

Cons: You must pay ongoing fees. You need to research the opportunity – is there a strong need for the product/service in the proposed location. Is there strong competition? You are purchasing the business model and reputation of the franchisor. Any franchisor's issues such as reputation or a weak product are your issues too.

Freelancing:

Pros: Easy and cheap to start.

Cons: It is a crowded market and may be difficult to get customer's attention. You will be competing on price – especially at the beginning. You need excellent skills, expertise and follow through for the service you will be providing.

2. Discuss ways to find a business idea?

You have a great idea. This is a good start but make sure the idea is something many people want and will pay money for. It is not enough for you to think it is a great idea. Potential customers must also be very interested and willing to buy the product or service.

You see a customer problem: You need to talk to potential customers with this problem, understand the problem, the customer needs, and come up with good solutions. HP LIFE Design thinking course covers the process on how to do this. Make sure there are enough customers that have this problem and it is a serious enough problem they are willing to buy the product or service.

Observation: What problems, inconveniences or obstacles do you face frequently? Do you have a good solution for those problems? Get your friends and family to help – have them observe and list problems also. Make sure there are enough people that have that problem and the problem is serious enough they are willing to pay money for a solution.

Google search: there are many lists of business ideas.

A few additional ways to come up with a business idea: bad design of existing product/service (could you create a better design?), hobbies and skills you are already good at, things that people ask you for – at work or in your personal life.

3. Market research is done to evaluate the business opportunity. What are some questions you need to answer during this step? In addition to the questions listed below, what are other questions that should be answered?

Who is my target audience, their needs and are there enough customers for the business to be viable

Is there a gap in the marketplace in which you can compete?

Can you create a better or different product/service than your competitors?

Is the business opportunity growing or getting smaller?

4. Discuss the value of talking to potential customers, mentors, friends and family early and often about the business idea, marketing message and other elements of the business model.

Understanding customers and their needs is very important. Feedback on the business idea, prototypes and business model will help you create a better product/service and plan early in the process so you won't waste time and money. By talking to potential customers you can also create a customer base. Often there are small business resources such as mentors and incubators available. Take advantage of these services. They may be able to help you find customers, partners, suppliers, marketplace information, and funding.

5. Discuss the importance of breakeven analysis.

You need to make a profit. You need to understand your costs (startup, variable and fixed), the quantity of product/service sold and the price of the product/service that will allow you to breakeven and make a profit. The HP LIFE Basics of finance is a great course to learn about breakeven analysis.

Group activity #1:

Divide the students into groups of 3 to 5. Have them come up with some viable business ideas. They should describe the market need they are solving and list the reasons the idea could lead to a successful business. Also have them list the main challenges they might face in starting the business. Have them present their ideas and challenges to the entire class. Are there some common challenges. Discuss the challenges and how they might overcome them.

Group activity #2:

Use the same group as above and ask them to interview a successful small business owner in the community. Have them think about what they would like to learn and create an interview guide before the interview. Some example questions might be – Why did you create the business? What was the 1 or 2 things that made the business a success? What were the biggest challenges you faced? What do you like most about being a small business owner? What do you like least? Can you give us advice on starting a small business? Share the interview results with the rest of the class. Discuss what they learned. Were there any surprises? Are they more or less interested in starting a small business after the interview?

Technology skill

Learn how to use metrics to measure small business success. Examples of metrics are provided for different parts of the business (product, marketing, sales and operations).

- Activity: the user selects metrics to measure for Chet's small equipment repair and rental business
- Download: My entrepreneurship inventory, Steps to starting a small business, Small business ideas, Target market template, Competitive analysis template, Small business metrics, Small business resources

Discussion questions:

1. Why is it important to identify and use metrics?

Metrics can be used to measure business success, identify problems (early) and help you make good business decisions. Metrics can also help you understand what works and what doesn't – especially in marketing campaigns.

2. What are characteristics of a good metric?

Critical to business success, actionable and comparable.

Group activity:

Have the same group as above that worked on business ideas, identify good business metrics for their business idea. Have them describe why it is a good metric.

Design thinking (Startup/innovate)

The course is an introduction to design thinking, a process that enables users to identify and understand problems, then ideate, prototype and test new products or services to solve the problem. The user will use the design thinking process to ideate and prototype a product or service to improve emergency preparedness of citizens in a small town.

Story

Dina and Carlos, owners of the Coffee Corner, are trying to come up with new products or services to help the citizens in their town to be better prepared for the next flood.

Business concept

- Learn how to identify and define problems, ideate, prototype and test new products or services using a design thinking process by doing the following:
 - Learn how to use a problem statement to define the problem you are trying to solve
 - Activity: The user creates a problem statement for the Coffee Corner
 - Learn how to observe the audience using interviews to better understand them and the problem you are trying to solve
 - Activity: The user observes an interview with two stakeholders (a citizen and a first responder) to understand them and their emergency preparedness needs
 - Learn how to use personas and scenarios to empathize and explore the problem. The personas and scenarios will help guide the product or service ideation
 - Activity: The user creates a persona based on the interviews
 - Learn how to ideate, prototype and test the prototype with potential customers
 - Activity: The user will ideate and prototype a product or service for the Coffee Corner to improve emergency preparedness. The user will submit their problem statement and prototype and assess 2 user submissions. Users will also have an opportunity to see the top rated submissions so they can compare to theirs. This activity does not have to be completed to receive an HP LIFE certificate.

Discussion questions:

1. Define design thinking? How is this approach different than other approaches a small business might take to create a new product or service?

Design thinking is a process that recognizes the importance of the people who will be using a product or service. Design thinking provides ways to better understand people, the context in which they will use the product or service, the objectives, and the outcomes related to using the product or service. A design thinking approach is understanding the customer and their problem first before creating an idea – and then going back to your customer to test your ideas early and repeatedly. Many entrepreneurs run with their first idea before talking to actual potential customers.

2. What is the purpose of the problem statement?

It clarifies the focus of your efforts, both the purpose of the product and the people who will benefit. As you learn more about the problem (through interviews and testing prototypes with customers), you can refine the problem statement as you refine your product/service prototypes.

3. What is the purpose of the interviews and why is it a critical step in design thinking?

Interviews are used to learn more about your potential customers and their problem or unmet needs. You need to interview several people affiliated with the problem so you can get multiple points of view and develop a better understanding of the problem. Then you can use this information to create personas, scenarios and come up with product and service ideas that solve the problem. Also by establishing relationships with your potential customers, you can go back to them and test your product or service prototype.

4. What are some of the interview best practices?

Ask open-ended questions (not questions easily answered by “yes” or “no”). Then ask follow-up questions such as “why?” to uncover deeper meaning, Listen with an open mind and afterwards reflect on what you heard to consider the insights that you gained. It is also recommended to record the interview (video (best) or audio).

5. What are some of the insights from the interview with Mei (citizen) and Suraj (first responder)? How do those insights guide the ideation process?

Mei



Terms defined:

Design thinking, design objective, design outcome, fieldwork, stakeholder, empathy, persona, scenario, insights, prototype, pitch

- A new resident of the town who had never been in a flood, didn't know her neighbors well, was completely unprepared for a flood
- There are many family members, locations and a cat to consider in emergency planning
- Information before and during a flood is critical for safety and comfort
- Her family is still unprepared for a flood because she doesn't want to face the possibility of another flood

Suraj

- It is difficult to predict the scale of a flood in advance
- There are not enough first responder resources to help everyone

These insights can be used to understand the people, the problem and how to solve the problem.

6. Why is empathy important in design thinking?

Empathy is understanding the people involved, how they do things, their physical and emotional needs, how they think, and what is most important to them within the context of your design challenge. By understanding your potential customers, you will uncover insights that give you direction to create innovative solutions.

7. What is the purpose of a prototype and why is it important that you create prototypes that are fast and inexpensive?

Prototypes are used to test your idea with a potential customer and get their feedback. The first few prototypes can be simple non-functional cardboard mock-ups, drawings or descriptions. The prototype will give you a tangible way to make your idea realistic and test with potential customers. Early prototypes should be quick, easy to make, and inexpensive, because your first idea will likely not be the final solution. You want a fast and cheap prototype so not a lot of time or money is wasted.

8. What is a "stakeholder"?

Anyone who has a vested interest in what you are creating can have a "stake" in its design and success. You may find that your idea is of interest to different types of end users, and there may be people who don't actually buy your product but do influence others who do buy it.

Group activity #1:

Divide the students into groups of 3 to 5. Assign a design challenge and have them come up with a problem statement along with interview questions. Ask the students to identify 2 or 3 stakeholders and interview them. Have them report back on the results and what insights they discovered. The design challenge might be related to their school or community. Focus on finding solutions (products/services) that can be sold.

Group activity #2:

Use the same group as above and ask them to brainstorm several ideas to solve the stakeholders' problem. Use the brainstorming rules in the course and try to come up with as many ideas as possible (quantity over quality at this point).

Group activity #3:

Interviewing is an important skill. In this activity, break the students into groups of 3, where one person is the "potential customer", one person is the "designer" representing the business, and the third person is the "observer" who takes notes and identifies missed opportunities for digging deeper. Take 5 minutes to conduct an interview. The observer is silent during the interview, but takes notes. After the 5 minutes, the observer describes what worked, and what could have improved the interview (potential follow-up questions, body language, other cues, etc.)

Technology skill

- Learn how to pitch a new business, product, or service to an investor or customer
- Download: The Design Thinking Process, Interview Guide, Persona Template, Mei Persona Examples

Discussion questions:

1. Why is a pitch different for an investor than it is for a potential customer?

The purpose of the pitch is unique to each audience. For an investor, you want funding and funders need to know that your business concept is a good investment. For a customer, you want them to be interested enough in your product or service to make a purchase. Customers want to be reassured that your product or service will solve their problem and that it's worth the cost.

2. How can I "pitch" and "listen" in the same conversation?

A lot has been written about selling, but it isn't what we often experience. Talk about benefits and give your customer time to express their interest and questions. Every customer conversation is a 'win' if you learn something along the way.

Group activity:

Have the same group as above that worked on a design challenge and interviewed stakeholders, to create a pitch for funding their idea. Have the groups present their pitches to the rest of the class. Have the audience (class) give feedback on the pitches. What did they learn, what did they like/dislike and would they fund the idea?

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Perfect pitch – how to create and deliver the perfect pitch

Strategic planning (Startup/innovate)

The course examines the process of strategic planning and using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to determine how to choose the best strategies to help a business reach its long-term goals.

Story

Arun and Cho consider their options to increase business for their pharmacy in Myanmar (Burma).

Business concept

- Learn about the strategic planning process businesses must undertake to adapt to a changing marketplace
- Learn about the types and sources of information needed to do a SWOT analysis
- Use SWOT analysis to choose the best strategies to help a business reach its long-term goals. Tips are provided to help prioritize strategic actions.
 - activity: The user is asked to select two business strategies (out of 8) based on a SWOT analysis of a pharmacy business to help the business meet their long-term goals
- Learn about how to best do a SWOT analysis and some of the pitfalls

Discussion questions:

1. In the story, what were the three approaches Aung and Cho discussed as options to expand the pharmacy business.
In the story Aung and Chu discussed opening stalls in the markets across town, developing a facebook page for the pharmacy and expanding the product line.
2. What problem or issue in the story supported one of the expansion options listed above?
A customer came in and asked for a new face cream that they did not have in stock. Expanding the product line could have eliminated this problem.
3. Why is strategic planning important for a business?
It helps to understand and analyze the marketplace and make the right strategic decisions. This helps a business grow and use resources efficiently.
4. Describe the two internal elements of a SWOT analysis.
In a SWOT analysis, strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) are internal measures. Strengths are the assets, resources, or capabilities that make an organization competitive. Weaknesses are the limitations or deficiencies within an organization that serve as obstacles to achieving its purpose.
5. Describe the two external elements of a SWOT analysis.
In a SWOT analysis, opportunities (O) and threats (T) are external measures. Opportunities are favorable current or prospective trends, changes, or needs that are being overlooked in the marketplace. Threats are unfavorable trends or changes in the marketplace that could cause damages or harm to the organization.
6. List and briefly describe the six steps of the SWOT analysis.
 - (1) Review the organizations mission statement and objectives
Is the mission statement action oriented and does it focus on the impact that the organization hopes to make in the marketplace.
 - (2) List and evaluate the organizations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
Draw on existing data, economic reports, customer survey reports, etc to develop, analyze and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
 - (3) Prioritize the strategic SWOT factors.
Rank the factors based on likelihood of occurrence and projected short and long term impact.
 - (4) Develop the strategies to address the combinations of internal and external factors.
Develop plans to minimize weaknesses and exploit opportunities.
 - (5) Choose the highest priority actions, implement, and monitor results.



Terms defined:

Mission statement, SWOT analysis, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Prioritize and align the strategies with your mission and resources.

(6) Revisit and revise the process periodically.

Refresh your SWOT analysis every 6-12 months.

7. What are three ways to help prioritize strategies?

One way would be to choose a strategy that matched your organizations mission; another would be to look for a strategy that would achieve a long term competitive advantage rather than a short term gain; and the third would be to consider your competitors and how they will respond.

Individual activity:

Have the students prioritize the two strategies for Aung and Cho based on the three tips discussed in the business concepts and in number six above.

Technology skill

- Learn how to create a SWOT analysis document that has supporting information integrated in to the document
 - activity: The user learns how to integrate documents (spreadsheets into a Word document)
- Additional tips are provided to insert, embed or link documents
- Download: SWOT matrix template to help the user complete a SWOT analysis for their business or business idea and prioritize strategic actions

Discussion questions:

1. What do you use to integrate spreadsheets into a word document?

You would use the **Insert Object** feature in **Word** to insert new or existing spreadsheets into word documents.

2. If you plan to make frequent changes to your excel table would you want to link or embed your table into your Word document? Why?

You would want to link an excel table that changes frequently because if it is linked anytime you make changes to the excel file it would automatically change the linked file. If you embed the table it would stay the same and have to be manually changed as changes were made.

Individual activity:

Have each student develop an excel table form for a simple SWOT analysis. Have them write a one paragraph summary of a SWOT analysis and insert the excel table into the document as a table and as an icon.

Group activity:

Start this activity with viewing the Strategic Planning and Strategic Management recorded presentations. Then divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have each group download the SWOT matrix template. Using the template, have them identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for a SWOT analysis of their school. Next have them come up with 4 strategies based on the SWOT and prioritize them. Have the students present and discuss.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- How to write your mission statement: Provides questions to ask, tips and examples to help create a mission statement
- SWOT analysis – How to do it properly: SWOT analysis best practices and examples
- Online SWOT analysis tool: A Silverlight based tool for doing a SWOT analysis
- SWOT analysis method and examples: Detailed guidance on SWOT analysis including examples and a template
- What's wrong with strategy: A Harvard Business Review article on strategy and common strategic planning mistakes

Technology Skill Resources:

Guidelines or tutorials

- Link or embed an Excel worksheet
- Link or embed a PowerPoint slide
- Add a PDF to your Office file

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What are some of the challenges small companies may face when doing strategic planning

Thinking long term, doing adequate market research and planning, change their habits from the old strategy to the new, maintaining new strategies over time and measuring and analyzing the results.

2. Identify a mission statement for a company. Consider the industry this company is in and research threats and opportunities that face businesses operating in that industry.

Answers will vary. Mission Statement Example: Advance Auto Parts Mission is to provide personal vehicle owners and enthusiasts with the vehicle related products and knowledge that fulfill their wants and needs at the right price. Our friendly, knowledgeable and professional staff will help inspire, educate and problem solve for our customers.

Threat: Research indicates that many young people aren't interested in owning a car. The rising purchase price of cars along with insurance, gas and maintenance are turn offs especially when the job market is tough. Many young people are moving to cities and turning to public transportation rather than owning a vehicle. Public transportation systems are growing nationwide. Car sharing programs and cell phone apps make it possible to arrange car transportation when needed.

Threat: Automobiles are incorporating more technology in vehicles. As a result, the threat of hacking is causing security concerns.

Threat: Purchasing parts online instead of from physical (brick and mortar) locations

Opportunity: Car owners interested in DIY (doing it yourself) to trim, detail and customize their vehicle

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- The SWOT matrix template
- The SWOT factor prioritization template

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Strategic Planning and Strategic Management (2 20 minute segments)

Greg Fisher, Assistant Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship at Indiana University Kelly School of Business provides a 5 step process to position a business to be more effective and successful

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE My business plan. My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Marketing** section of the My business plan and answer the strategic planning questions related to **Competitors**.

Social entrepreneurship (Startup/innovate)

The course provides information on how to build a financially sound business idea for a community problem.

Story

Leanne wants to solve an important problem in her community by helping children get healthy food so they are able to learn better at school.

Business concept

- Learn how to develop a business to solve a problem in the community
- Consider how social impact and financial soundness can go hand in hand
 - activity: User looks at three social enterprise case studies (Weaver's Hut in India, Riders for Health in Africa, First Book in the US and Canada) to understand the company, social impact and financial model
 - activity: User explores three ideas (school food service, cooking school, farmer's market) and decides which idea will have the most social impact for Leanne's community and will also succeed financially
- Learn some common mistakes to avoid and the next steps in setting up a social enterprise

Discussion questions:

1. In the story, what was the problem to be solved for Leanne that prompted her to want to start a new business?

As is the case with many new business startups, there was a need to be addressed (a problem to be solved). In this case it was the large number of children going to school without having eaten correctly and the impact that was having on their education.

2. What were the two areas of concern voiced by Leanna's friend regarding starting that business?

As is the case with many social enterprises, Leanna's friend wanted to know if the business would make a difference and would it be financially viable.

3. What is the difference between social entrepreneurship and a social enterprise?

Social entrepreneurship is an activity that uses innovation and market-based solutions to address social and environmental problems. A social enterprise is a business that has as its primary goals to provide a solution for a social or environmental problem while at the same time seeking to be financially viable.

4. What are 4 key principles behind a social enterprise?

- 1). It should have a clear social or environmental mission
- 2). It generates most of its income through selling products/services and not through charity
- 3). It reinvests most of its profits to continue its social or environmental mission
- 4). It measures success not only by its social impact but also through its financial viability

5. In the three social enterprises highlighted in the lesson, how were each of these enterprises alike?

Each of the enterprises highlighted not only addressed a social need, they also created a financial model that allowed them to be sustainable.

6. What are 3 common mistakes to avoid as a social enterprise?

- Not having a good understanding of the social problem being addressed
- Neglecting financial concerns in pursuit of the social mission
- Ignoring other products/services that already exist to address the social issue

Individual activity:

Identify a social problem that exists in your community and reflect on a new business that would make a difference in solving that problem.

Technology skill

- Use desktop or mobile software to record information needed to build a solid social enterprise



Terms defined:

Social entrepreneurship, Social enterprise

- activity: The user learns how to use Evernote to collect, record and share information and ideas. Tips are provided for recording audio notes, web-clipping, tags and virtual maps and locations.
- Download: The social entrepreneur’s journey, and building your social enterprise idea to help the user understand the steps to creating a social enterprise

Discussion questions:

1. In this section you learned how to create a notebook, create a note within the notebook, create a reminder, and how to share a note with others using Evernote. Briefly describe other features within this program.

1). Record Audio Notes:

This feature allows the user to create audio notes such as an interview.

2. Web Clipping

This feature allows the user to save useful website links for future reference.

3. Tags

Tags help you organize and search for notes you have created.

Individual activity:

Use the link provided in the lesson to download Evernote. Once downloaded, create a notebook, add a note to the notebook, share the note with a member of the class using email, create an audio note, and save a website link relating to any social cause that you are interested in.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- The power of unreasonable people: Article about how “unreasonable” entrepreneurs build their enterprises
- What is a social enterprise: Introduction of the concept of “social enterprises,” and characteristics
- Personal considerations for social entrepreneurs: Discussion of motivations that drive entrepreneurs, highlighting the financial and personal commitments of social entrepreneurship
- DoSomething.org: Information on a number of social and environmental causes
- How to build a social enterprise that makes money: e-book on building profitable social enterprises
- The social entrepreneur’s playbook: e-book summarizing field research on social entrepreneurship, and providing steps towards creating a social enterprise
- Profiles of successful social entrepreneurs from Schwab Foundation, Skoll Foundation and Ashoka

Technology Skill Resources:

- Evernote: A link to download Evernote including links to video tutorials, stories and tips

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What is the difference between a social enterprise and a company that makes philanthropic donations or coordinates community and volunteer efforts? Conduct an internet search to find an example of a company that does the latter.

The company that makes philanthropic donations and volunteerism focuses its core business on making a profit and building a strong business. Some of the profits and or business strengths (for example, employee base or brand recognition) are used to support a social need in some way. This is in contrast to the social enterprise that focuses its core business on the social issue. Examples might range from a company giving employees volunteer hours to work at a local food kitchen to larger efforts such as Avon’s support for breast cancer awareness and research.

2. Why does a social enterprise need a business plan?

The most obvious reason is that the social enterprise needs to generate enough money to cover costs and have funds to invest in future growth and development. Expenses that need to be covered are similar to those encountered by the more traditional business including items such as rent, utilities, salaries, insurance, legal fees and marketing. In addition to the financial aspect of the business, the social enterprise needs to look at issues including but not limited to market need, target market, the competition, personnel, infrastructure, legal issues and insurance just like a traditional business.

3. Many companies engage in a practice called “Cause Marketing” a marketing method in which a firm’s products or services are linked to a cause. Some people believe “cause marketing” is unethical. What are your thoughts?

“Cause Marketing” can be beneficial both for the business and for the cause. In many cases, the business donates a percentage of profits to the cause, therefore, helping with that organization’s financial stability. In addition, the partnership creates awareness and education about the cause. However, the partnership should be compatible. For example, a children’s cause wouldn’t form a relationship with a beer distributor.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- There will be the need to create notes on the research you will be engaged in while writing your business plan.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

3D printing (Startup/innovate)

The course provides information about the entrepreneurial opportunities 3D printing provides. 3D printing is compared to other manufacturing techniques and provides resources to help a person get started 3D printing.

Story

Marina has a 3D printing business. Marco needs a custom part printed to fix a broken water system. Marco provides the needed part specifications and Marina designs and prints the part.



Terms defined:

3D printing, additive manufacturing, formative manufacturing, subtractive manufacturing

Business concept

- Learn about 3D printing and how it compares to other manufacturing techniques (formative and subtractive)
- Examples are provided of industries and products where 3D printing is being used
- The business advantages of 3D printing are discussed – fast, enables new designs that can't be done using other manufacturing, access, etc.
- Access to 3D printing is easy and details are provided on several 3D print resources and services
 - Activity: The user is asked to think of a part they would like to 3D print, the material to be used and who they might sell the 3D part to

Discussion questions:

1. How does 3D print compare to other manufacturing techniques? What criteria would you use to pick the best manufacturing technique?

- Additive (3D printing) forms a solid object by layering material and bonding
- Formative presses or molds an object into the desired shape
- Subtractive, the part is created by cutting away material

Criteria:

- Cost per part
- Number (or volume) of parts to be created
- Complexity and other design criteria
- Material required

2. Everyone can have access to 3D design and print tools, resources and services. Discuss the different types of tools, resources and services available and how to use them.

3D design software tools to design a part

Libraries where you can download a part design

3D print service bureaus that will print your part

3D print marketplaces

Forums

3. Discuss the examples of 3D printed products provided in the course. What did the students find most interesting? What did the students want to 3D print? How might they start that process?

Answers will vary. To start the discussion, examples of 3D printed products includes clothes, shoes, jewelry and other artisan products, prosthetics, medical implants, automotive/aerospace parts.

To start the process, the student might browse libraries to find existing designs and download. Then use Tinkercad to edit the part.

4. Have the students use their imagination. What might be 3D printed in the future?

Answers will vary. Ask what makes the product a good fit for 3D printing – (answers could be complex, lightweight, needs customization)

Group activity:

1. Brainstorm a product they want to design and 3D print. There are some categories they might design for
 - A. A need in their community

B. A product that is needed in a natural disaster. It could be a product to prepare for a natural disaster or something needed after the natural disaster.

Have the group use the tools provided and see how far they get – idea, design, etc.

Have the groups present their ideas and the tools they investigated.

Technology skill

- Skills and resources for 3D design and print are provided
 - Activity: The user downloads a pipe part from Thingiverse, edits the part using Tinkercad and 3D prints using a 3D print service.
- Downloadables: 3D printing course overview, 3D printing materials, 3D printing processes and technologies, 3D printing tips, 3D printing market places, services and resources, 3D printing application areas

Group activity:

1. Explore and play with some of the free tools available – Tinkercad, SketchUp, Autodesk Meshmixer, Thingiverse. Download a free design from a 3D print library and edit the part using a tool of their choice.

Next steps

- 3D printing articles
- Business ideas
- Innovation/design thinking articles
- Business startup articles

Success mindset (Startup/innovate) – coming soon

The course provides information on how to create a vision for your future, set personal/professional goals and create a plan. The course also focuses on soft skills (strengths and business habits).



Story

Gianna, a woodworking and custom furniture business owner, talks about her vision to own her shop and how she was successful.

Business concept

- Learn about visions, goals and success plans and why they are important
 - Activity: User creates their vision, goals and a success plan
 - Activity: User does several activities on how to create a good goal
- Case studies are provided for real people who achieved their vision to help guide the user.
- Learn how to use your strengths and create good business habits to help you be successful.
 - Activity: A link is provided to a free Values In Action (character strengths) survey. The user takes a brief survey and a list of their strengths is provided. This can help user identify and think about their strengths. The survey is available in 40 languages.
 - Activity: There are tips and questions to help the user think about how to improve their strengths and create good business habits
 - Strengths covered in the course: Resilience, innovative/problem solver, confidence, courageous, resourceful, critical thinking
 - Habits covered in the course: take initiative, spend your time wisely and be well organized, expect excellence, keep your commitments, reach beyond your comfort zone, set a positive attitude, stress management, exercise, embrace change, journaling

Discussion questions:

1. Why is a vision important?
 - Empowering and motivating
 - Provides direction for your life and prepares you for the future (what skills and resources you need to be successful)
 - Encourages initiative-taking
2. Discuss each step of the goal framework and how this level of detail assists you in accomplishing your vision.
 - Specific:** provide a clear description of what needs to be achieved
 - Measurable:** include a metric with a target that indicates success
 - Achievable:** set a challenging target but keep it realistic
 - Relevant:** keep your goal consistent in achieving your vision. Think about what the reason, purpose or benefit of accomplishing this goal.
 - Time-bound:** set a date for when your goal needs to be achieved

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision into reality. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you must concentrate your efforts. You'll see the distractions that can easily lead you off track. Goals provide a way to measure your progress.
3. Why is developing a plan to achieve your vision important?
 - A plan is a roadmap or set of actions you need to achieve your vision and goals.
 - Gives you clear direction, helps identify skills/knowledge and resources required
 - Eliminates distractions and provides a way to measure your progress
4. The course discusses the importance of understanding and developing your strengths. Why is it more important to work from your strengths than working to improve weaknesses?
 - Leading with strengths takes less time and energy than developing weaknesses
 - An emphasis on weaknesses doesn't provide the same level of impact as focusing on strengths
 - You derive energy from working on strengths-it's more enjoyable to work on your strengths
5. Which of the habits in the course resonated with you and why? Are there other good habits not listed in the course that would be useful?
 - Answers will vary. The habits provided in the course are

- Take initiative
- Spend your time wisely and be well organized
- Expect excellence
- Keep your commitments
- Reach beyond your comfort zone
- Set a positive attitude
- Stress management
- Exercise
- Embrace change
- Journaling

6. When you think about accomplishing your vision, which obstacle will be the hardest to overcome? How will the resources provided in the course support you?

Answers will vary.

Individual activity:

1. This course guides users through a plan to make significant life changes. To share and reflect with other participants, it helps to know what led to their current vision and goals. It could be events, people who inspired them, hobbies/interests, values, and/or difficulties they experienced in their life. Have the student write two to three paragraphs on what led them to their vision and goals. This may be very personal, and they may not want to share with others.
2. Review the case studies. Which case study most resonates with your idea of success and why?
3. Reflect on a daily habit that supports you.
 - How did you develop this habit?
 - What is the impact if you skip the habit for a day or two?
 - Reflect on a daily habit that is sabotaging your success. This might be drinking coffee in the afternoon that negatively affects your sleep, it might be spending too much time on social media or waking up late in the day which impacts your productivity.
 - What would you be able to accomplish if you deleted this habit from your daily routine?
4. Pick one of the habits and outline how you will use the relate, repeat, reframe format to build this habit.
5. Have everyone set a date in their calendar – in 2 weeks, 2 months, 6 months to review their vision, goals and plan. Are they on track to accomplish what they set out to? How can they get back on track? Has their vision changed? Has their strengths and habits improved? How has creating a vision, goals and a success plan helped them?

Group activity:

1. Review the vision, goals and success plan of one of your classmates and provide feedback. Feedback can be difficult to deliver. Focus on two strengths and one piece of constructive feedback. What did you learn from reviewing your classmate's work? Did it inspire you to make changes to your own vision, goals and success plan? What are those changes?

Next steps:

Business and entrepreneurship skill articles

Leadership articles

Communication articles

Innovation/design thinking articles

Growth mindset recorded presentation

Basics of finance (Finance)

The course covers key expense types (start-up, fixed, variable), how these expenses affect profits and how to calculate the break-even point.

Story

Mariam is thinking about starting a business to sell bags. She doesn't know how much money she needs to start the business or how many bags she needs to sell each month to cover her expenses (break-even point).



Business concept

- Understand different expense types
 - activity: User sorts a list of typical expenses into start-up, fixed and variable costs by dragging and dropping into the three expense categories
- Calculate the break-even point
 - activity: User explores different types of expenses and how they affect profitability. The user adjusts the selling price, the number of months to repay the start-up costs, and various costs to reach a break-even point of selling one hundred bags or less per month.
 - Hint: There are several spreadsheet tabs and each tab contains cells highlighted in yellow that can be adjusted to reach one hundred bags or less per month break-even point

Discussion questions:

1. Why does Mariam want a loan from her mother?

Mariam has been hand making tote bags and has received positive feedback and requests from her friends to make them bags. She would like to quit her job and make and sell her bags. However she does not have the money needed to buy supplies and prepare marketing material. She is asking her mother for the “startup” funds needed to begin this business.

2. Do you think Mariam's mother was justified in wanting specific information from her daughter? Why or why not?

Answers will vary but should be indicative that wanting a specific number and an expected time for payback is a reasonable expectation for most lenders, even family members. Also, being able to determine how many bags Mariam will have to sell will provide her an idea of whether she has a large enough market for her product.

3. Describe the concept of break even as it relates to Mariam's business idea. What information will Mariam have to have to calculate her break even?

Break even for Mariam would be how many bags she has to sell to cover her expenses. She would need to know her costs, how much she is going to sell her bags for, and how many she expects to sell.

4. Describe the three types of costs Mariam will incur and give an example of each.

There are (1) Start-up costs: are one-time expenses that are necessary to start the business such as registering for a web domain name or paying for a lawyer to structure the business (2) Fixed costs: expenses for goods and services that do not depend on the number of bags Mariam is making such as monthly internet access fees, insurance, wages for the owner, or rental fees (3) Variable costs are costs that change based on the number of bags produced such as fabric, thread and labels for the bags.

5. Why does Mariam need to calculate a breakeven for her startup expenses separate from her ongoing fixed expenses?

The ongoing fixed expenses are expenses that need to be covered every month in order for the business to operate. The startup costs are usually paid back over an agreed upon period of time. By calculating them separately it allows Mariam to determine a realistic length of time to pay back her startup costs based upon her profit margins.

Group activity:

Assign groups of 3-5 the task of developing a bag to sell using a waterproof nylon material and cord instead of handles. Have them research the cost of the raw materials needed to produce this bag. Have each group develop a list of fixed and variable costs that they would incur if they were producing this bag in their home.

Technology skill

- Learn the basics of using spreadsheets
 - activity: User learns how to use formulas in a spreadsheet (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing)
 - Hint: User must input the formula exactly how it is stated in the instructions to successfully complete the exercise
- Download: Break-even point spreadsheet that the user can apply to their business idea or actual business and explore how the different expense types affect profitability and the break-even point

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the most basic way to develop a formula in an excel spreadsheet. What sign must be typed first?

The most basic way to develop a spreadsheet formula is to type it directly into the cell of the spreadsheet. All formulas must begin with the “=” sign.

2. Spreadsheets allow you to perform commonly used tasks with standard formulas. Describe what “=AVERAGE(B3:B8)” would calculate? What “=MIN(G6:G36)” calculate? And what would “=MAX(A1:A22)” calculate?

“=AVERAGE(B3:B8)” would calculate the average of the values in column B cells 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

“=MIN(G6:G36)” would identify the minimum value in the list of values in column G cells 6 to 36.

“=MAX(A1:A22)” would identify the largest value in the list of values in column A cells 1 to 22.

Individual activity:

Download the breakeven spreadsheet in excel or LibreOffice using the instructions in the downloadable resource section. Use the cost information you obtained for the nylon bags to determine your breakeven point for the bag assuming you have the same fixed and startup cost as Mariam.

Group activity:

Assign students to groups of three. For each group have them conduct research to determine the startup, fixed and variable costs in the categories Mariam identified. You could also (1) give them different dollar values of start-up loans they have been provided, (2) tell them they can no longer produce their product at home and have to add in a rental and utility charge of \$800 per month, (3) surprise them with an unexpected increase in raw material cost. Have the students use the spreadsheets downloaded to calculate their total fixed costs, variable costs, profit margin and breakeven points. Have each group determine how many they are going to produce the first year and justify their decision.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Types of costs: Six-minute video tutorial explaining the costs businesses incur and their classifications
- How to do a break-even analysis: Short explanation for break-even analysis covering costs, pricing, and limitations. Gives links to other online resources including break-even calculators.
- How to project profit and loss: Step by step instructions on how to project profit and loss. Features useful resources as well as related searches.
- Recorded Presentation: Basics of finance - Managing costs

Technology Skill Resources:

- LibreOffice: Free, online, office suite software with programs for documentation, calculation, presentation, database management, etc. Tutorials and manuals are provided.

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Why is calculating a breakeven cost useful for a business?

The break-even quantity, the number of units you need to sell to cover your costs, give a business an easy way to estimate profit and loss - any sales above that are profit, anything below means you're losing money. It could be used in a business plan for a start up to help validate the business viability - can you sell enough units of product to make a profit and at what price will you need to sell the product. It could also be used to test different pricing strategies, channels of distribution, product design options and business expansion plans.

2. Do you think Mariam has identified all her start-up and fixed costs? What are some additional costs she might encounter?

Mariam hasn't listed costs such as business licenses, sales tax permits and web page development. Other than the industrial sewing machine, she hasn't identified any supplies, equipment and furniture needed. While she has been making these bags on a small scale, chances are she will need additional equipment and supplies to produce the volume needed for a full time business. Her ongoing operating expenses also appear to be underestimated. Mariam needs to consider marketing costs, networking, delivery/distribution and labeling/packaging, to name a few. She requested money from her mother for advertising and brochures but hasn't included them in her calculations.

3. If Mariam needed to rent space to conduct her business, how would that affect her breakeven point?

If Mariam needed to rent space, her fixed costs would rise considerably and therefore, her breakeven point would as well. In addition to rent, Mariam would probably encounter costs such as utilities, signage, trash removal, additional insurance and leasehold improvements. Mariam would need to expand her production and product line before she could consider such a move.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- A list of your startup, fixed and variable costs
- A spreadsheet to be used to calculate breakeven

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Basics of Finances – Managing Costs (8 minutes)

HP Expert Gois Fouche walks through the fundamentals of finance

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to:

- The **Finance** section of the My plan and answer the finance questions related to the **Budget Narrative**.
- The **Marketing** section of the My plan and answer the finance questions related to the **Pricing Strategy**.

Profit and loss (Finance)

The course examines the easily overlooked expenses that can affect profits and provides a spreadsheet to calculate a business's profits and losses.

Story

Lorenzo recently started selling handmade greeting cards and business is good. He doesn't understand why there isn't enough money to pay his expenses.



Terms defined:

Overhead costs, net income

Business concept

- Understand and find hidden expenses (such as product samples, magazine subscriptions or books, lost or damaged products)
 - activity: Identify hidden expenses for a company
 - Three company examples are provided (manufacturing, service, retail). The user must identify hidden expenses for one company. The user spends time understanding the expenses of the company by clicking on objects provided. The user then clicks on a checklist and selects the hidden expenses. The user is provided the number of hidden expenses for each company.

Discussion questions:

1. Lorenzo is unhappy. Why?

Lorenzo does not have the money to pay his bills despite the sales of his cards being good and the cost of each card being less than the price he is charging.

2. What are the two expenses found by Lorenzo's friend that he was not including in his cost?

Lorenzo's friend found cards that had been thrown out when they did not turn out correctly and unsold cards that were produced that no one wanted.

3. Describe the concept of hidden expenses as it relates to Lorenzo's business.

Hidden expenses are the costs in producing the cards and overhead costs that Lorenzo has not considered. These costs impact his profitability.

4. List at least five of the hidden costs you discovered in Rachel's Math Tutoring business.

Students answers will vary but should include (1) coffee for entertaining parents; (2) cost of bus transportation to get to her students homes; (3) cost of office supplies such as notebooks that she likes to use for her students assignments; (4) cost of books and periodicals that she buys; (5) cost of the telephone that she uses to schedule her students; (6) cost of advertising.

5. List at least five of the hidden costs you discovered in Bethari's Batik Clothing business.

Students answers will vary but should include (1) priority shipping for repaired items; (2) subscriptions for periodicals and magazines to get ideas; (3) faulty raw materials such as thread that broke; (4) computer for email contact with her clients; (5) special colored tissue paper to wrap clothing; (6) office supplies.

6. List at least five of the hidden costs you discovered in Lesidi's fruit stand business.

Student's answers will vary but should include (1) spoiled fruit; (2) office supplies that he uses to keep track of what he buys and sells; (3) extra cost for fruit and drinks if he has to purchase additional items during the day; (4) ice for drinks and cold fruit; (5) transportation cost for gas and maintenance on his motor bike.

Group activity:

Assign groups of 3-5 the task of choosing a simple retail or service operation that they are familiar with (businesses such as small bakeries, landscape services, individual accountants work well for this exercise). Have the students develop a list of potential hidden costs for this business.

Technology skill

- Customize an income statement spreadsheet to calculate profit and loss
 - activity: The user learns how to insert/delete rows, add information, apply fill and borders to cells on an income statement spreadsheet
- Download: Income statement spreadsheet that can be applied to the user's business idea or actual business to calculate profit and loss

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the steps you take to delete a row or column in a spreadsheet.

Step one is to choose the row or column to be deleted. Step two is to click on the number on the far left or uppermost location to highlight the area. Step three is to click the delete button located on the home page tab at the top of the spreadsheet.

2. Describe the steps you would take to add a border to a cell in a spreadsheet.

Step one is to click on the cell that you want to modify. Step two click on the border button in the font section of the home page tab. Step three is to choose the type of border you want to add.

3. Describe the steps you would take to insert a new row in a spreadsheet.

Step one is to click on the row below where you would like the new row to appear. Step two would be to go to the home page tab and click on the insert button.

Individual activity:

Download the breakeven spreadsheet in excel or LibreOffice using the instructions in the downloadable resource section. Have students make some or all of the following changes to the spreadsheet. (1) Delete the row for general and administrative expenses. (2) Add a row for rental expenses. (3) Add a row for office supply expenses. (4) Change the background color for the Net Income row to yellow. (5) In the cell with the Net Sales insert a border on all four sides.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Wasp Barcode: Blog post that enumerates and explains the hidden costs of running a business
- Ohio State Profit/Loss: Fact sheet that gives a good overview of the topic, with in-depth explanations on types of expenses
- Score.org's Profit/Loss Workshop: Free online workshop on creating a profit/loss statement. Includes illustrations on possible formats.

Technology Skill Resources:

- Basic Tasks in Office 2010 (Windows): Article to help one get started on using Microsoft Excel. Lists instructions for basic tasks such as creating a formula, charting data, printing, etc.
- Microsoft Office Help and How-To's (Mac): Information, tutorials and videos for Microsoft Excel
- LibreOffice Calc: List of user guides documented for users of LibreOffice Calc
- YouTube Spreadsheet Tutorials: Help to get started using LibreOffice Calc spreadsheets

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What does a Profit and Loss statement tell the business owner? How can he use this statement to improve his business?

A Profit and Loss statement documents the sales (revenue) and the expenses for a given period of time such as a month or a year using the formula Revenue – Expenses. The bottom line of the Profit and Loss statement indicates whether the business made a profit during that period of time or experienced a loss. A business owner can use the statement to improve his business by looking at the relationship of sales to expenses and determining areas that might need to be addressed.

2. Review the Next Steps article 10 Hidden Costs of Running a Small Business on the Wasp Barcode Blog Post. Identify at least three ways a business owner might manage hidden costs.

Answers will vary and might include some of the following suggestions:

- While association memberships are important, carefully assess your choices by determining which will give you the greatest return for you money.
- Employees are expensive. Consider using other small businesses and independent contractors until your workload can justify paying an employee.
- Office space can be a big expense. Sharing space or subletting unused space can help cover overhead.
- Equipment doesn't always have to be new nor does the business need to own their equipment. Leasing is one of the most common methods of helping to fund a small business.
- Shop around and ask other business owners where they have found the best deals and rates for everything from credit cards to cell phone service.

3. A business owner might be tempted to eliminate some hidden costs to save money. Should a business owner stop accepting credit cards to eliminate the approximately 3% charge?

While this may vary according to the type of business, most businesses will benefit financially if they provide customers with the ability to pay by credit card. Intuit reports that 55% of the nation's 27 million small business owners do not take credit cards. However, 66 percent of all point of sales transactions are made using credit, debit or gift cards. Research also indicates that people tend to spend more money when using a credit card. In general, when a business owner considers eliminating a cost to save money, they need to consider the impact that decision will make on other aspects of the business.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- The download of the income statement spreadsheet.
- A list of the estimated costs and expenses as indicated on the income statement spreadsheet.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE My business plan. My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Finance** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to the **Budget Narrative**.

Finding funding (Finance)

The course explores how to determine how much funding is required, different funding sources, guidance on selecting the best funding source to match the business needs and what to consider before applying for funding.

Story

Mariam needs to find funding to expand her product line to include belts.

Business concept

- Learn how to determine how much money is required
- Learn about different sources of funds
- Identify the funding sources that are best for different business types
 - activity: User learns about six different funding sources (self-funding, loans from family and friends, government funding, microfinance, crowdfunding, bank funding), and what you need to know to successfully apply
- Learn how to increase your success to receiving funding
- Avoid predatory lenders

Discussion questions:

1. What are the first steps in the funding process?

Determine:

- Why you need the loan.
- How you are going to use the funds
- How long you need the funding

2. Describe the concept of self-funding as it relates to Mariam's business.

For Mariam to use self-funding she would use her personal financial resources such as her savings, personal credit cards or equity in her home. It would be limited to the resources she already has.

3. Loans from family and friends is a common source of small business funding. What do family and friends usually expect in return? What do you consider to be the most important pro and the most important con to asking for loans from family and friends? Why?

Family and friends usually provide funding for (1) expectation of the repayment of the loan, or (2) equity in the business. Student answers will vary on the most important pro / con but usually focus on the potential change in relationship that may occur as a negative and the ease of accessing funds or the recognition of the individual's character or creative repayment options as a positive.

4. What are the 3 critical factors to increase your funding success?

Know your business

- How much money do you need?
- For what purpose?
- How long do you need the money, how and when can you pay back the money?

What are the defenses in your business model?

What are your sources of funding?

Know your lender and what they require

- A well thought out business plan with demonstrable history of performance
- A funding need that can be supported and repaid by the business
- A strong founder / founding team – people who have demonstrated business success and teams that been together for a long time
- A well thought out and viable back-up plan – how lenders can get repaid if the business fails, such as assets, land, car etc.

Be prepared

- Know which sources will lend to you and which won't
- Compile your key business documents and have them readily available
- Start early
- Introduce competition



Terms defined:

Working capital, short-term expenses, collateral, guarantor, business plan, credit history, income/cash, flow projection, predatory lenders

- Seek financial advice

5. Lenders want to feel confident that they will be paid back. How can a new business owner assure the lender that this will happen?

Preparation is the key to instilling that confidence. Be aware, that preparation needs to begin years in advance by establishing a good credit rating. Evidence that you have used credit wisely and paid bills on time will help establish your reputation as a trustworthy, responsible individual. In addition, a well written business plan with industry research and financial projections that show you have studied the market carefully will provide additional support. Lending is a business as well and lenders, like business owners, must make decisions based on data.

6. What are the risks in using predatory lenders?

- Inability to repay loan
- Losing collateral or your business

Predatory lenders should be avoided!

Individual activity:

1. Have the students research any credit cards that market specifically toward small businesses. Have them choose a card, list the attributes of the card and the pros and cons they feel might exist for a small business such as Mariam's.

2. Have the students choose one of the lending sources that they would consider for potential funding. Have them explain in writing or through an oral presentation why they choose that source over the other potential funding sources.

Group activity:

Divide the class into six groups. Have each group choose one of the six common funding sources. Have them prepare a two to three-minute presentation on the source including a description of the source and its pros and cons.

Technology skill

- Learn about the different types of crowdfunding and the crowdfunding platforms that are available
- Tips and tools to improve your crowdfunding success
- Search for funding online
 - activity: Find a funding source using Google advanced search
- Downloadables:
 - Learn how others have found business funding
 - Five tips for a good business plan
 - Sources for finding funding
 - A guide for presenting to an investor
 - A checklist for applying for a small business loan
 - A spreadsheet for keeping track of your funding possibilities
 - Finding Funding course overview

Discussion questions:

1. Discuss the different types of crowdfunding and why you would use each one.

Donation crowdfunding is common in social causes and charities. Funders do not obtain any ownership or rights to the project.

Funders donate to a cause that they are passionate about.

Rewards -funders contribute money in return for products, perks or rewards. Rewards-based crowdfunding is usually leveraged to pre-sale a product or service.

Debt - funders provide a loan that must be paid back, usually at a low interest rate.

Equity - people invest in an early-stage unlisted company (a company that is not listed on a stock market) in exchange for shares in that company. A shareholder has partial ownership of a company and stands to profit should the company do well.

2. Discuss tips and tools to increase crowdfunding success.

Select the right platform

Do the research

- How much money do you need?
- Look at successful crowdfunding campaigns, make notes on why you think the campaign is successful. What did they do well?
- Are there already similar projects to yours
- Understand the steps you need to take

- Ask for advice
- Tools to use: Google advanced search

Create compelling content

- Tell a compelling, authentic story
- Be clear and understandable
- Be concise
- Tool to use: successful crowdfunding campaign as an example

Promote and build support

Promote deeply

- Make sure friends and family fund you
- Engage with them before the campaign starts

Promote broadly

- Reach out to bloggers, media sites
- Mass emails
- Use social media marketing
- Issue a press release

Engage with your backers

- Encourage backer-to-backer virality – e.g. thank you notes, referral bonuses
- Write updates when milestones are achieved, thank your backers

Tools to use: Email, social media platforms, press releases, online media tools, Bitly, Google adwords

Group activity:

Create a presentation to a funder. Think about what the funder wants to know. Present to the class and ask them if they would fund them (why or why not).

Next steps (English language version)

- Funding articles
- Sales articles
- Startup articles
- Adobe Acrobat Reader
- 5 Best Bookmark Management Tools
- Top 18 Free Email Services
- How to Prepare Your Loan Application
- AccionUSA Loans
- Kiva Zip (US only)

Tying it all together (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. One of the advantages of funding through family and friend is that terms can be negotiated to suit your needs – such as first payment not being due for 6 months. How could this help a start-up business?

It could be particularly helpful to a start-up business if terms were such that loan payments could start six months (or another designated period of time) after the business opens. This would provide time for the business to establish a customer base and cash flow. It would temporarily decrease money being taken out of the business and improve cash flow.

2. Some sources provide funding in exchange for equity. What are the pros and cons of equity?

Equity is an infusion of cash from an investor in exchange for a share of the business. “Pros” to this type of arrangement start with the fact that the equity provides cash for the business. In addition, it also often supplies a partner who has an interest in seeing the business succeed. That partner often brings skills and expertise to the table. Since the partner desires “pay back” through his return on his investment, the business owner isn’t tied to a rigid loan payment. And, if the business fails, he isn’t responsible for repayment.

The most significant “Con” to this arrangement is the fact that the business owner is giving up partial ownership in the business. In addition, there is a partner who will want to have his say and they might not always see eye to eye.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Cash flow (Finance)

The course shows the importance of monitoring cash flow and making business decisions based on cash flow.

Story

Bethari, who has a clothing business, discovers that she doesn't have enough cash to pay her bills.

Business concept

- Make effective decisions about how to manage cash flow
 - activity: The user manages cash flow each month by making purchasing decisions over a six-month period
 - Hint: The user needs to check the cash flow spreadsheet to ensure there is enough money that month before making a purchase decision

Discussion questions:

1. What problem was Bethari facing?

Bethari was keeping track of her income and expenses and knew she was making a profit but did not have enough money each month to pay the bills for her business.

2. What does Bethari's friend suggest?

Bethari's friend suggests that she needs to do a better job keeping track of what money is coming into the business and what money is going out of the business.

3. Define the concept of cash flow as it relates to Behari's business.

Cash flow is the amount of money Bethari is bringing into the business minus the amount of money she is spending for a specific period of time.

4. Explain the difference between cash flow and profit and loss.

While a business may be making money over the long term their cash may come in at varying amounts and times. A cash flow considers when the cash comes into the business.

5. Define a cash flow projection. How does a business use a cash flow?

A cash flow projection uses information to forecast the amount of incoming cash and outgoing cash your business will incur at different times. It is used to indicate when your business may be short of cash and prepare for this in advance by saving more or tap into other funding sources. And when a business might have excess cash that can be used for business investments.

6. How can you prepare a cash flow projection for a company with no past financial history?

For new businesses with no financial history, you would research the market that your business operates to determine the busy and slow times. Remember cash flow projections are only estimates of trends.

Individual activity:

Have the students identify a business that would have an uneven cash flow and have them prepare a simple line graph by months indicating the busy and slow times of the business.

While students' answers will vary, lawn care services and accountants work well as examples for this activity.

Technology skill

- Use a spreadsheet to track cash flow
 - activity: User learns how to format cells, copy worksheets to new tabs. This activity also provides additional spreadsheet tips such as copying/pasting and conditional formatting.
- Download: Cash flow projection spreadsheet to apply to the user's business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the way you would change a cell number format in a spreadsheet.



Terms defined:

Break-even point, cash flow

To change a cell number format you would go begin by highlighting the cells you want to change. You would then go to the home tab at the top of the screen and select "Format Cells". In this area you would choose "Number" and indicate the numerical format you want.

2. Describe the difference between a workbook and a worksheet in Excel. How would you copy or move a worksheet?

A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet file is also called a workbook. In the workbook there are different worksheets. To move or copy a worksheet, you would begin by going to the home page tab at the top of the screen. Select "Format" and then "Move or copy sheet" from the drop down menu. Note: there is often more than one way to do many functions on Excel.

3. Explain how worksheets are indicated? How would you personalize them by changing the color or name of their tabs?

Worksheets are indicated by tabs at the bottom of the screen. To personalize the tabs, begin by bringing up the worksheet you want to personalize on the screen. Go to the home page tab at the top of the screen. Select "Format" and then under the organize section in the drop down menu you would choose "Rename sheet" to give the worksheet a unique identifier on the tab or "Change color" to change the physical color of the tab. Note: there is often more than one way to do many functions on Excel.

Individual activity:

Download the cash flow worksheet. Personalize the worksheet by doing some or all of the following: (a) changing it to print gridlines (b) making a copy of the worksheet and naming the copy using a colored tab (c) changing the visual aspect of the copy spreadsheet by making the numbers green, the fonts 14 Calibri, and (d) copying the numerical rows and pasting them beside the original rows. Have students print and turn in the new worksheets.

Group activity:

Divide students into groups of three to five. Using the resources listed in the Next Steps section, have students prepare a three to five minute presentation on two common cash flow mistakes and how they could be avoided.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Seven Common Cash Flow Problems Faced by Small Businesses: Brief explanation of seven common cash flow problems and the reasons why small businesses experience them
- Cash Flow Calculator: A handy online calculator that helps one see the effect of sales, inventory, credit terms, and other variables on their company's cash flow
- Cash Flow Statement: In-depth information for understanding the cash flow statement, divided into seven sections. Includes sample cash flow statements to illustrate concepts discussed.
- Common Cash Flow Mistakes: Brief explanation of four cash flow mistakes and tips on how to avoid them.

Technology Skill Resources:

- Top Five Excel Formatting Tips: Quick and easy tips to make excel spreadsheets look better and clearer
- Eight Tips to make you a Formatting Pro: An illustrative guide to excel spreadsheet formatting. Complements the resource above with slightly more advanced formatting tips.
- OpenOffice Spreadsheets: Two chapters of online tutorials to help one get started with using OpenOffice spreadsheets. Each chapter is divided into specific lessons to easily select a topic of interest.
- LibreOffice Spreadsheets

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What are some reasons a small business experience cash flow problems?

Answers will vary. Undercapitalization, a result of poor planning, is one of top reasons for cash flow issues and business failure. Other reasons are outstanding (uncollected) accounts receivable, seasonality, significant change in demand (having to significantly ramp up or down products or services), too much money tied up in inventory, increase cost of raw materials or product components, poor planning or unexpected expenses.

2. What can a small business owner do to avoid cash flow problems related to customer payments?

As a small business owner, the ideal customer payment is cash on delivery or payment by credit card. However, if that isn't possible, conducting customer credit checks in advance is critical. This increases the likelihood that you are entering into business agreements with those who have an acceptable track record for paying their debts. Offering term discounts for early payment (for example net 2/10 net 30 – payment is due in 30 days but the customer receives a 2% discount if payment is made in 10 days) or

charging a penalty for late payment can also help avoid cash flow problems related to customer payments. Credit insurance might also be considered especially for businesses dealing globally.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Download the “Cash Flow” worksheet
- Research the market of your business to identify any significant cash flow issues

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Finance** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to the **Budget Narrative**.

Sales forecasting (Finance)

The course explores how to gather information used to make a sales forecast. A reliable sales forecast is vital to business planning.

Story

Walid runs a food truck and needs to forecast how much he will sell each month. He has a seasonal business and is planning to start catering.

Business concept

- What is a sales forecast and why is it important
- Learn how to create a sales forecasting process
- Learn about factors that can affect a sales forecast (such as seasonal trends, market size, competition)
- Learn different methods to create a sales forecast (historical, pipeline, fixed capacity)
- Learn how to create best case, most likely and worst-case scenarios

Discussion questions:

1. What was Walid attempting to do in the story?

Walid was attempting to project how much he was going to sell each month.

2. What was making this difficult for Walid?

The weather impacts his sales and it is difficult to accurately project the weather each month. Also he was going to begin catering and he did not have historical data for catering sales.

3. Why is sales forecasting so important and how can a bad forecast impact your business?

In existing businesses:

Operations – your business capacity (staff, inventory and production equipment) needs to match the sales forecast. The sales forecast can help you know how many products to make and when.

Marketing – the sales forecast will affect your product, promotion and pricing plans. You may need to enhance your product or service due to strong competition.

Sales – the sales forecast can affect how you allocate your sales resources and strategy

Finance – the sales forecast will impact your revenue, profits, budget (purchasing decisions) and cash flow.

When starting a business:

Sales forecasting is critical for determining pricing, staffing, inventory and funding when developing your business plan.

4. Define the concept of a sales forecast as it relates to Walid's business.

Walid's sales forecast is a projection of the amount of sales and potential revenue he might expect to receive over a defined period of time.

5. List three benefits of a reliable sales forecast.

Student answers will vary but the items identified in the business content section include (a) allow you to estimate your income; (b) indicate the amount of products or services that need to be produced; (c) show your business potential to investors; and (d) allow you to manage your cash flow.

6. List three things that could influence a sales forecast.

Student answers will vary but the items identified in the business content section include (a) seasonal trends; (b) size of your market; (c) business history; (d) laws; (e) events in your community or geographical area; (f) economy; (g) market demand; (h) competitors; and (i) suppliers.

7. Based on records from prior years, an ice cream shop owner in a popular tourist area determined the average individual sale in his shop to be \$4 with an estimated 200 customers each day during the month of June. Using the formula: \$4 average sale x 200 customers per day x 30 days he projected sales of \$24,000 in June. What events might take place that could affect this forecast?

Answers will vary. A colder than normal June might cause a dip in sales. The economy may be in a slump and limit the number of vacations taken to popular tourist spots. Or, ice cream may lose popularity based on a health or diet craze or a new product in the



Terms defined:

Conditional formatting

marketplace. Supplies could also affect sales if manufacturing or delivery issues such as strikes or increasing fuel costs affected the availability of the product.

The reverse could also happen. Sales might increase because of particularly hot weather, a booming economy causing an increase in tourism or a new ice cream product which gains popularity. Unplanned events such as a local sports team progressing to a playoff might also have a positive effect on sales.

8. List three ways to collect information to develop a sales forecast.

Student answers will vary but the items identified in the business content section include (a) analyzing business records (historical); (b) surveying current and potential customers (pipeline); (c) published consumer data; (d) interviews of other businesses; and (e) observing trends in other businesses.

9. When should you create a best case, most likely, worst case scenario?

- there is a lot of uncertainty in your sales forecast
- you may have to provide this to a potential lender to prove even in the worst case scenario you can pay back your loan

Group activity:

Divide students into groups of three to five students. Have them choose a simple business idea to potentially open in their local geographic area or college campus. Perhaps a coffee shop, a bagel shop, a lawn care business would be appropriate. Have them answer the following questions for that business: (1) how to make a sales forecast; (2) why make a sales forecast; (3) what to watch out for in your sales forecast; and (4) how often do you update your sales forecast. Have each group summarize and present to the class.

Technology skill

- Use a spreadsheet to track a sales forecast
 - activity: The user learns how to copy formulas across cells and apply conditional formatting to the sales forecast worksheet. Additional tips on cell referencing and absolute cell referencing.
- Download: Sales forecasting tips and a sales forecast worksheet that can be applied to the user's business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. List three no cost software tools that allow you to create and edit spreadsheets.

(1) LibreOffice; (2) Apache OpenOffice; (3) Google Docs

2. Define conditional formatting and describe how you would create a conditional formatting rule in Excel.

Conditional formatting is changing the visual appearance of cell based on specific criteria. To create a conditional formatting rule you would begin by selecting and highlighting the cells where you would like to apply the rule. Then in the Home tab select the conditional formatting option. A drop down menu will give you rules to choose.

3. Almost every calculation or formula you create in spreadsheet software uses referenced cells. Describe a cell reference. How is this different from an absolute reference cell? How is an absolute reference cell indicated?

A cell reference is a function that points the spreadsheet software to another cell in the worksheet. An absolute cell reference tells the spreadsheet to always refer to a specific cell no matter where a formula or calculation is pasted. It is indicated by the "\$" symbol.

Individual activity:

Download the sales forecast worksheet. Have students determine two different conditional formatting rules that they think would help them use the information on the spread sheet. Add the rules to their Excel spreadsheet and prepare a hypothetical sales forecast to illustrate the rules used in the spreadsheet,

Group activity:

1. Using the same groups and business they selected in the group activity above, have them downloadable sales forecast spreadsheet develop a sales projection for their hypothetical business concept. The projection should use real data from interviews, economic and seasonal trends, personal observation, etc.

2. Divide students into groups of three to five. Using the resources listed in the Next Steps section, have students prepare a three to five minute presentation on ways to improve sales forecasting.

Next steps (English language version)

- Tips for Improving Sales Forecasting
- Creating a Sales Forecast
- Tips for Forecasting Initial Sales for a New Business
- Google Trends Web Search Analytics
- Sales strategies
- Invoice template
- Sales articles
- Move or Copy a Formula
- Apply Conditional Formatting
- 10 cool ways to use Excel's conditional formatting feature
- OpenOffice Spreadsheets
- LibreOffice Spreadsheets

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. How often would you want to review and revise your sales forecast? And why?

The answer will vary depending on the business and the business/market conditions. Some of the reasons a company might want to review their sales forecast often (weekly or even daily) could be tight cash flow, tight supply chain or inventory control - they need to match demand with supply very closely, short sales cycles, seasonality, a significant change in demand of a product or service (sudden ramp up of sales or decline).

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Download the “Sales Forecast” worksheet
- Identify three sources of information that could be used to project the sales for your business

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

CRM - Increase Your Sales (6 minutes)

HP Expert Petro Plotz talks about customer relationships and how this can increase sales.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build and effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Finance** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to the **Budget Narrative**.

Social media marketing (Marketing)

The course provides steps on how to create a social media marketing plan.

Story

Alejandro is trying to find new ways to grow his café business. Social media is an option but he doesn't know what will work for his business.



Terms defined:

Editorial calendar, response plan, organic posts, paid promotional content

Business concept

- Understand the benefits of social media channels
- Learn the steps to create a social media marketing plan
 - activity: The user explores three businesses examples (beauty salon, jewelry distribution, website design) and learns about their social media marketing plan including examples of their blogs, Facebook and Twitter content used to market their products or services

Discussion questions:

1. What was the basic problem Alejandro was facing with his business?

While he has generated reasonable sales for a new business, the increase of new customers has leveled off. He knows that to grow he has to increase sales even more.

2. Which of Alejandro's customer segments would be a perfect audience for using social media?

His large number of young customers would be a perfect audience for social media. Young professionals are shown to be heavily involved with social media.

3. What are the advantages of social media over other 'traditional' promotional channels like advertising?

Social media is inexpensive, flexible, easy to target a specific audience, can connect and interact with customers and good tools to measure the results.

4. What are the 6 steps in creating a social media marketing plan? You can use the case studies to discuss how businesses applied the steps.

1. Define your goals
2. Define your audience
3. Create compelling content
4. Engage your audience
5. Measure success
6. Revisit these steps as you learn what works and what doesn't

5. Why is it important to measure the effectiveness of social media? How can you do this?

Why is simple...you need to measure the effectiveness to know if you are reaching the goals you have for using social media. As with all goals, these should be specific, have measurable outcomes and a specific time frame.

There are many tools available to analyze the impact of your social media efforts. Explore those available through Facebook and Twitter as well as tools such as Google Analytics and Hootsuite.

6. Did you find the Facebook pages of the three examples to be effective? Why or why not?

Each appeared to be professionally done with a focus on their target market. All three had professional looking graphics and utilized the layout features of Facebook appropriately.

Individual activity:

Select a company that you are familiar with and critique their Facebook page. Would you consider purchasing from this company based upon their page? What would you change to strengthen the effectiveness of this company's Facebook page and why?

Technology skill

- Create a Facebook business page for Alejandro's café and then create an ad
 - activity: The user creates a Facebook business page and ad targeted to Alejandro's customers.

- Download: Course Overview, Choose a Platform, Open an Account, Create a Facebook Ad, Content Editorial Calendar Template, Social Media Planning Template, Social Media Tip Sheet. The downloadables can be used to create a social media marketing plan for the user's business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. What were the main steps in creating a Business Facebook page?
A profile picture, a cover photo, a user name and a short description.
2. What are some things you must decide on when creating a Facebook ad?
 - the appearance of the ad
 - who is your audience – including location, age group, gender
 - the budget for the ad, and the run time you will use

Individual activity:

Design a Facebook ad for a business idea you have. Decide on your audience you would target (location, age and gender).

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Social media marketing articles
- Marketing/branding articles
- Mastering social media marketing
- Effective communications for small business marketing

Technology Skill Resources:

- Facebook for Business: Steps for how to build a business Facebook page and create ads on Facebook
- Twitter for Business: Instructions, success stories, best practices, and other Twitter web-marketing tools
- Ten Best Blogging Platforms: The benefits of blogging and ten of the best blogging platforms

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Dmitri from Studio D recommends that you make your social media interactive to increase customer engagement. Identify some ways a business owner could do that.

Responding to customer comments is one means of creating an interactive environment within social media. Conducting a contest, offering giveaways and polling customers can also engage an audience and send the message that you are interested in what they think. It doesn't have to be complicated. In Niraagi's jewelry business blog, she asked one simple question, "Where should I go next?" My Starbucks Idea is an excellent example of customer engagement through social media. This site invites customers to post, vote on, and discuss ideas they have for Starbucks with other customers. In addition, customer can see examples of customer ideas which have been put into action. And, of course, it is important to offer excellent content which focuses on benefits to the consumer rather than just talking about your business.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- A Facebook page for your business

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Social Media Marketing (17 minutes)

HP Expert Stu Greenbaum shares strategies on effective social media marketing

Mastering Social Media Marketing (57 minutes)

Samantha Becker Adams tells you how to develop consistent social media practices and create a thriving community for your business.

Effective communication for small business marketing (12 minutes)

HP Expert Shari King shares strategies on effective communications for small business marketing.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Marketing and Sales** section of the My plan and answer the social media marketing questions related to **Marketing Plan**.

Unique value proposition (Marketing)

The course uses customer reviews of a business and its competition to help pinpoint the business's unique value.

Story

Paul and Loretta own a guesthouse. They want to increase business and are trying to determine their unique value proposition, which can be used to design their advertising.

Business concept

- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of a business and its competition
- Translate analysis into a unique value proposition
 - activity: The user reads customer comment cards, online reviews of the guesthouse and its competition. The user makes note of strengths and weaknesses in several business aspects, like food and location, to determine what makes the guesthouse unique and selects the best unique value proposition.

Discussion questions:

1. Why do Paul and Loretta need to determine their Unique Value Proposition (UVP)? What do they hope to gain by doing so?

Paul and Loretta need a unique value proposition to help them establish their niche in the marketplace. It will help them establish a brand and make it easier to communicate the benefits that their guest house offers customers. By determining their UVP, they can compete against other hotel and motel chains by telling the customers about their benefits.

The UVP will also help them connect with their specific target market. Their market isn't everyone...it's the person who is looking for a more personal, homelike experience not available in a hotel. In the process of identifying their UVP, they will begin to understand their target market better and more clearly understand what that market is looking for in a guesthouse experience.

2. In your own words, how would you define Unique Value Proposition?

Answers will vary. Your unique value proposition is a clear statement, in line with your market's challenges and desires, communicating the unique contribution your company, product and services provide to your market different than your competitors.

3. How might Paul and Loretta determine a Unique Value Proposition for their guest house?

Paul and Loretta's best options for determining a UVP are to study the marketplace as well as their current and potential customer base.

They can study the marketplace by looking at the offerings of other guesthouses both in their own geographic vicinity as well as those in other markets. They can do this personally by going to the businesses and/or by researching on the internet using Google and tools such as Yelp and Trip Advisor. A competitive matrix chart might be helpful in this process. Researching those in other markets can be helpful as long as they are aware that customers in different markets may have different needs and desires.

Comment cards from past and current customers can give Paul and Loretta insight into their thoughts about the current offerings of the guesthouse. On those comment cards, they should also include an option for customers to make suggestions for improvements or additions. Surveys of potential customers could also provide insight. Travel agents and other "gatekeepers" who can connect them with potential customers might be a valuable source of information as well.

4. Identify the Unique Value Proposition for a company you are familiar with. What does this Unique Value Proposition do for this company?

One example: Southwest Airlines provides an excellent example of a Unique Value Proposition with their Bags Fly Free feature. This offering makes them different from any other airline and helps them stand out from the competition. Customers tired of being limited to a small suitcase, dragging their luggage on board or paying extra baggage fees will think of Southwest first when they are planning a flight.

5. Experts caution new business owners who want to use the Value Proposition "Price". Why should this Value Proposition be used with caution?

A common joke among business consultants refers to the client who wants to differentiate their business on price. The saying goes "they lose money on every sale but make it up in volume." Face it, the small business owner often has increased costs



Terms defined:

Unique value proposition

because of their size. They can't buy in volume and lack the negotiating powers of the "big guys". Therefore, competing against those "big guys" on price can often be the worst choice for a value competition. The personal service Paul and Loretta can offer will contribute to building a solid business base....low prices won't. A UVP of Price is usually better left for the "big guy".

Individual activity:

Research a local or national company not identified in Discussion Question 4 above and identify that company's UVP. Does the UVP give the company a competitive edge? Do you feel the UVP is strong and effective? How do you see it being used in their marketing?

Group activity:

Assign groups of 3-5 a business and provide each group a website address for that business. Have each group create a "comment card" for that business to use with existing customers. A spokesperson from each group shares their comment card with the class for discussion.

Technology skill

- Conduct an effective internet search for information about the competition
 - activity: The user learns how to use key words and advanced search features to find relevant information. Additional search tips are provided.
- Download: A unique value proposition table to list strengths and weakness of the user's business and the competitors (Exploring the Competition)

Discussion questions:

1. When conducting an internet search on an industry or the competition, it is important to first identify your goals and/or questions to be answered. Why?

Searching without goals or focus will most likely result in wasted time and perhaps lead you to conclusions that won't really help in the formation of a UVP for your business. It's easy to get caught up in an internet search and find an abundance of information that doesn't relate to your purpose. Carefully formulate your questions before you start your search.

2. Have students review the worksheet "Exploring the Competition" found in the module at the end of the Technology Download. Discuss and brainstorm the various "Aspects of Business" that might be used to compare a business to the competition. Commonly used "aspects" include Price; Quality; Unique Features; Distribution System; Marketing and Advertising; Locations; Strengths and Weaknesses. Point out to students that they can create a comparison table that more precisely compares businesses within their industry by making their "aspects" more focused. Depending on the industry, this might include "aspects" such as service, selection, delivery, warranties, market share and customer service. They might even use very specific "aspects". For example, Paul and Loretta might look at proximity to public transportation, number of guest rooms and parking.

Individual activities:

1. Review an article found in the Next Steps section of this module. What does it add to the discussion of Unique Value Proposition?

2. Identify the business idea you are most interested in pursuing.

- Develop a question(s) that will help you research the industry or competition and facilitate the development of a UVP.
- Use that question to conduct an internet search. Discuss your findings.

3. Using the "Exploring the Competition" (downloadable template at end of technology skill) as a model, create a comparison table for your business or business idea.

4. Complete your "Exploring the Competition" (downloadable template at end of technology skill) worksheet to study your competition.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Ten Value Proposition Examples: List of attributes that should be highlighted in value propositions, plus examples
- How Do You Develop a Unique Value Proposition: Description of a UVP and steps to create one
- Useful Value Proposition Examples: What a UVP is and is not, tips on an effective UVP, good and poor examples of UVPs

- Recorded Presentation: Effective communication for small business marketing
- Recorded Presentation: Branding your business
- Recorded Presentation: Running lean

Technology Skill Resources:

- Twenty User Review Websites Critical to Small Business: Explanation of the importance of user reviews, plus twenty business review websites
- Seven Local Business Review Sites Influencing Your New Customers: Ten review and business listing sites that have a large online presence and influence
- Yelp Alternatives: A comparative analysis of nine of the biggest, most popular user-review websites for service-based businesses

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Review the Next Steps article “Useful Value Proposition Examples (and How to Create a Good One)”. Think beyond the examples provided in the article and identify the unique value propositions of a well-known company. How have they established this Unique Value Proposition? Conduct your own research to find out.

Answers will vary. Zappos is an excellent example. Zappo’s UVP is based on customer service and the core of that customer service is their call center. Extreme care is put into hiring the right employees and training them to provide an extraordinary customer experience.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Unique value proposition for your business
- Exploring the competition chart

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Effective Communications for Small Businesses (12 minutes)

HP Expert Shari King shares strategies on effective communications for small business marketing.

Branding Your Business (8 minutes)

HP Expert Abena Larbi-Odam takes you through the basics of branding your business and why it is important.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Product/Service** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to **Unique Value Proposition**.

Selling online (Marketing)

The course shows how to maximize the effectiveness of online product-listings.

Story

Mariam has run out of new customers in her local area and needs to find new places to sell her bags. She wants to try to sell her bags online to reach a larger audience.



Business concept

- Understand core principles of selling online
- Create effective titles, descriptions, and photographs for your online product-listing
 - activity: The user examines an online product-listing and learns what makes it effective. Aspects of picture quality and angles, product titles, description and price are discussed. The user applies that knowledge to look at other online product-listings and find areas for improvement.

Discussion questions:

1. What was the problem Mariam faced with her new business?

Sales have been declining after very brisk initial sales.

2. What did her friend suggest might have caused this decline in sales and how could she fix this problem?

Her friend suggested that it was probably caused by the business outgrowing its local market and that the local market was not large enough to support sales growth. The solution offered by her friend was to expand her market reach geographically by selling online.

3. To be effective with images on a product listing site, what characteristics are best?

- Images should be clear and in focus
- A neutral background such as white should be used
- Only include the product in the photograph
- Use proper lighting
- Crop the photograph properly to exclude any unwanted distractions
- Provide multiple angles of the product to give a better perspective of the product

4. What should be included in the description portion of a product listing?

A concise, well organized, easy to read, and proofed description of:

- What is being sold
- Benefits of the product
- Size
- Make and brand name

5. Why is it important to include keywords about your product in the title of your product listing?

The inclusion of descriptive keywords better allows potential customers to easily find your product on a listing site.

Individual activity:

Go to eBay and select an example of a good product listing and of one that needs improvement. Identify why the second one needs improvement.

Technology skill

- Improve photographs using photo-editing software
 - activity: The user learns about picture backgrounds, lighting, framing and editing to create an effective product picture. Edit photos using crop, brightness and rotation.
- Download: A list of online marketplaces and descriptions, and a guide for planning an online listing that the user can apply to their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. What is one of the most important (if not the most important) elements of a product listing?

The photograph

2. Why is white a good background for a photograph in a product listing?

Neutral colors, especially white, serve as a good background because they remove distractions.

3. What is the best lighting (if available) for a photograph to be used in a product listing?

If available, natural light supplemented with one artificial light is usually the best option. Too much natural light such as direct sunlight is not a good choice.

4. What is the purpose of each of the editing tools discussed in this lesson (Cropping, Rotating, and Brightness)?

- The crop option allows you to only include what you need to include in the photograph and removes other distracting elements.
- The brightness element allows you to have the right amount of brightness thus improving clarity in the photograph.
- The rotate function allows you to choose various angles to display your photograph.

Individual activity:

Using the “Planning your Online Listing” guide provided in this lesson, prepare an online product listing. Select a personal item and take a photograph of the item. Prepare an appropriate title, description and keywords. It is not necessary to provide a price.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Where Can I List? Description of seven of the biggest and most widely-used online marketplaces, compiled specifically for HP LIFE users. Links to tutorials are provided.

Technology Skill Resources:

- Seven Tips to Improve Product Photography: Useful techniques for product photography
- Guide to eBay Auction Photography: Techniques for product photography, including guidelines for specific product types such as clothing and jewelry
- Photoscape: Guide to using Photoscape photo-editing software for PCs
- Paint.NET: Link to free image and photo-editing software for PCs
- GIMP - The GNU Image Manipulation Program: Link to free image and photo-editing software for PCs and Macs
- Seashore: Link to free image and photo-editing software for Macs

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Explore the various online marketplaces. What additional fees might be encountered when listing on these sites?

Fees vary by site but might include: listing fees, transaction fees, advertising, shipping, payment processing, currency conversion and wholesaler fees. Listing fees are generally charged for a specific period of time and can be renewed for an additional fee. Transaction fees are a percentage of the selling price. If you offer a discount to a customer, your transaction fee may be based on the original price. Read all procedures carefully.

2. Have you purchased from an online marketplace (not an individual web page)? Why did you choose this type of retailer? What was your experience?

Answers will vary. Many students will indicate that they chose the online marketplace in search of something unique or a very specific product.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Examples of good and bad online product listings with your analysis of why it is good or bad

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

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HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Setting prices (Marketing)

The course explores how to price products and services effectively.

Story

Alejandro owns a café and is trying to decide if he should raise the price of his popular coffee.



Business concept

- Learn what variables to consider and the common mistakes when setting prices for products and services
 - activity: The user is provided summaries of three businesses (bake shop, piano lessons, and Alejandro’s café) and must select the best price for the product or service. The cost, competitor pricing and value of the product or service are provided.

Discussion questions

1. In the opening story, Alejandro was told by his friend that his prices were too low and that he should consider raising them. What was the reason that Alejandro gave for not raising his prices?

Alejandro indicated that he would lose customers if he raised his prices.

2. On what grounds did Alejandro use to come up with that conclusion?

Alejandro had no grounds for thinking this would occur. He had not investigated the prices (or the perceived quality) of his competitors’ products.

3. What are three approaches a business owner should use in setting prices for their products?

- Analyze their own costs associated with providing their product
- Decide on how they want their customers to perceive their product
- Determine what their competitors are charging for similar products

4. What are some common pricing mistakes many small business owners make?

- Pricing too low
- Pricing too high
- Forgetting to consider costs
- Charging the same price as competitors
- Discounting price rather than adding value to their product

5. What are two downfalls of pricing too low?

Pricing too low could potentially prevent a business from making a profit—at a minimum it decreases the profits the business could be making. It may also cause their customers (or potential customers) to think that the quality of their product is low.

Technology skill

- Use word processing software to create and customize tables for comparing and analyzing variables in setting prices
 - activity: User learns how to insert a table, add rows and columns and change the page orientation in Microsoft Word. Tips are provided to help design the table, merge/split cells and change cell height/width.
- Download: Price comparison worksheet the user can apply to their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. In this section you learned how to use some of the tools available when working with tables in Word. To create a table in a word document you would begin by following what steps?

Whether you are opening a new document or wanting to include a table in a document you are already working on, you would begin by using the “Insert” command found on the upper tool bar. After selecting “Table” in terms of what you want to insert, you then would decide the number of rows and columns by highlighting these amounts either by using the table or by entering specifically the appropriate number of each.

2. Often when working with an existing table we will find that we need additional rows or columns. How would you add both columns and rows to an existing table?

Once you have created a table use the Table Tools option. Select “Layout” and then the appropriate insert option—insert above or below for rows, and insert left or right for columns.

Individual activity:

Create a table that captures the following information related to potential competitors of Alejandro. Competitors include Bad Joe, OK Java, and Coffee Supreme. Bad Joe charges \$.99 a cup, Ok Java charges \$2.00 a cup, and Coffee Supreme charges \$3.25 a cup. It is agreed in the community that each shop’s name reflects the quality of the coffee they serve.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- How To Set Prices When You Have No Idea How Much To Charge: An article on pricing strategy issues for small businesses, and a framework to set the right price
- Retail Pricing Strategies: Seven retail pricing strategies are covered
- Seven Biggest Mistakes in Setting Prices: Seven issues that price-setters must avoid for both startups and existing businesses
- Setting Competitive and Profitable Prices: Five key questions to help set a good price, plus a price setting checklist

Technology Skill Resources:

- Microsoft Word Tables Tutorial: Quick guide to creating and formatting tables in Microsoft Word
- How to Format a Table in Word 2010: A detailed guide to formatting tables in Microsoft Word
- OpenOffice Tables: A guide to formatting OpenOffice tables
- Tables in LibreOffice: A guide to formatting LibreOffice tables

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What is value added pricing? How can you identify effective value added strategies?

Value added pricing is adding worth to your product or service in the minds of the consumer. This strategy can be used to make your product or service stand out from the competition instead of discounting. Extraordinary customer service might be a value added strategy. Free delivery might be another. The ideal value added strategy would not add additional costs, however, for value added strategies which add cost for the business, the increase in price should more than cover the additional cost. To identify effective value added strategies, a business owner needs to study the competition and determine what they are offering the consumer. The owner also needs to study the market itself to decide what value added strategies are appreciated by the market. The piano teacher in this lesson offers snacks to her students. That is value added and does involve additional costs.

2. Forgetting to take all costs into account is one of the mistakes identified in the Next Steps article “7 Biggest Mistakes in Setting Prices”. Identify some costs that would be easily overlooked when determining pricing in various businesses.

Answers will vary. Lists might include: napkins, labeling, subscriptions, repairs, installation, attorney fees, bathroom and cleaning supplies, theft, décor, donations, samples, returns, legal fees (reviewing contracts, leases, etc), research and development, bad debt collection, trash and snow removal, equipment, architecture fees, requirements such as handicap accessible ramps or water fountains, instruction sheets, photography, etc.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- A pricing strategy for your product or service. You might include a high and low price range that can be tested in the marketplace.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

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After they complete this course, have students go to the **Product/Service** section of the My business plan and answer the finance questions related to the **Pricing Strategy**.

Marketing benefits vs. features (Marketing)

The course illustrates the differences between benefits and features and how to effectively promote the advantages of products or services.

Story

Wassim is working on a flyer, aimed at tourists, to advertise his pottery. He is focused on the pottery features and not the customer benefits.

Business concept

- Understand the difference between benefits and features of products and services
- Translate this knowledge into effective promotion strategies
 - activity: The user is provided information about the differences in product features and benefits. A description of Wassim's target market is provided. The user is asked to design a flyer for Wassim's ceramics that highlights the customer benefits.

Discussion questions:

1. In the story, Wassim described several items he was going to include in an upcoming flyer. Were these items benefits or features?

Wassim was describing features of his business.

2. What is the difference between a feature and a benefit of a product?

A feature only describes what that product has. A benefit explains why it is of value to the individual—or, “what’s in it for me?”

3. How might Wassim emphasize the benefit of his new kiln versus describing a feature?

Wassim might indicate that his glazes last longer and faded less due the high and constant heat of his kiln.

4. What was another featured item Wassim mentioned that could be promoted as a benefit?

Many customers are interested in unique products when purchasing art. The fact that each item was hand painted made them one of a kind.

5. What are some common benefits that might be of interest to a customer?

A few possible benefits include:

- Saves money
- Helps a business make money
- Saves time and effort
- Provides protection or reduces fear
- Reduces stress
- Raises social status

6. In the exercise included in this lesson to help Wassim design his flyer, why did your choices end up bringing in lots of new customers?

The benefits described were ones desired by Wassim's target market. In other words, they represented the reasons that group made purchases.

Individual activity:

Select a product you have purchased and list some of the features of that product. Next, describe the benefits to you related to each of the features.

Technology skill

- Use online templates to create a professional-looking business flyer
 - activity: User edits Wassim's flyer by adding a picture, text box and aligning the text. Additional tips are provided for page orientation, adding columns, themes and colors.
- Download: Marketing benefits vs. features worksheet the user can apply to their business idea or actual business



Terms defined:
Benefits, Features

Discussion questions:

1. The first job to be done when creating your own flyer for your business is to do what?

The first order of business when designing your own flyer for your business is to identify what is important to your target market.

2. Why was it important to add the two additional items to the flyer that was being created by Wassim?

The potential customers that Wassim was targeting needed to know the location to be able to purchase his products. The image was important to gain a potential customer's interest in buying the product.

3. In modifying the flyer, explain the steps involved in adding an image.

In the edit mode, select insert and then the image. In the exercise the image was modified once inserted by changing the alignment.

4. Why might a business select themes and colors as an option for the flyer?

The image of the business should be reflected by a consistent look and feel (colors, font, wording, style, layout, graphics). This is a major element of branding the business.

Individual activity:

1. Select a product you want to promote for your business and design a flyer for that product. This flyer should focus on benefits of the product and be accompanied by a professionally looking graphic. Make sure you include how a customer can learn more and buy the product.

2. Select a company or product you like. How does the company create a consistent brand (look and feel) to all content about that company or product? Create a brand stylesheet that outlines all the elements of the brand (colors, font, wording, tagline, style, layout, graphics including logo) and show examples. Describe the benefits for doing this.

A brand stylesheet is commonly used to ensure that a company has a consistent brand and to train all employees and suppliers on that brand identity. A consistent brand allows customer to easily recognize your company or product and the brand value.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Difference Between Features and Benefits: A short article that differentiates features and benefits and shows how benefits are identified
- Why You Should Market Benefits: A detailed discussion on features versus benefits. Offers a three-step solution that applies this concept to one's own business.
- Target Market Research: Discussion of creative, budget-friendly ways to get to know one's target audience

Technology Skill Resources:

- HP Creative Studio for Business: A free, downloadable app for creating calendars, newsletters, etc.
- OpenOffice Flyer and Brochure Templates: Free sample templates for business marketing
- Apple Pages Flyer and Brochure Templates: Sample templates for business marketing, free of charge
- Save a Word document as a template: A guide to converting Microsoft Word documents into templates
- Build Templates in OpenOffice Tutorial: A guide to creating a template document in OpenOffice

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Discuss the how the benefits for a new vehicle might be different for the following markets: young, single male, fun oriented professional with a good salary; young family with a stay at home mom and middle school children involved in lots of activities. Answers will vary. The young professional might be looking for a vehicle that makes him look successful. He might be interested in a sporty look to reflect his fun nature. Affordable or high gas mileage might not be a benefit he is seeking since he has a good paying job. The young family might want the ability to store sports equipment and transport their children's friends to sports or other activities. They might also be looking for vehicle which gets high gas mileage and is particularly safe. Affordable might be a benefit they are seeking since they have a one income family.

2. The Next Steps article "Why You Should Market Benefits" mentions demographic and psychographic information. What is the difference and why is it important to consider each type?

Demographic information is factual information about the potential customer such as age, gender, income, education, family size and occupation. Psychographic information considers the person's lifestyle, interests, values and buying habits. It is important to

consider both since it allows you to go beyond facts and look at individual consumers in a more personal manner. In the question above, the point that the young, male professional might not be concerned with affordability since he has a high paying job was based purely on demographics. We haven't taken into account his value system. If he values financial stability and saving for his future, affordability might be important to him.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- What are the benefits of your product/service and how can you demonstrate the benefits to your target audience.
- Add a brand stylesheet example

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

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HP Expert Shari King shares strategies on effective communications for small business marketing.

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After they complete this course, have students go to:

The **Marketing and Sales** section of the My business plan and answer the marketing benefits and features questions related to **Marketing Plan**.

Your target audience (Marketing)

The course covers how to understand your customers and potential customers through surveys to hone your marketing.

Story

Paul and Loretta own a guesthouse and they are trying to understand who their customers are so they can better target their marketing efforts.



Business concept

- Learn the importance of understanding the target audience
- Craft the right questions to learn about the target audience
 - activity: The user is asked to review and edit a survey to send to the guesthouse customers to learn more about them. Tips are provided for doing an effective survey.

Discussion questions:

1. Why do Paul and Loretta need to find out more about their customers?

Paul and Loretta need to increase the pre booking of their bed and breakfast. They feel like advertising is one way to do this. To help them design an effective ad they need to know the customers that they will be targeting or writing the advertising for. Using a broad advertising approach is expensive and less effective than directing the advertising tool to specific potential customers that may already be interested.

2. Why can't Paul and Loretta use the comment cards they have already collected?

When Paul and Loretta collected the comment cards they failed to identify specific characteristics about the customers who completed the cards. Also, not all customers completed cards. With a better design Paul and Loretta will know much more about customers who have used their services in the past.

3. Define the concept of a target market as it relates to Paul and Loretta's business.

A target market is the group of potential customers that Paul and Loretta choose to aim their marketing efforts. Paul and Loretta should identify how many people are in this group. What are their needs, wants, habits, and personal characteristics? This will help them pinpoint the message that will best appeal to this group.

4. Is the following question effective for use in Paul and Loretta's survey? "Did you enjoy the food and cost of your stay with us?" Explain why or why not.

No. This question is double barreled, combining two or more issues into one question. Also, while customers may "enjoy" the food or cost, it does not give enough specific information about either food or cost.

5. Paul and Loretta choose five items of information to include in their survey. Provide two additional types of information from the Learning about your customer's checklist that you would include. Why would you include these? How do they add to the information already being collected?

Paul and Loretta want to include information on (1) hometown, (2) type of trip, (3) whether they have children, (4) their opinion of the cleanliness of the guesthouse, and (5) their favorite aspect of the guesthouse. Student answers will vary. Ensure that the student answers do not replicate information already obtained.

6. Paul and Loretta indicate that they wanted to know whether their customers have children. Do you think this would be important information to for Paul and Loretta to gather? Why or why not?

While student answers will vary, many will conclude that this may not be important information to know. Most guests who have brought children will have already provided that information in the guest registration and this may be redundant information.

Individual activity:

1. Choose a print or online advertisement. Identify the characteristics of the individuals that you think the advertisement is targeting. Do you think it is effective? Why or why not?

2. Paul and Loretta were concerned about the number of customer comment cards completed. Develop a process or procedure to use during registration or check out to help increase the number of comment cards completed.

Group activity:

1. The above individual activities could be done in groups of three to five students. After discussing the questions above in their small group, have students present the information to the class in a two to three minute presentation.
2. Assign groups of 3-5 the task of obtaining a customer survey card from a restaurant or a local business. Have the group critique the comment card based on the tips for successful survey questions. A spokesperson from each group shares their comment card and critique with the class for discussion.

Technology skill

- Create an online survey to gather information about customers
 - activity: The user creates a survey in SurveyMonkey and learns how to view the results
- Download: Target audience profile worksheet can be used by the user to summarize their knowledge about their target audience

Discussion questions:

1. SurveyMonkey has five different ways to collect responses. Which of the five ways would you suggest Paul and Loretta use? Explain why you think this would be the best source to use?

Student answers will vary but will include one of the five methods indicated, (1) web link, (2) email, (3) buy a targeted audience, (4) website, (5) share on facebook. The answers should indicate specific reasons why this source would be best.

2. Have students review the worksheet “Target Audience Profile” found in the module at the end of the Technology skill. Prepare a survey question to gather information for each of the areas indicated in the Profile.

Student answers will vary but should conform to the tips for successful survey questions. Students could also critique each other’s questions based on the tips for successful survey questions.

Individual activity:

Sign up with SurveyMonkey or one of the other survey instruments identified in Next Steps. Prepare a five to ten question survey focusing on the items of information that Paul and Loretta identified as important.

Group activity:

Assign students to groups of three. Have each group choose one of the survey development sources indicated in Next Steps. Have the students review the information on the site indicating at least three positives and three negatives about the survey development tool. A spokesperson from each group shares their review and indicates if they would recommend using this survey development tool.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Conducting Online Market Research - Tips and Tools: Outlines some online market research tools (e.g. keyword searches, blogs); research techniques; and some basic rules in writing online questionnaires
- How Big Is My Small Business Target Audience: An overview including some examples of how one can calculate the size of their target audience
- Market Analysis: Discussion of what one should include in the market analysis section of a business plan

Technology Skill Resources:

- SurveyMonkey: Links to SurveyMonkey and its comprehensive user manual
- Best Practices for Survey Design: A guide to “smart” survey design. Includes information on writing successful survey questions, creating survey flow and layout, calculating response rates, tips for increasing response rates, and the pros and cons of online surveys.
- Zoomerang: A link to online survey tool Zoomerang
- KwikSurveys: A link to free online survey tool KwikSurveys

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. After Paul and Loretta survey their customers, how might they use this information to market their business?

After surveying their customers, Paul and Loretta might identify common factors that customers like or even those they dislike. For example, if there is a pattern of responses from customers indicating the cleanliness of the guesthouse needs attention, they could work on that. Answers to the questions on the survey will also help them clearly define their target market – where they come from, the type of trip they have taken and whether they have children. If they determine that most customers are from the Mid-West and have elementary school children, they can focus their marketing on that audience. This might include advertising in publications that reach parents of elementary school students in that geographic area. In addition, wording in their brochures or on their website should emphasize benefits that were identified in the survey as important to that market. Testimonials from customers regarding benefits they enjoyed could also be used in marketing.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Description of your target market
- Method to be used to identify additional information about potential customers.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

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After they complete this course, have students go to:

- The **Marketing and Sales** section of the My business plan and answer the target audience questions related to the **Target Market**.
- The **Marketing and Sales** section of the My business plan and answer the target audience questions related to **Marketing Plan**.

Effective business websites (Marketing)

The course shows how to plan and create a user-friendly website that meets the needs of your target audiences and business goals.

Story

Walid is building a new website for his food truck business. He needs to think through what his website goals are and design a website that works well for his customers.



Business concept

- Create a website that reaches your target audience and meets your business goals
 - activity: The user edits the banner, navigation and web page content for Walid's site
 - Hint: The user must review and edit each web page (home page, menu and locations) to complete the activity

Discussion questions:

1. Walid was convinced that after his short training session he was ready to create a website for his business. What did his trainer tell him he needed to do?

His trainer suggested he needed to put more planning into the design of the website if he wanted it to be effective. Just knowing how to build a website will not guarantee that it will be effective.

2. What do you think Walid should know about his customers in order to make his website more useful for his customers?

The students' answers on this question will vary. To be useful for customers of a food truck, they might want to know what is included on the menu, what times it will be open, where will it be and when. The customers might also be interested in the reputation of the food served and how long he has been in business.

3. What are some of the goals a business might have for creating a website?

A business might want to use a website to: increase sales; build credibility; increase the company's visibility; or, improve customer support.

4. What are several common mistakes many businesses make with their websites?

- Having no clear purpose
- Cluttered information or information overload
- Not tailoring it to the audience
- Hard to navigate
- Not updated
- Unattractive design

5. Before you start to build your website, what are some things you should do first?

Before actually creating a website, a tremendous amount of planning should be accomplished. This first thing you would decide is what are the goals for your website (increase sales, build credibility, increase visibility, or improve customer support). Second you should decide who will be using your website and what their needs are.

Group activity:

After dividing students into groups of three, instruct the groups to decide on a business idea and begin planning for that business's website. Decide on the goals for the website and who will be the users of that site. Finally, the group will determine how it will satisfy the needs of those users.

Technology skill

- Use online web design software to create a website for your business
 - activity: The user creates a new web page for Walid's catering business and adds a picture on the right side of the new page. Additional tips are provided for hyperlinks, templates, media, social media widgets, parent and subpages.
 - Hint: The user must update the page so it is published on the website
- Download: Business website planning worksheet, and website user-experience best practices to help the user create effective websites for their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. What are some of the reasons that a new small business might use a website development tool such as WordPress (WP) to create their initial website?

WordPress is one of the most popular website development tools available on the internet. It offers a free version and a number of tools and features that not only allow you to create a professional looking website, but that are easy to learn and use.

2. What is the basic process using WordPress to add a new page, insert a picture, and adjust the alignment of an image on an existing website?

To add a page simply click on “Pages” in the WordPress dashboard. Next, select “Add New”. On the new page, enter a title and text. To add an image, click on “Add Media” and select an image included in the Gallery and insert into the page. Click on the image to change the alignment and click “Update” when you are ready to save.

3. What are Social Media Widgets that are included in most web development packages?

A widget allows users to share your website with others using social media programs such as Facebook and Twitter.

Individual activity:

Select a business idea and create an initial website using the free version of WordPress. Begin by using one of the Templates available in WP. Create a minimum of three pages (Home plus two additional pages). Remember to avoid the many problems that are normally found on ineffective websites that were discussed in this lesson.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Effective websites articles
- Sales articles
- Business tools

Technology Skill Resources:

- WordPress tutorials: A guide to getting started web-blogging with WordPress
- Basics of Coding: An interactive and free guide to learning how to code
- Google Sites: A link to Google Sites

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Give me an example of a good business website, why do you like the site? Give me an example of a poor business website? Why don't you like the site?

Answers will vary. Good website: all information I need is easy to find, easy to read and understand and up to date, I can easily accomplish what I want on the site (look up information, buy a product, etc.). Poor website: I can't find anything I need, content and navigation is confusing, the website is slow, there are bad links, out of date information.

2. How could you measure the effectiveness of a website? How could you use this information to improve a website?

Web analytics software can provide number of visitors, number of returning visitors, number of web page views, how long on average do visitors stay on the site, sales volume from the site, navigation paths through the site and dead links. You can also look at the type and frequency of customer inquiries and add a pop up survey on the site to get customer feedback. The data should be tracked over time. Are you getting more or less sales, visitors and page views? This information could be used to improve the website because you know the most (and least) popular information and actions that customers are taking. Also customer feedback on the website from the survey will be very helpful.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- A draft of a company website
- Examples of company websites for similar businesses or websites you think are very good including what you think makes it a good website and how might you apply that to your business website

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Marketing and Sales** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to **Marketing Plan**.

Maximizing capacity (Operations)

The course focuses on maximizing a business's capacity to produce goods or services.

Story

Ming struggles to fill the orders coming into his growing repair business.

Business concept

- Understand the value of short-term and long-term planning
- Learn to allocate staff time to reach both short-term profit and long-term business goals
 - activity: The user selects activities that Ming will do during his working hours. He has a profit goal for the day that must be met during his business hours.

Discussion questions:

1. What problems were creating issues for Ming in his business?

Ming was not organized and was missing deadlines. He had not paid his supplier. He had not ordered a part he needed to repair a lamp. He had so many repair orders he could not keep up with running the business.

2. Did it appear that the phone was helping or hindering Ming's business?

It appeared that the phone was hindering Ming's business. While it allowed him to stay in touch with his customers and suppliers it created constant interruptions to the work flow.

3. Define the concept of production capacity as it relates to Ming's business.

The production capacity of Ming's business would be the volume of repair orders his business has the capacity to complete.

4. What is one of the most important limits on production capacity for most businesses?

The amount of staff time available is one of the most important limits on production capacity for most businesses.

5. Ming split his tasks into three categories. List the three categories. What was his goal for the day based on?

The three categories Ming used to sort his tasks were "Do Today"; "Don't Do"; "Do Later if Time Permits". He sorted his task with the goal of maximizing his profit within his time constraints.

Individual activity:

Have the students list the tasks they need to complete in a typical class day on post it type notes or index cards. Have them estimate the time it takes to complete each task and give it a value from one to ten with ten being the most valuable and one being the least valuable. Then inform the students that they have been notified that they only have four hours to complete their tasks today. Have them allocate the tasks to the three categories used by Ming to generate the most value within the four hour time limit.

Group activity:

The activity described above could also be done in groups of three to five students.

Technology skill

- Analyze and plan staff time with a spreadsheet
 - activity: The user learns how to customize a staff time capacity spreadsheet using merge, reference cell, sum, and insert rows and columns
- Download: Staff time capacity calculator spreadsheet, and production capacity guide the user can apply to their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the process you would use to analyze how your time is used in a business.



Terms defined:

Production capacity

The first step would be to use a stopwatch to time how long it takes to produce a particular product or service. This should be measured several times and an average time calculated. You also need to measure the time it takes to perform any administrative or maintenance tasks. This information is then loaded into a spreadsheet.

2. What does it mean to merge cells in a spreadsheet? How is this task done in an excel spreadsheet?

The term merge cells means to select two or more cells and make them merge into one cell. It is done by selecting the cells to be merged and clicking on them while holding down the shift key. You then click on the “Merge and Center” button in the home tab at the top of the screen.

3. What does it mean to reference a cell? Describe how you would create a reference from cell A6 to the value in cell B12. Why is this useful? Give examples of how this could be used.

To reference a cell means that the cell automatically shows the value that is in another cell. You can reference a cell in the same worksheet or a different worksheet within the same workbook. To create a reference you would go to cell A6 and click in that cell. You would then type “=B12” in the cell and press enter.

There are times that you need to use the same data in several different areas and calculations. You can have a data input area that can be easily changed – such as product price, forecast sales volume, staff wages, etc. and you can change that information once and it can change the values automatically in many areas of your workbook.

Individual activity:

Download the staff time capacity calculator. Have students assume that the staff has increased from five to six. They will need to add a column in both the operational tasks and the summary worksheets. The column information from the other staff columns will need to be copied into the new column.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Strategic Capacity Planning for Products and Services: An article discussing capacity planning including asset management, starting early, and monitoring marginal output
- How to Plan Production Capacity: A four-step guide to planning production capacity
- Production Time Calculator: Online time production calculator for manufacturing processes
- New Rules of Personal Productivity: A free webinar on personal productivity, discussing tips and new practices

Technology Skill Resources:

- LibreOffice Calc: A link to download LibreOffice Calc, plus links to its user manual and a YouTube video tutorial
- Microsoft Excel: A guide to using Microsoft Excel and a YouTube tutorial on spreadsheets

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Where did you put the 30 minute lunch break for Ming? Do you think he should skip a lunch break and repair one more item?

Experts say that failing to take a break will lower productivity and that it reduces your ability to be creative. Lunching with co-workers or fellow business owners provides an opportunity for collaboration, brainstorming or just broadening your horizons which could lead to new opportunities. Even a solitary lunch break provides the needed rest which results in increased efficiency.

2. How will the concept of tracking time and the principles of production capacity help Ming determine if and when he needs to hire employees?

By tracking his sales forecast, current work load and income potential, Ming can determine his ability to pay an employee. He can track the types of tasks he doesn't have time to complete. If the work load that supports his revenue (his core business activity) is a significant part of that, he might add an employee. However, he needs to determine if the increase is enough to pay an employee's salary and the associated costs and if the work overload is consistent. If either of these are questionable, he might consider outsourcing his overload. Or, perhaps a better solution would be to outsource the tasks associated with running the business such as recordkeeping, maintaining equipment and contacting customers. Often the business owner's skills are more valuable focused on the core business.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Download the “Production Capacity Guide”
- Download the “Staff Time Capacity Calculator”

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Operations** section of the My plan and answer the questions related to **Staffing/Organizational Structure**.

Managing contact information (Operations)

The course provides ways to gather and access key information about customers, potential customers, suppliers and other contacts.

Story

Ming tries to find contact information he needs to get an important repair job done.

Business concept

- Understand who is important to your business
- Gather, organize, and access key information about customers, potential customers, suppliers and other contacts
 - activity: Dmitri, owner of Studio D, has a conversation with a potential customer. The user drags and drops important information about the customer, her restaurant and what she wants for her website into a contact management form.

Discussion questions:

1. What problems were creating issues for Ming in his business?

Ming was trying to find information on a supplier that had offered him a good deal of repair parts. He was not able to locate the information for the supplier.

2. How could not locating that specific supplier's information impact the profitability of Ming's business?

That supplier had offered him a good price on repair parts. If he is not able to find the contact information he will have to buy the parts for a higher price. This would decrease the profit he makes on the repair.

3. What type of information did Dimitri gather from his phone conversation?

Student answers will vary based on their choices of Dimitri's phone responses. They should include name, business name, email, phone number, time to contact, type of information they wanted on the website, how they heard of Dimitri's business, and address of the restaurant.

4. Where did Dimitri store his information?

Dimitri used a contact management system such as Outlook to store the information he gathered from his phone conversation. He recorded the information as it was being gathered rather than waiting until after and relying on his memory.

5. What could Dimitri have done during or after the phone conversation to gather additional information?

Answers will vary but may include asking additional questions, asking who recommended him, viewing the current website or visiting the restaurant.

Group activity:

Have two students role play a phone conversation between Dimitri and another potential client. Have the other students' record relevant information they gather from the simulated phone conversation. Discuss the different types of information gathered and why the students felt it was important. You may also want to address ways that Dimitri could elicit additional information from the potential client either during or after the phone call.

Technology skill

- Record key contact information
- Create new contacts in a contact management system and search for contacts
 - activity: A demonstration is provided on how to use Microsoft Outlook as a contact management system, including how to categorize contacts and do basic and advanced searches. The user is required to set up a category and do a search.
- Download: Contact information worksheet to record customer information including orders, and a call log that can be used for the user's business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. How does a basic freeform search work in Outlook?

Type the information you are looking for in the search bar. Outlook searches in all fields and categories for the information and displays any contacts it locates.



Terms defined:

Outlook category

2. How do categories improve your search ability? What categories should be used?

Categories allow you to separate contacts by specific terms relevant to you and/or your business. The categories vary and will depend on how many contacts you anticipate having and the type of information you need and will be able to gather about the contact.

3. What is an advanced search by field and how it is done?

An advanced search by field allows you to search for contacts by a specific field you choose. To conduct the search you start in the contacts area of Outlook. Go to the Search Tools tab and click on the “More” icon. From the drop down menu select the field that you want to search by. A new search field will appear and you type in the specific aspect you want to search and hit enter. All contact that include the designated information will appear.

Individual activity:

Download the Contact Information Planning worksheet. Complete this information for at least four contacts you have including as much information as possible.

Group activity:

Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Using the information in Next Steps have the students prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on the value of networking providing at least 3 tips for successful networking.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Using Technology to Manage Your Business Contacts: Guide for how to create a contact management system, appropriate use of technology and a few recommended resources
- Ten Tips for Successful Business Networking: Quick tips on how to network to help grow business prospects

Technology Skill Resources:

- Microsoft Outlook Guide for Windows: Illustrated guide to Microsoft Office Outlook for Windows
- Microsoft Outlook Guide for Macs: A Microsoft Office Outlook guide for Macs with a tutorial
- Three Free Alternatives to Microsoft Outlook: Online alternatives to Microsoft Outlook and why these may be better than Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Outlook Express, a free version of Microsoft Outlook: A Microsoft Office Outlook Express guide
- How to Use Google Contacts: A guide to using Google contacts as a unified address book

Tying it all together

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Download the Contact Information Planning worksheet
- Begin gather information either through the use of an online contact management system or with the worksheet on contacts that may be useful to your business.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build and effective business plan.

Customer relationship management – CRM (Operations)

The course shows the importance of keeping track of customer information and using a customer relationship management system to build a business.

Story

Dimitri has a website development business and was late in contacting a customer about her website requirements. As a result, he lost the business.

Business concept

- Learn the importance of cultivating customer relationships
- Use a customer relationship management (CRM) tool to build your business
 - activity: Building on the analogy of a garden, a successful CRM means doing the correct things at the right times. This is difficult to do without a CRM system if you have a lot of customers. This point is reinforced in the exercise.

Discussion questions:

1. What was the problem Dimitri encountered?

He failed to contact a client about a potential change to their website in time.

2. What did Dimitri determine that he needed?

He commented that he needed a method to keep track of his clients and when he needed to contact them.

3. Compare the concept of cultivating plants in a garden with the concept of cultivating clients.

Plants in a garden need food and water on a regular basis. If you don't provide enough or provide too much the plant will die. Clients need to be contacted on a regular basis as well. And like plants the relationship will die if you do not spend enough time with them or if you spend too much time with them. Different customers need different amounts of attention.

Individual activity:

Assume you were a client of Dimitri's web development business. How often would you want Dimitri to contact you? Why?

Technology skill

- Set up a CRM tool for your business
- Use the CRM tool to track information that will help you build your business
 - activity: The user learns how to use Microsoft Outlook as a CRM tool, using the contact feature to keep track of all interactions with the customer. Follow-up activities are entered as a task on the day they are due.
- Download: Using Outlook 2010 as your CRM provides a guide users can apply to their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. Describe a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software package. Can a contact management system be used? If so, why would a business want to use the specialized CRM software?

Customer relationship management software is a tracking system that helps you monitor your interactions with customers, suppliers, and other contacts. Many contact management systems have options that allow you to monitor and track your interactions. However once your business has multiple people making contact with the clients it is advisable to use a specialized tracking system such as CRM software.

2. Explain how you would use a contact management system such as Microsoft Outlook to categorize your clients, schedule and monitor your client interactions.

In Microsoft Outlook you have the option to categorize your clients by relevant information such as the type of client, amount of contact needed etc. You can also add tasks such as making a specific contact on certain dates. It will also allow you to be reminded of these tasks.



Terms defined:

Contact Relationship, Management, Campaigns, Sales leads

3. Define campaign and sales leads.

A campaign is a set of activities used to market a product or a service. A sales lead is a person or company that may be interested in a business's product or service.

Individual activity:

Review the information in Next Steps and online regarding different CRM systems. Have the student prepare a list of three different CRM systems listing the pros and cons of each system.

Group activity:

1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have the students share contact information with each other. Have each of the students set up the other group members as contacts in the Outlook system. Have them set different contact days within the next week for each of the group members. At the end of the week, note the number of times the students were contacted by the other group members.

2. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have the students investigate different customer relationship management systems using the Next Step information and other online resources. Have each group choose one that they would recommend to a business like Dimitri's. Each group will then prepare a two to three minute presentation of the attributes of the CRM system and why they think it would be the best system to use.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Sales articles
- Business tool articles
- Managing client relationships
- CRM, increase your sales

Technology Skill Resources:

- Microsoft Outlook Links: Guides for using Microsoft Outlook 2010 that assist in; grouping, tracking and organizing contacts; creating, changing or customizing a view; creating tasks and to-do items
- Get familiar with the Outlook Calendar: A guide for Outlook calendars
- Links to CRM Tools: Three online CRM tools (Zoho CRM, SugarCRM, and Salesforce) with some free trials offered

Typing it all together

Discussion questions:

1. Review the Next Step Article entitled 9 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Apps for Small Business. What types of information do they suggest tracking in a CRM?

Customer contact information is the most basic information which should be kept in a customer database. Along with that, information related to customer's responses to a marketing campaign, sales data, questions they have called in and any other interaction you've had with them. In general, any aspect of the customer's behavior which might provide insight in the future should be documented. The article also mentions apps that provide the ability to organize social media and as a result, track what is going on with customers, interact and build a community.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- The downloadable resources on CRM systems.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Business Communications (28 minutes)

HP Expert Shayne Weideman looks at various aspects of business communication

Building Client Relationship (20 minutes)

HP Expert Shayne Weideman talks about how to build successful client relationships and how to gather information about your client

HP LIFE e-Learning Course Detail

CRM - Increase Your Sales (6 minutes)

HP Expert Petro Plotz talks about customer relationships and how this can increase sales.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Hiring staff (Operations)

The course provides information on how to hire the best staff for a business and create a job application.

Story

Ming's repair business is growing fast. He needs to hire an office manager.



Business concept

- Hire the right employees to fit your business needs by asking the right questions to make sure the candidates have the experience, skills and attitudes needed for the job
- Create effective job descriptions
- Learn to review applications and interview candidates
 - activity: The user reviews the application, interviews and checks references for four candidates. The user decides which candidate is the best fit for the job description provided.

Discussion questions:

1. Ming's business is growing rapidly. That is a positive thing so why is it creating problems for Ming?

He does not have enough time to do all the work himself that his business is generating.

2. What is Ming thinking of doing to resolve this issue?

He thinks it is time to hire someone to help him.

3. His friend said he hoped that he did not have the same problem he did with his first hire. What happened?

His friend had hired a relative to help him who did not have the skills to correctly cut the greeting cards and did not want to do the other tasks that needed to be done.

4. Ming's first step in hiring was to prepare a job description. What types of information did Ming include in this document?

The job description included a basic description of the tasks in the job, required qualifications such as the skills and knowledge needed to perform these tasks and additional qualifications that would be helpful but are not required.

5. After applications are received, what tools do you use to determine the best applicant to hire?

You would (1) review the application; (2) ask the applicant a series of questions in an interview and perhaps have them perform or demonstrate their proficiency with the skills required; and (3) check references to see how they have performed in previous jobs.

6. List one pro and one con of using each of the selection tools.

Student answers will vary but may include some of the following:

(1) Review application:

Pro Easy, Fast, Consistent information between applicants; indicates gaps in employment; indicates basic job tasks performed in the past.

Con: Not always filled out completely. May not be accurate or truthful. Information obtained is brief and there is no opportunity to expand on the information.

(2) Interview:

Pro: Ability to ask for additional information and to expand answers. Can observe nonverbal cues of applicant.

Con: Some applicants are slow to provide information or still provide incomplete information. Easy to be swayed by one or two positive or negative aspects in the interview.

(3) Reference:

Pro: You can get more information about how the applicant actually performed on a previous job; you may also be able to clarify information that was unclear in the application or interview; you can explore issues of reliability (absences in job etc) that may be important to you.

Con: Many businesses are hesitant to provide specific information about their past employees; the applicant may have asked someone to provide a false positive recommendation.

Individual activity:

Write a job description for the job of “Student”. Include the three areas discussed; basic description, required qualifications, and additional qualifications.

Group activity:

1. Divide the students into groups of three to five students. Have the students develop a process for hiring Ming’s office manager. What questions would they ask in the interview? What type of tasks would they have them perform? What questions would they ask the references? Have the students informally discuss their process with the other groups noting differences and similarities between the processes.
2. Divide the students’ into groups of three to five students. Have the students explore the different types of equal employment laws that would impact Ming if he were hiring an office manager in their town.

Technology skill

- Use word processing software to create and format a job application
 - activity: The user edits an existing form by bolding the title, adding a line and a checkbox
- Download: Tips for interviewing applicants that the user can apply to their business idea or actual business

Discussion questions:

1. List three free word processing office software packages that are available.

[LibreOffice](#) [Apache OpenOffice](#) [Google Docs](#).

2. What are tables in word processing software used for? What are the advantages to having content organized in a table?

To organize information into rows and columns. Generally content in tables improves the organization of the data, it is easy to skim, understand and find specific information and it allows the reader to easily compare and contrast the data.

3. What tasks do the shortcuts Control + B” and Control + C perform?

Control + B will apply or remove the bold formatting to text.

Control + C will copy highlighted text.

Individual activity:

Have the student print an online word processed application. Have them identify the formatting that was done on the application. You may also want them to investigate the shortcuts for one or all of the formatting in Microsoft Word.

Group activity:

1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have the students develop a job description and an application form for a hypothetical job such as the office manager Dimitri is attempting to hire. Have the students critique the other groups’ job descriptions and applications for clarity, ease of completion, overall appearance.
2. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have each group bring in three different applications from businesses in the area. Have the students critique each of the applications for both content and appearance. Then each group choose one of the application forms to “edit” improving the appearance and content issues they had identified.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- What is the hiring process for small businesses? A guide for entrepreneurs and small businesses with little experience in hiring. Includes tips on how to effectively conduct an interview.
- Seven Hiring Tips for Growing Small Businesses: Quick and short tips on staffing a small business
- Writing Effective Emails - Making Sure Your Messages Get Read and Acted Upon: Helpful tips on writing effective emails. Provides good and poor examples.
- Writing Effective Job Descriptions: Overview of job descriptions, what to include and appropriate language
- Write Effective Job Descriptions: A detailed guide to writing job descriptions
- Job Interview Tips - How to Interview Potential Employees: Tips that will help one assess the skills, experience, and cultural fit of potential employees
- What is an Employment Contract? An overview of employment contracts, including what they should cover

Technology Skill Resources:

- Create Your First Word Document 1 and 2: Basic guides to creating a Microsoft Office document
- Making the Most of Word in Your Business: A detailed guide including formatting, layout, numbering, etc.

- LibreOffice Writer Quick Start: A guide to getting started with the LibreOffice word processor
- Ten essential LibreOffice Writer tricks: Quick details on timesaving features of LibreOffice

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. What are some general characteristics you think might be important in job candidates?

Answers will vary and it depends on the job. Some good characteristics might include integrity, honesty, persistence in the face of obstacles, flexibility, teamwork, being coachable, accepting criticism, motivated, engaged and interested in the business, a good fit with the rest of the team.

2. Screening application methods vary depending on the job. Brainstorm all the screening methods you can think of without limiting yourself to a particular type of job. Select one and discuss the type of job that might require that screening method.

Answers will vary. Examples might include a portfolio, skills test, role playing, aptitude test, personality test, drug test, physical exam, criminal background check, credit check, application, interview, group interview, internet search, resume, reference check and transcripts. Examples of types of jobs that might require specific tests might include: A criminal background check would be important for applying to work in a daycare. If someone was listed as a sexual offender, it would show up on the background check. A drug test might be important for someone repairing automobiles. The liability associated both with the fact that they would be working around machinery and the fact that they would be repairing expensive and potentially dangerous equipment would warrant this test.

3. Should employers conduct an internet search to screen potential job candidates? What might they find that would help or hurt the candidate?

Students will have varying opinions on this. Finds that might hurt the candidate would include unprofessional conduct or language, bad-mouthing a previous employer, being caught in a lie and poor communication skills. Employers might also find postings that would help the candidate. Positive comments, involvement in volunteer activities, awards and recognitions, a strong network with the right connections and strong social networking skills. Googling yourself in advance of a job search can give you a view of your internet reputation. A professional LinkedIn profile is a plus.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Copies of two to three applications that you feel are well done in regards to content and appearance.
- Using a word processing software package, prepare a draft of an application that could be used to hire individuals for your business.

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

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After they complete this course, have students go to the **Operations** section of the My business plan and answer the staffing questions related to **Staffing/Organizational Structure**.

Inventory management (Operations)

The course shows that managing a business's inventory is essential to maintaining a successful business operation and maximizing profit.

Story

Ahmed and Moshen need to keep track of how much inventory they have on hand to meet their customer demand.

Business concept

- Learn why inventory management is important
- Learn that inventory includes raw materials, work in process, finished goods and supplies
- Learn methods to track raw materials, supplies and finished goods in a business
 - activity: The user examines three different businesses (café, convenience store, boutique) and their inventory management systems.

Discussion questions:

1. Ahmed and Moshen have just received a large order. Why could this be a problem?

They do not know if they have the inventory to fill the order.

2. Moshen had completed the inventory list two months ago when Ahmed asked him to do this task. Why can they not use this information?

They have had large orders since then and have not kept with the inventory on hand.

3. What do Moshen and Ahmed need that will allow them to respond to customer orders?

They need a system that allows them to keep a running total of the inventory at hand.

4. Define the concept of inventory management. How does this relate to the flow of money in a business?

Inventory management is the process of tracking the constant flow of goods and materials in and out of a business. Your inventory is money. You spend money on materials and receive money when the goods are sold. Inventory management tracks the flow of money in the form of materials out of your business and money in the flow of payments for your goods and services into your business.

5. List at least two of the problems that poor inventory management could create.

Answers will vary but could include: not having enough product to sell; having too many raw materials so materials and money are wasted; needing or using extra space to store a large inventory of materials or finished goods; being late on deliveries because raw materials are not available in inventory; not being able to keep track of lost or stolen raw materials or finished products.

6. List what inventory includes.

Inventory includes finished goods, raw materials, work in progress and supplies.

Individual activity:

Describe the methods used by Alejandro, Sofia, and Bethari to handle their inventory. Include specifics on how the information in each system is entered and maintained.

Group activity:

Divide the students into groups of three to five students. Assign each of the groups' one of the businesses discussed in this section; Alejandro's, Sofia's or Bethari's. Have the students briefly describe the inventory management system being used and one potential problem about the system or process that they identify. How could this problem be avoided?

Technology skill

- Learn about several types of inventory management technologies: spreadsheets, databases, inventory management and accounting software, and point-of-sale systems
 - activity: The user examines four different inventory management systems including the pros and cons. Additional tips are provided on storage practices, procedures and staff training.
- Download: Inventory management tips and an inventory management spreadsheet that the user can apply to their business or business idea



Terms defined:

Inventory management

Discussion questions:

1. List four things that should be considered when determining what inventory management system to use.
Size of your business, available budget, the amount of time you can spend on the system and the staff you have available to help and/or that need to access the system.
2. How do your businesses storage practices impact your inventory management system?
Storage practices refer to the physical organization of your inventory. How it is stored, labeled and categorized. These can influence how you enter data into your data management system.
3. Describe the role procedures and staffing play in your data management system.
Inventory management is an ongoing process. Standard operating practices written as procedures will help your staff do the task on a regular basis. Also, as you add staff and/or modify the procedures, training will need to be conducted to make sure everyone knows the procedure and has the skills to do it successfully.

Individual activity:

Have the students download the downloadable resources at the end of this module. Using these, the information in Next Steps and in this module have the student prepare a one page summary of tips for a company considering an inventory management system.

Group activity:

Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Assign each group one of the four inventory management systems describe; spreadsheets, databases, inventory management and accounting systems, and point of sale systems. Have them prepare a three to five minute presentation on the system including its description, some of the popular systems available and the pros and cons of the system.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Less is More (Most of the Time) - Inventory Management 101: An introduction to inventory management, discussing key terms, trends, industry players, industry references and resources
- ABC Analysis: Explanation of the basics of the “ABC” inventory categorization method
- How to Establish a Practical Inventory Management System: Guidelines to streamline the inventory management process, including a few examples and tips

Technology Skill Resources:

- Microsoft Excel and Access Templates for Inventory Management: A number of Microsoft Office templates for inventory management
- How to Add Inventory in QuickBooks Online: A guide to using QuickBooks online
- HP Point of Sale Solution: Links to HP retail solutions’ descriptions and overview
- Choosing the Best Inventory Tracking Software: A guide to the basics in inventory tracking software

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. How would inventory management differ between a manufacturer of goods and a retailer of finished goods?
Inventory management for the manufacturer involves tracking raw materials, work in progress, finished goods and supplies. A retailer receives finished goods from a manufacturer and therefore, tracks only the finished goods and perhaps some supplies. Complexity of each is also determined by the variety of goods manufactured or resold.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Information on the pros and cons of the different types of inventory management systems.
- Inventory Management Technology Resource Links (downloadable document at end of technology skill).

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Operations** section of the My plan and answer the inventory management questions related to **Production Methods**.

IT for business success (Operations)

The course examines the types of technology solutions that best address business goals and the different options of implementing technology. Technology solutions can accelerate the growth and success of a business.

Story

Tarek and Jamel face choices around the best technology projects for their travel agency.

Business concept

- Learn how to choose technology solutions that could benefit a business the most
- Learn about different technology solutions (e.g. productivity tools, business applications, security tools) and the benefits
 - activity: The user examines three different businesses (travel agency, import/export business, crafts store) and selects technologies that best meet the business's goals. Business goals and strategy are provided for each business.

Discussion questions:

1. What was the major issue facing the tour business highlighted in the story?

Two members of the business had independently identified IT needs for the company but had not developed a plan or reviewed resources necessary to implement their independent plans.

2. What would you suggest the two members of the company need to do at this time?

They need to sit down and develop an IT plan based upon the needs of the company as well as what resources they have available at this point in time as well as into the future.

3. Small businesses are becoming increasingly aware of the needs and benefits of technology for their companies. What are some of the latest trends in technology of concern to small businesses?

Some of the most recent trends in technology impacting small businesses include:

- Cloud-based computing
- Mobile access
- Big data
- Online security

4. What are some of the goals that would be important to most small businesses that could be addressed by technology?

A few possible goals include:

- The ability to acquire and keep customers
- Increased productivity
- Increased efficiency thus lowering costs
- Keeping the business up and running

5. What are four business applications of technology that would be of benefit to most small businesses?

Four business applications that apply to almost all small businesses include:

- Payroll software
- Customer relationship management (CRM) software
- Financial management software
- Employee scheduling software

6. Small businesses often rely on employees on the go using mobile connectivity and access. What are some of the technology solutions to the needs of those businesses associated with this mobility?

- Netbooks, mobile devices and tablets
- Cloud based applications
- Remote access and virtual desktop systems



Terms defined:

Productivity tools, business applications, communication tools, mobile connectivity and remote access, online presence, security tools

Technology skill

- Learn the best way to implement a technology solution given the circumstances of a particular business
- Learn about each technology implementation approach (buy, build, subscribe, outsource) and the benefits and drawbacks
- Learn what the business questions to ask to determine the best technology implementation
 - activity: The user learns more about the same three businesses (travel agency, import/export business, crafts store) and selects the best technology implementation approach to meet their business needs. Business requirements and technology solution research are provided for each business.
- Additional tips are provided about selecting technology solutions for companies at different stages of development (starting out, building momentum, business expansion)
- Download: Technology initiative planning template the user can apply to their business or business idea

Discussion questions:

1. What are some of the common choices for implementing a new technology solution for a small business?
 - Buy an off-the-shelf commercial product
 - Build a custom solution
 - Subscribe to a hosted software solution
 - Outsource an organization to develop and manage the system
 - Use a hybrid model solution using a combination of the other choices
2. What are four questions to ask that will provide the necessary information to allow a small business to make a better choice in selecting and implementing a technology solution?
 1. How and when will the company use this technology?
 2. What technology solutions already exist that can be purchased?
 3. What human and financial resources does the company have available?
 4. What are the security and regulatory issues involved?
3. When you assisted each of the entrepreneurs in selecting a technology solution for their business in the lesson, what steps did you go through in the process?

You first studied the story of the company to gain a better idea of the actual need and resources available within the company; you then did research on the options available outside of the company; and, finally you matched the needs of the business with the resources available to implement the plan.

Individual activity:

Using the downloadable “Technology Initiative Planning Template” available in the lesson, provide a general plan for a business idea you have where the company will go through a startup, building momentum and expansion stage.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Business tools
- Business operations

Technology Skill Resources:

- Small business technology: A step-by-step guide to getting started
- Software solutions -- Should I outsource, buy or develop in house?: provides questions to think about for each implementation approach and guidelines on how to select a vendor
- Strategies for growth: Technology and growth (video)
- Basic computer and communication tools: lists types of computer and communication tools
- Assessing computer needs for your business: steps to understand your business technology needs

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Select a type of business. Identify specific types of technology and technology applications that might be used by that business – be specific. Which of these technologies have either been developed or become popular within the last five years?

Answers will vary. A student might select the restaurant industry and mention typical methods such as computers, cell phones and web pages. But, as they dig further, responses should include examples such as inventory management systems, point of sale systems that allow customers to place their order via a tablet at the table and/or allow the kitchen to receive and manage the order, reservation systems, social media, various types of apps, kitchen equipment which automates the cooking process (measures ingredients, regulates temperatures), mobile ordering, digital menus, online coupons, videos, customer tracking, customer loyalty development through online club membership and while-u-wait entertainment and gaming. While many of these have been around for more than five years, usage for most beyond the “typical methods” mentioned above have exploded in usage in recent years.

2. Once a business owner identifies the type of technology needed for a business, there are usually still many options. How can business owners research the best applications for his business?

Technology and the time associated with implementation can be costly so the business owner should make this decision carefully rather than by trial and error. Research through vendors is critical, but can be biased. Business networking groups can provide a forum for interaction and recommendations. But, since IT needs vary by industry, the business owner should also look around and see what other business owners in his industry are using. This can be done to a degree simply by observation and more in-depth through personal interaction. In addition, industry associations are an excellent source of industry specific knowledge.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Technology Initiative Planning Template (downloadable at the end of technology skill)

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE My business plan. My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

After they complete this course, have students go to the **Operations** section of the My plan and answer the IT questions related to the **Legal Requirements**.

Energy efficiency (Operations)

The course shows how to assess and reduce energy use in a business.

Story

Ahmed runs a bakery and wants to reduce his energy use to save money and protect the environment.



Terms defined:

Climate change, solar power, wind power, biomass, geothermal energy

Business concept

- Learn ways to improve your bottom line by conserving energy
- Identify sources of energy use in your business
 - activity: The user is given two building areas, a kitchen and office, to identify and understand major uses of electricity. Tips are provided on ways to reduce the energy use.

Discussion questions:

1. What problem was Ahmed facing in his business?

His orders were increasing but his profits were not increasing.

2. What did Ahmed identify as one reason why his profits were not increasing?

His energy costs were increasing

3. What does Ahmed decide he needs to do to help decrease his energy costs?

He decides that he and his employees need to find all the places where they are wasting energy and finds ways to eliminate or decrease the energy loss to help save money and the environment.

4. Why should businesses attempt to reduce energy use?

The main sources of energy are fossil fuel such as oil or gas and electricity which is often made from burning fossil fuels. Fossil fuels and electricity are a major expense for small businesses. They are a nonrenewable and limited resource. They also impact climate change, the environment and ultimately our health.

5. What are some of the steps a business can take to reduce their energy usage?

Businesses can buy ENERGY STAR (or other eco-label) qualified products and appliances that are certified to be energy efficient. They can turn off lights and use energy efficiency light bulbs. They can unplug appliances that are not going to be used for a while, turn off printer and computers when not in use and have them go into standby mode when idle.

6. Describe renewable energy and list four common types of renewable energy.

Renewable energy is an energy source that is constantly replenished in nature. Common types include solar power, wind power, biomass, and geothermal energy.

7. Define an energy audit and explain how an energy audit can be used.

An energy audit is a detailed inventory of the devices in your business that use energy. It can be used to understand your energy use and identify way to conserve and save money. It can also be used to compare your business energy consumption with similar businesses to help you determine your investment in energy conservation. It can also be used to help determine if older appliances and equipment should be replaced with newer, more energy efficient devices.

Technology skill

- Use a spreadsheet to assess your business's energy use
 - activity: The user learns about conditional formulas and uses a spreadsheet to create an energy audit form including drop-down lists. Additional tips are provided for drop-down lists and formulas.
- Download: Energy savings checklist, and energy audit template to help the user reduce their energy use

Discussion questions:

1. How can conditional formulas in spreadsheets be used to show changes in energy use?

Conditional formulas can be programmed to compare energy usage between different periods or facilities to highlight when there are significant variations.

2) In the conditional formula $\text{IF}(D4 < E4)$, "Low", "Normal" what would be indicated if D4 was 600 and E4 was 800? Would the statement be true or false? What if D4 was 600 and E4 was 300?

Low would be indicated because the statement $D4 < E4$ is true. In the second scenario Normal would be indicated because the statement was false.

Individual activity:

Have the students conduct an energy audit for the items in the classroom using a drop down list and conditional formulas. Have them research normal usage for lighting, computers, projectors, etc. using the resources listed in Next Steps.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- HP Carbon Footprint Calculator: A free, online carbon-footprint calculator to help identify steps to reduce the environmental impact and cost of computing and printing
- WWF-HP Living Planet @ Work energy resources: Resources and guides to help companies reduce their carbon footprint
- HP eco solutions: A link to different low-carbon solutions and energy-efficient HP products
- Estimating appliance energy use: A formula for estimating energy consumption and annual cost to run an appliance. Includes examples for calculating, as well as a guide to typical wattages of various appliances.
- The Sustainability Report - Today's essential marketing tool: A detailed guide to writing an environmental sustainability report for small and medium businesses

Technology Skill Resources:

- Create conditional formulas: A guide for creating conditional formulas using Microsoft Office
- Create or remove a drop-down list: A guide for drop-down lists using Microsoft Office

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. Locate the webpage for your local electric power company. What types of resources do they offer business owners related to energy efficiency?

Answers will vary. Student may find some of the following as well as additional offerings: energy saving tips, rebates, load management programs offering discounts during peak times, courses for building managers, free products such as programmable thermostats and the opportunity to have a professional analyze the company's energy usage.

2. Review the Next Steps article "Estimating Appliance and Home Electronic Energy Use". Use the formulas provided to calculate appliance energy use at home or at school. What factors affect energy cost?

Answers will vary based on the type of appliance, hours of use and energy cost. Energy cost depends on Kilowatt-hour (KWh) consumption, hours the appliance is used and the utility rate cost for electricity (kWh).

Group activity:

Divide the class into groups of three to five. Have each group prepare an energy audit for a room in the building or on campus using the resources listed in Next Steps and the downloadable energy audit template. A presentation could be made on specific ways to reduce energy in that location. If any students want to go further, work with your campus building or facility management and use the EPA Portfolio Manager to benchmark a building <http://www.energystar.gov/buildings/facility-owners-and-managers/existing-buildings/use-portfolio-manager>. Energy auditing and building benchmarking is a business opportunity.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- The energy audit templates
- Energy saving resources

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Basics of Finance – Saving Money (14 minutes)

HP expert Frances Edmonds explains a checklist on how to save money and resources in your business.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Effective leadership (Communication)

The course illustrates different leadership approaches and how to use them to become a more effective leader. The use of online tools to enhance communication and collaboration with employees, partners, and customers are covered.

Story

Bethari, the owner of a small batik clothing company, faces challenges in leading her employees effectively.

Business concept

- Learn about different leadership styles (visionary, affiliative, collaborative, coaching, directive, pacesetting) and how to be a more effective leader
- Explore three cases to see how leaders in a small business, a social enterprise and a large technology company used different approaches to address business opportunities and challenges
- Learn how to apply the different leadership styles to business scenarios
 - activity: The user is given four business scenarios that Bethari is facing and is asked to select the most appropriate way to respond to each challenge. Each scenario has four options on how best to respond and each option will represent one of the six leadership styles. There is more than one good option for three of the scenarios.
- Learn about how and when to apply each of the six leadership styles

Discussion questions:

1. What three problems were creating issues for Bethari in her business?

- (1) Bethari had been contacted by a new customer about a potential order but it would need to be completed in the next 3 weeks.
- (2) She also was notified that a customer had been sent the wrong order and it needed to be corrected within the next 24 hours.
- (3) It was suggested to her that she expand into men's clothing.

2. What does Bethari think she needs to do?

She feels like she needs to change her leadership approach.

3. Effective business owners need leadership skills. In a small business who does leadership apply to:

In a small business leadership applies to employees, customers and vendors...basically everyone the entrepreneur interacts with.

4. Define leadership. Define management.

A leader is someone who shares a vision, sets clear goals, then motivates and enables others to achieve them.

Managing focuses on planning, organizing and coordinating the details of the business.

5. What are the most important leadership skills?

Answers will vary and there is no right answer— it is a great way to get several viewpoints about what leadership is and the most important leadership skills. Answers could include visionary, good listener, decisive, collaborative, relationship builder, empowering, etc. If the students are having a hard time answering this, another approach is what they appreciate in the leaders they know and why.

6. Define three of the six leadership approaches. What determines when they are used?

Student answers may vary but will include three of the following:

- a) Visionary leaders clarify the vision and common goals, motivates employees and gives them the freedom to develop the specific ways to achieve the goals.
- b) Affiliative leaders establish strong relationships and works to develop strong emotional bonds.
- c) Collaborative leaders involve others in the decision making process.
- d) Coaching leader emphasizes developing the skills of others.
- e) Directive leaders take charge and tell people what to do.
- f) Pacesetter leaders set high performance goals and lead by example.

Each of the leadership approaches work and a good leader should be flexible and able to apply the best approach based on the specific circumstances of the situation, the culture context and stage of the business.



Terms defined:

Leadership, Management, Leadership styles: Visionary, Affiliative, Collaborative, Coaching, Directive, Pacesetter

7. When should the Directive approach be used? When should the Pacesetting approach be used?

The Directive approach should be used in times of conflict and stress. The Pacesetting approach is used when the individuals are highly motivated, skilled and under a tight deadline.

Individual activity:

Have the students summarize and describe both the situation and the approach each of the small business leaders illustrated used.

Group activity:

1. The activity described above could also be done in groups of three to five students. This could be expanded to have the students identify the specific elements of the situation that created the need for the specific leadership approach.

2. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Assign each group one of the leadership approaches – do this privately or by having students draw one from an envelope. Students should only know the leadership approach of their group. Based on all the situational examples provided in this module, have each group put together a scenario describing situational elements that would facilitate the use of the assigned leadership approach. Each group presents their scenario without identifying the leadership approach. Students list the leadership approach they think would work in each of the scenarios described. After all groups have presented their scenarios, they identify their intended leadership approach and the situational approaches.

Technology skill

- Learn what technologies (instant messaging, online community, internet voice and video call, screen sharing, collaborative document editing) help a leader communicate and collaborate more effectively
 - activity: The user learns how to use Skype to communicate with Bethari's staff
- Additional tips are provided to help use and manage the technologies
- Download: The six leadership styles, Communication technologies for effective leadership

Discussion questions:

1. What communication technologies are recommended for the visionary leadership approach? The directive approach? The coaching approach?

Visionary: Online community, internet voice and video call, screen sharing.

Directive: Instant messaging, online community, internet voice and video call.

Coaching: Instant messaging, internet voice and video call, screen sharing.

2. Why would a leader want to post about themselves in an online community?

Posting about yourself, your vision, your ideas helps your employees get to know you on a personal level. People are more motivated to work for you when they know and understand your goals and vision.

3. How can a leader use the status feature of instant messaging?

The status feature of instant measuring can be used to indicate your availability.

4. How do you start an instant message conversation with another person? How would you name this conversation?

To start an instant message conversation go to the contact list and click on the person's name. To name the conversation, hover over the name location and click on it.

Individual activity:

Choose one of the information technology formats. Describe its pros and cons and give at least two tips for using that format.

Group activity:

1. Divide the class into groups of three to five. Have each group choose one of the technology formats and prepare a three minute presentation on the approach and the relevant leadership approaches.

2. Divide the class into groups of three to five. Have one student with electronic access begin an instant message conversation with another student. Add the remaining group members and name the conversation.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Leadership articles
- Communication articles
- Business skill articles
- Leading people through change

Technology Skill Resources:

Internet voice and video
call tutorials

- HP MyRoom
- Google+ Hangout
- Skype

Instant messaging
tutorials

- Google+ Hangout
- Skype

Collaborative document
editing tutorials

- Google Docs
- Microsoft Office 365

Screen sharing tutorials

- Skype
- JoinMe

Online community
tutorials

- Yammer
- Facebook group
- LinkedIn

Tying it all together

Discussion questions:

1. Review the Next Steps article “Becoming a Leader”. How can a business owner develop leadership traits and skills?

Answers will vary. One way to start is to find out how others view you as a leader. Various tools are available and can be used to acquire a 360 degree view from peers, subordinates and directors. Determine your gaps and develop a plan to fill those gaps. There is a wealth of quality resources in the form of reading materials, courses and even certifications. Take advantage of industry association opportunities as well as those available through Chambers of Commerce. These opportunities might arise in the form of a leadership role in the organization or in the form of training. Many Chambers of Commerce have a leadership development program available to their members.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Resources on Leadership from Next steps

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Leading People Thru Change (21 minutes)

HP Expert Shayne Weidman shares insights about the effect of a change in leadership and management.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Business communications (Communication)

This course defines effective communications and gives examples of how communications can go bad and the possible results. The course provides an effective communications framework for both verbal and written communications, including the use of online tools to enhance communication and collaboration with employees, partners, and customers.

Story

Julian is a manager at a catering company. His poor communication skills caused a significant loss of business and unhappy customers.

Business concept

- Understand the steps of effective business communications for both verbal and written communications. Understand some of the barriers to effective communications.
 - Activity: the user can reflect on barriers of communication and how those barriers can be avoided
- Learn the business benefits of effective communications
- Apply a framework of effective communication (target the correct audience, define the purpose, ensure that a clear message, transmitted via the appropriate medium, is understood and acted upon)
 - Activity: The user is given five communication scenarios and asked to pick the most appropriate communications medium (e.g., email, IM, virtual meeting, phone, face-to-face, etc.)
 - Activity: The user is provided an example of ineffective communication highlighting the issues and then is provided the same example with the communication issues corrected. The user can reflect on the outcomes of the good and bad communications example
 - Activity: the story about Julian is redone with the user helping to correct his mistakes

Discussion questions:

1. Jose wasn't sure which job order Julian asked him to send. He assumed incorrectly that it was the Jones' order. What should Jose have done differently in this scenario? Describe a similar situation in which you made assumptions or guessed what a person was saying or requesting of you. What held you back from asking for clarification at the time of the interaction? What are some steps that you can take in the future for clearer communication with co-workers?

Jose should have asked Julian which job order he was referring to. Asking questions is important. It leads to better communications, deeper understanding and it may lead to new and better ideas or solutions. People may not feel comfortable asking questions for a number of reasons (they think it shows they don't have the knowledge, culturally asking questions is not encouraged, etc.). Asking questions should be encouraged and seen as a good way to improve communications and job performance.

2. Describe examples of poor communication that you have experienced in the workplace or as a customer. What was the consequence? How could the communications been improved?

Answers will vary. Encourage discussion on what went wrong, what were the communications barriers, what were the business consequences (e.g., unhappy customers, unhappy employees, loss of business, etc). How could the business communication framework been used to improve the communications.

3. The result of poor communications is misunderstanding. What could misunderstanding lead to in a business setting?

Answers will vary. Misunderstanding leads to:

- Confusion that could cause delays, re-work, extra cost, hurt relationships, mistrust, and a lack of understanding of the proper path forward or end goal.
- lost sales or reduced profit
- expectations not set properly
- low productivity and morale

4. Discuss each step of the business communications framework and why it is important.

Targets the correct audience: you need to know who you should communicate with, what is their role, what are their needs and interests and whether or not they understand your message without needing more information.

Has a well-defined purpose: you need to define the purpose of the message. Is it to inform, request action, make decisions, explore or generate ideas? By understanding the purpose, you can create a clear and concise message.



Terms defined:

Effective communications, written communications, verbal communications, body language, message, medium

Conveys a clear message: message in this context applies to both verbal and written communication. Create a message that is clear, concise, states any actions that need doing, and specifies the deadline..

Is delivered in an appropriate medium: discuss mediums and why mediums are important, Here are some examples:

- Verbal communications (e.g., face-to-face, phone, virtual meeting, etc) enables you to build rapport, have a discussion about ideas or decisions, or deal with sensitive issues
- Written communications have several advantages:
 - gives you time to think through and create the message
 - gives the receiver time to think through their response
 - Documents decisions and provides basic, routine information.

Is understood and acted upon. Discuss the LEAPS (**L**isten, **E**mpathize, **A**sk questions, **P**araphrase, **S**ummarize) model, including why it is important

- You can apply LEAPS to make sure you have a good understanding between the sender and receiver. Both the sender and receiver can use LEAPS for both verbal and written communication.

5. Describe differences in communicating with coworkers versus customers? What medium would you use to communicate effectively with each audience?

The best way to answer this is to first think of who you are communicating with and for what purpose. Your target audience may have a preferred medium for communication. That information will help you create the message and select the medium. All communications should be courteous and appropriate.

6. Why should all communications be courteous and appropriate?

Part of the answer is obvious. You should treat others with respect and be courteous. The part of the answer that might not be obvious is that written messages could be forwarded to other people you did not intend to receive the message. Be mindful of this and keep all messages courteous and appropriate.

Individual activity:

How would you self-evaluate your own communication skills? Are you stronger in verbal or written communications? Provide an example. What would you like to improve about your communication skills? Use the Business Communication Action Plan (downloadable).

Group activity #1:

Give a scenario to a group and have them design the business communications. Here are some possible scenarios:

1. A product planning team needs to discuss possible new features and create a plan for the next revision of a product.
A good start would be a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the agenda sent in advance. Ask the participants to be prepared to discuss customer requirements, competitive product features, and other information needed to prioritize new features for the product. Document all decisions, timing, and action items with an email.
2. A branding team needs to create an external communications calendar for social media.
A good start would be for the leader of the team to create a communications calendar draft and send it to participants in an email. Ask each person to contribute their ideas/suggestions and return the calendar by a specific date. The leader adds all of the ideas/suggestions to the draft communications calendar and schedules a meeting with an agenda to present the updated communications calendar draft. Discuss and define next steps to finalize the calendar.

Group activity #2: Game - "Email, Phone call, Chat, Virtual, Text"

Break into teams of 3 or 4 and designate the teams as Team A, Team B, etc. Each team competes as if they are on a TV game show. Draw a "situation" out of a hat and give Team A 30 seconds to decide if the communication response should be an email, a phone call, a face-to-face chat, virtual meeting, or a text message. Have them provide reasoning for their answer. The opposing team then has 30 seconds to agree (but elaborate on the reason why) or disagree and explain. The audience then votes on which team's answer is best. Include "situations" that are vague or could actually be handled in multiple ways.

Technology skill

- Learn what technologies (e.g., instant messaging, social media, internet voice and video call, screen sharing, collaborative document editing, etc.) can be used to communicate and collaborate more effectively
 - Activity: the user goes through each technology and learns about the technology and how to use it
 - Activity: the user learns how to use Skype to communicate
- Download:
 - Business Communications Action Plan, create a plan to improve communications

- Business Communications Planning Template, proactively plan for business communications
- Business Communications Tips, a handy reference guide with lots of tips on meetings, phone calls and other communication mediums

Discussion questions:

1. How has communication technology improved or impeded business communications?

Improved: It is very easy and quick to reach out to people in any location to share and discuss information and to collaborate online. This increases information availability, collaboration, understanding, and reduces business travel.

Impeded: The use of new tools such as Instant messaging, social media marketing, and email may reduce the face-to-face interactive conversations that are needed in some cases. It is up to us to use the right medium for the target audience and purpose of the communications. In-person meetings can help to build rapport that will enable improved communication and cooperation in the future.

2. Social Media improves communication - defend or refute.

A lot can be said about social media, and not surprisingly, it has both positive and potentially negative consequences. From “Fake News” that sways public opinion, to people becoming too narrow with regard to what they read and who they follow, points of view can become polarized. On the flip side, if the communication is authentic and empathetic, direct engagement with your customers is very valuable.

Individual activity:

Choose one of the information technology formats. Describe its pros and cons and give at least two tips for using that format. Give examples of how it might be used to improve communications.

Group activity:

Set up a virtual meeting with another class or a group in a different location. Set up the meeting, create an agenda, and conduct the meeting. Include meeting minutes to document action items and decisions. Practice LEAPS during the meeting.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Effective communication articles
- Business skill articles

Related HP LIFE Courses:

- Effective leadership
- Effective presentations
- Business email

Technology Skill Resources:

Internet voice and video call tutorials

- HP MyRoom
- Google+ Hangout
- Skype
- Viper

Instant messaging tutorials

- Google+ Hangout
- Skype

Collaborative document editing tutorials

- Google Docs
- Microsoft Office 365

Screen sharing tutorials

- Skype
- JoinMe

Social media tutorials

- Yammer
- Facebook group
- LinkedIn

Effective presentations (Communication)

The course gives users information on how to create targeted and engaging presentations for a variety of audiences.

Story

Alejandro owns a café and is preparing to give two important presentations: one to secure new funding, and one to increase sales to grow his business.



Business concept

- Understand strategies to effectively reach your audience
- Develop a presentation tailored to a specific audience
 - activity: The user creates two presentations from existing slides: one for sales and one for funding. The user selects the best way to present data.

Discussion questions:

1. Why was Alejandro not correct in thinking he could use the same presentation for the two groups he was meeting with this week?

Alejandro did not take into consideration his goal for each audience was different. He also did not consider the needs of each of the groups.

2. What was the goal Alejandro should be focused on for each of the groups?

His goal for the bankers was to raise funds. His goal for the hotel and guesthouse owners was to increase sales.

3. What were the needs for each of the two audiences?

The bankers needed to know from the presentation that Alejandro had a strong business that would be a good risk for the bank to provide funding. The hotel and guesthouse owners needed to know that Alejandro had a good product that would meet the needs of their customers and would be cost effective for them to purchase from.

4. Should a slide include a lot of text content to get a point across?

Each slide should address only one point and should limit the amount of text included. A greater amount of text would be included on the speaker's notes, and an even greater amount on full text handouts.

5. There are numerous images that can be drawn from clipart. Is this the best choice for a business creating a PowerPoint presentation? Why or why not?

This is usually not a good idea. While it is easier to use the clipart examples, they may not match the branding theme you are looking for in regard to your business. Also, using professional photos are generally much more pleasing to your audience.

Individual activity:

Choose a business you would like to start and prepare an introduction slide for a longer presentation that includes a company name, a theme, and an image related to your business branding. Go to Google Images (<https://images.google.com>) and download several professional images related to your business theme.

Technology skill

- Create effective and well-designed slide presentations
 - activity: The user learns how to use Microsoft PowerPoint to add themes, layouts and graphics to presentations
- Download: Planning your presentation, and tips for designing your presentation to help the user create more effective presentations

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the process you would use in PowerPoint to create a slide theme, layout changes and the insertion of images.

While the answers may be somewhat different across the students, they should include selecting the design tab on the top toolbar for theme changes; selecting Home and the dropdown layout for layout changes; and, Insert tab for inserting images.

2. Why is it important to revisit your slide after making any design changes to a slide?

Many characteristics such as font, color, and background can change with each design change.

3. What is a good test for the font size selected on a slide?

Check to see if the slide can be easily read from the back of the room.

Individual activity:

Using the “Planning Your Presentation” handout included under this section, design a presentation relating to the business you used in the first individual activity

Group activity:

Assign students to groups of three. Select one of the three presentations created in the individual activity above and create a slide presentation for the audience identified in the plan.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Presentation Tips: A comprehensive compilation of tips, divided into three topics: prepare, design, and deliver
- The Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint Presentations: List and explanation of what presenters should avoid
- Five Strategies for a Winning Sales Presentation: Five rules that will improve one’s sales pitch and prospects for securing a business deal
- Fix Your Presentations – Twenty one Quick Tips: Easy tricks to make presentations more compelling and persuasive

Technology Skill Resources:

- Create Your First PowerPoint Presentation: Links to tutorials for creating 2010/2007/2003 Microsoft PowerPoint presentations
- PowerPoint 2010 Crash Course: YouTube video tutorial on Microsoft PowerPoint 2010
- Gofree.com, LibreOffice Impress Tutorial #1: A guide for using LibreOffice Impress
- LibreOffice Impress: A link to the LibreOffice free presentation creator/editor

Tying it all together

Discussion questions: (these questions go beyond what is covered in the HP LIFE course)

1. How does the concept of target market apply to business presentations? How does it differ from the target market for the business itself?

The target market for the products or services sold by a business consists of those people (customers) who are most likely to buy from that business and therefore, the individuals to whom marketing efforts are directed. Defining a target market is the first step in developing a marketing strategy. When making a presentation, a business owner also needs to begin by defining the target market. This may or may not be for the product or service itself as in the case of the presentation to the bankers. In that presentation, the owner of the business was selling the concept of the business as a whole and his own ability to manage that business and pay back the loan. The target audience was the bankers. The benefits sought by the bankers is very different than the benefits sought by those drinking the coffee. This needs to be kept in mind when preparing the presentation. In the presentation to the hotel and guesthouse owners, the target market is obviously the owners of those establishments. While the benefits sought by this group overlap those of the end user/coffee drinker, this group also looks for benefits generated through discounted bulk options, fast delivery and custom blending.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- Your business presentation created in the individual activities
- A collection of 5 to 10 images that reflect your business brand

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Effective Presentations (33 minutes)

HP Expert Shayne Weidman shows what it takes to prepare and present effective presentations to engage the audience.

Four easy steps to an elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is used to sell yourself and your business. Learn how to develop and deliver the perfect pitch.

HP LIFE My business plan – Have your students apply what they learned in the course by having them complete the coordinating section in the HP LIFE [My business plan](#). My business plan is a feature where users capture key ideas and information about their business and can use it to build an effective business plan.

Business email (Communication)

The course shows how to create effective and professional emails.

Story

Disc Jockey Vijay Singh wonders why potential clients aren't responding to his emails.



Business concept

- Recognize the dos and don'ts of business email
- Create professional and appropriate business emails
 - activity: The user learns how to create a professional email, and then is asked to edit several emails to Vijay's potential and current customers and a loan officer. Feedback is provided by the recipient on the professionalism of the email.

Discussion questions:

1. Vijay was receiving numerous emails after potential clients saw his website. Why do you think he was not being contacted back after he responded to those emails?

Vijay's emails were not prepared in a manner appropriate for business communications. They lacked professionalism and reflected his personal lack of business experience.

2. What were the two criticisms that Vijay's friend gave regarding responses he had prepared.

She suggested he not use acronyms that many readers would not be familiar with, and that his signature block did not reflect that he was responding on behalf of the business.

3. Why is the "to" address the last item to complete on an email you are sending?

This ensures that a recipient never gets an email you have not had a chance to review.

4. What are some reasons to be clear on what is included in the subject line of an email?

The receiver of the email will know exactly what the email is about. This may allow that person to prioritize emails they receive. In many cases it may also give a better chance that the email will not be ignored.

5. What are some items that should not be used in a business email?

The email should not include emoticons, internet slang, or obscure abbreviations.

Individual activity: Write a draft email for Vijay in response to an email received from Bob Smith from the Thirsty Turtle Bar and Grill inquiring about his services and to gather more information about the business.

Students' responses will vary but all should avoid all of the pitfalls of bad email communication covered in this lesson.

Technology skill

- Learn how to compose an email
 - activity: The user learns the different parts of an email, ccs another person, adds an attachment and creates an email signature. Additional email tips are provided on spell check, insert and text formatting.
- Download: Business email tips to help the user create more effective emails

Discussion questions:

1. Who would normally be included in the Bcc box of an email?

Recipients whom you don't want visible to the primary recipients including those in the Cc box.

2. Why would you include a recipient in the Cc box rather than in the To box of an email?

Normally this person has an interest in the information in the email but is usually not expected to reply to the email.

3. Why would you not type your email in all capital letters?

Usually typing in all capital letters indicates that the sender is yelling.

Individual activity:

Prepare an email that includes a word document attachment providing a short explanation of how three tools found in email platforms (spell check, insert, and text formatting) are important for business email communication. The email should also include a new signature block from the sender. The email should be addressed to one primary recipient, one Cc recipient, and one Bcc recipient.

Group activity:

Assign students to groups of four (this would be accomplished prior to the individual activity). Once an individual email is received from the individual activity, the recipient would forward the email to the person identified in the Cc box.

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Effective E-mail Communication: Discussion of what is and is not appropriate, as well as the various components of a professional email
- Six Steps to Writing Professional Emails: Divided into steps and loaded with tips on the topic
- Writing Effective Emails - Making Sure Your Messages Get Read and Acted Upon: An article discussing helpful tips on writing effective emails. Provides good and poor examples.

Technology Skill Resources:

- Email Basics: Material teaching the essentials of email, in addition to other popular ways to communicate online. A good starting point for choosing an email provider.
- Gmail: The basics of how to compose, send and respond to emails, in addition to exploring Gmail's features for managing your email and accessing it from your mobile devices
- Getting started with Hotmail: A link and guide to using Hotmail
- Welcome to the Yahoo! Mail Tutorials: Yahoo mail help center
- Getting started with Outlook 2010: A link and guide to using Microsoft Outlook
- Mozilla Mail: A link and guide to using Mozilla Mail
- GMX Mail Basics: YouTube tutorial on using GMX Mail

Tying it all together

Discussion questions:

1. Vijay is a DJ not a business writer. Why would potential customers care if his messages are informal and lack detail? Potential customers might see this as a reflection of his overall business manner and the degree to which he takes his business seriously. If Vijay doesn't pay attention to details when responding to an email, will he pay attention to details when hired to provide his services? The manner in which he responds to emails is received as a reflection of his overall character and professionalism. This may or may not be the case but might be the only thing a potential customer has as an indication.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a "course folder" for use when creating a business plan.

- A draft email describing your business to a potential client
- A signature line for you when responding to a business email

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under "Community", you will find a variety of presentations available. For this course try:

Business Communications (28 minutes)

HP Expert Shayne Weideman looks at various aspects of business communication

Presenting data (Communication)

The course illustrates how to use charts and graphs to help people understand business information.

Story

Bethari, who runs a clothing business, has a chance to secure a loan for online advertising. She must submit a brief summary of her financials.



Business concept

- See how powerful visual-representations of data can be
- Choose the right chart or graph to present your data effectively
 - activity: The user is provided a summary about different types of graphs (line graphs, bar charts and pie charts) and how each is best used

Discussion questions:

1. Bethari's customer was very friendly to her and indicated that she liked Bethari's products. Was this the only criteria that she was going to use for a possible business loan?

While it is often to a seller's benefit that a potential investor likes their product, investors are usually driven by returns on their investments. It appears to be the case in the story that an investment may occur only if the financials looked promising.

2. What were the needs that had to be met before the investor would consider making a loan to Bethari?

As is the case with most successful investors, time is one of their most valuable resources. The potential investor needed financials that not only made good investment sense but also ones that were easy to read and find the key points quickly.

3. When is a line graph a good choice in conveying data?

A line graph is effective in showing a trend over time. If you have a lot of data this is usually the most effective means of conveying that information. In addition, the line graph is a very useful approach in comparing two or more sets of numbers (especially if there are lots of numbers in each of the comparative groups). A good example would be sales by month over the past year, as well as those numbers compared to the same data from the previous year.

4. When is a bar chart a good choice in conveying data?

Bar charts are very useful when you want to show a relationship or comparison between sets of data in a similar category. It can also be used to demonstrate changes over time. In both of these cases this type of chart works best with a limited number of items. A good example would be sales over the past four quarters compared to the same numbers of the previous year.

5. When is a pie chart a good choice in conveying data?

Pie charts are almost always used to demonstrate a comparison of numbers that make up a whole. For example, the proportion of sales by individual products within a company's product line, or total sales by region would be well represented on a pie chart. This type of chart works best in this regard when only a few numbers of categories are involved.

Individual activity:

Create a series of five sales amounts over a five month period (Jan-May) in a spreadsheet program. Compare the appearance of the presentation of this data using a line graph, bar chart and a pie chart. Determine which chart style is most appropriate. Create a series of 24 months of sales (Jan 2012-Dec 2012, and Jan 2013-Dec 2013). Compare the two years of data using each of the chart types and determine which is most appropriate.

Technology skill

- Use spreadsheet software to create charts and graphs
 - activity: The user creates a line graph, adds x and y axis titles, and deletes the legend. Additional graph tips are provided on layouts, chart styles and color.
- Download: Tips for creating charts and graphs to help the user present data effectively

Discussion questions:

1. What are the steps necessary to create a line graph from data included in an excel spreadsheet program?

- 1) Click on the data within the spreadsheet you wish to use
- 2) Click on Insert
- 3) Click on line
- 4) Select your choice of line graph

2. What are the necessary steps to delete a legend in the created line graph above?

- 1) Click on layout
- 2) Click on legend
- 3) Click on none

3. What are the necessary steps to name your X and Y axis in the chart?

- 1) Click on layout
- 2) Click on Axis titles
- 3) Click on Horizontal Axis Title and type a name
- 4) Click on Vertical Axis Title and type a name

Individual activities:

Copy the data from the table below into a spreadsheet program. Create a chart that best demonstrates the data in comparing both performance over time and comparison between the individual products. In creating the chart, create a title for the chart, legends for the sales data, and X and Y axis titles.

	Product A	Product B	Product C	Product D	Product E
2010	6000	12000	9000	25000	4000
2011	7000	16000	4000	32000	5000
2012	8000	18000	6000	42000	6000
2013	9000	15000	8000	45000	7000
2014	7000	14000	12000	50000	8000

Next steps (English language version)

Business Concept Resources:

- Selecting the Right Chart Type for your Data: A guide to selecting charts, by purpose (e.g. for comparing data, for showing composition of data, or for showing distribution of data)
- How to Select the Right Chart for your Data: Explanation of a chart-making process, and help for the user to identify the right chart. Includes some information and links to help in formatting charts.

Technology Skill Resources:

- Google Chart Tools: A link and guide to using Google Chart Tools
- Our eight best tutorials on Excel charts: Various tutorials for Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Excel Tips and Tricks: List of a number of helpful format-related tips for Microsoft Excel
- Available Chart Types (Excel 2007): List of the different chart types available for use
- LibreOffice Documentation: User guides to LibreOffice
- Charts in LibreOffice: A guide to LibreOffice charts
- OpenOffice Tips and Tricks: A guide to using the OpenOffice Calc spreadsheet tool

Tying it all together

Discussion questions:

1. What are the benefits of using charts to convey business data?

Graphs are useful visual tools that can take complicated data and translate it into a meaningful message that can often then be comprehended in a short period of time. This is extremely important in today's busy world. Often times, business owners only have a matter of minutes to get their point across. Think about making a business pitch to a group of investors. Visual are a much more effective tool to use than extensive verbiage. The old adage "A picture is worth a thousand words" applies to charts and graphs as well. And, in today's global economy where language barriers exist, visuals can help bridge these barriers.

Individual activity:

Incorporate the following into your business plan or a “course folder” for use when creating a business plan.

- The “Tips for Creating Charts and Graphs” download information

Additional resources available on HP LIFE e-Learning

Recorded Presentations – Bring a guest speaker into your course with a recorded presentation from HP LIFE. Located under “Community”, you will find a variety of presentations available.

Summary of technology skills

Microsoft Excel	
Basics of finance	How to use formulas
Profit and loss	Insert/delete rows, add information, apply fill and borders to cells
Cash flow	Format cells, copy worksheets, tips on copying/pasting and conditional formatting
Sales forecasting	Copy formulas, conditional formatting, tips on cell reference and absolute cell reference
Maximizing capacity	Merge cells, reference cell, sum and insert rows/columns
Presenting data	Create line graphs, edits the graph. Additional tips on graph layouts, chart styles and color
Energy efficiency	Conditional formatting, drop-down lists
Microsoft Word	
Setting prices	Design a table, insert rows/columns, merge/split cells, change cell height/width, change page to landscape
Marketing benefits vs. features	Edit a marketing flyer by adding a picture, text box and aligning text. Tips on page orientation, adding columns, themes and colors
Hiring staff	Edit a form by bolding a title, adding a line and a checkbox
Strategic planning	Embedding and linking a spreadsheet into a Word document
Microsoft Outlook	
Managing contact information	Use Outlook as a contact management system, categorize contacts, basic and advance searches
Customer relationship management (CRM)	Use Outlook as a CRM tool, keep track of all customer interactions and follow up activities
Business email	Learn different parts of an email, cc another person, add an attachment and create a signature
Microsoft PowerPoint	
Effective presentations	Add themes, layouts and graphics to presentations
Google	
Finding funding	Delicious social bookmarking and Google advanced search
Unique value proposition	Google advanced search
Effective leadership	Communication and collaboration using Google Docs and Google+ Hangout
Business communications	Communication and collaboration using Google Docs and Google+ Hangout
Facebook	
Social media marketing	Create a Facebook ad

Effective leadership	Communication using Facebook
Delicious.com	
Finding funding	Delicious social bookmarking and Google advanced search
Others	
Selling online	Picture editing: picture backgrounds, lighting, framing, crop, brightness and rotation
Inventory management	Databases, inventory and accounting software and point-of-sale systems
Your target audience	SurveyMonkey: Create an online survey and view the results
Effective business websites	WordPress: add a new web page, add a picture, tips provided for hyperlinks, templates, media, social media widgets, parent and subpages
Social entrepreneurship	Evernote: collect, record and share business information and ideas. Additional tips are provided for recording audio notes, web-clipping, tags and virtual maps and locations.
Effective leadership	Communication and collaboration tools: Skype, LinkedIn, Microsoft Office 365, JoinMe, Yammer
Business communications	Communication and collaboration tools: Skype, LinkedIn, Microsoft Office 365, JoinMe, Yammer
Starting a small business	Data collection and analysis tools including Google Analytics, social media analysis tools, surveys, spreadsheets, Kissmetrics

List of downloadable templates

Course		
Basics of finance	Break-even point	A spreadsheet to calculate profitability and the break-even point
Business communications	Business Communications Action Plan	Create a plan to improve your business communications
Business communications	Business Communications Planning Template	Proactively plan for a future business communications
Business communications	Business Communications Tips	Tips on how to effectively communicate
Business email	Business email tips	Tips for all parts of a business email
Cash flow	Cash flow projection	A spreadsheet to calculate a cash flow projection
Customer relationship management	Using Outlook 2010 as your CRM	A guide on how to use Outlook to add contacts, contact information, customizing categories, creating and assigning tasks
Customer relationship management	Nine steps to implementing your CRM system	Nine steps to implementing your CRM system such as research your CRM options, set goals and implementation tips
Effective business websites	Business website planning worksheet	A planning template to summarize the user's business goals, target audience and content
Effective business websites	Website user experience best practices	Best practices for website content, navigation and design
Effective leadership	The six leadership approaches	A summary of the six leadership approaches covered in the course
Effective leadership	Communication technologies for effective leadership	A list of communication technologies and how they can be used
Effective presentations	Planning your presentation	Tips on presentation purpose, audience, and planning
Effective presentations	Tips for designing your presentation	Tips for preparation, content including graphics, branding and audience actions
Energy efficiency	Energy savings checklist	A list of energy saving questions for the user's business and employees
Energy efficiency	Energy audit spreadsheet	The spreadsheet can be used to analyze monthly energy usage and cost
Finding funding	Keeping track of your funding possibilities	A form to list funding sources and status for the user's business idea or actual business
Hiring staff	Tips for interviewing applicants	General tips, and tips for before, during and after the interview

Inventory management	Inventory management tips	Tips for inventory management planning, purchasing, organization, updating and continual improvement
Inventory management	Inventory management spreadsheet	Using a spreadsheet for inventory management – list of items, number in stock, price and additional information
Inventory management	Inventory management technology resource links	List of inventory management options – spreadsheets, databases, software, point of sale systems
IT for business success	Technology initiative planning template	A planning template to list business goals, strategies, and technology solution options
Managing contact information	Contact information worksheet	A form to fill out contact information including order history, call log and other information
Marketing benefits vs. features	Marketing benefits vs. features worksheet	A form that can be used to fill out information about the target market, and the product or service benefits and features
Maximizing capacity	Staff time capacity calculator	A spreadsheet to summarize the time needed to produce products and services, and to perform all operating tasks in one week
Maximizing capacity	Production capacity guide	A guide to help the user use the Staff time capacity calculator
Presenting data	Tips for creating charts and graphs	Tips for chart types, styles and other tips
Profit and loss	Income statement	A spreadsheet to calculate profit and loss
Sales forecasting	Sales forecasting tips	A list of sales forecasting tips
Sales forecasting	Sales forecast worksheet	A 12 month sales forecast spreadsheet. Also includes cash flow history and cash flow projection tabs.
Selling online	Popular online marketplaces	A list of online marketplaces and descriptions
Selling online	Planning your online listing	A guide for planning an online listing, including keywords, descriptions, photographs and price
Setting prices	Price comparison worksheet	A form to compare competitors' pricing and value to help user to determine the best pricing
Social entrepreneurship	The social entrepreneur's journey	Phases including building the idea, developing a business plan, setting up the business, running the business and measuring the impact
Social entrepreneurship	Building your social enterprise idea	Tips to building a social enterprise idea including understanding the issue, context, local needs, financial model and other tips
Social media marketing	Social media planning template	Uses the 5 steps covered in the course to create a marketing plan
Social media marketing	Choose a social media platform	A description of the most common social media platforms, metrics and useful links
Social media marketing	Editorial content calendar	A tool to ensure social media content is published consistently and organize your key messages
Social media marketing	Open a social media account	Instructions on how to open an account for the most common social media platforms
Social media marketing	Facebook ad instructions	How to create a Facebook ad in 7 steps
Social media marketing	Social media tips	Best practices in general and for each social media platform
Starting a small business	My entrepreneurship inventory	The user can list the skills, experience and resources
Starting a small business	Steps to starting a small business	Steps to start a small business covered in the course
Starting a small business	Small business ideas	A list of small business ideas
Starting a small business	Target market template	A template that can be used to describe the target market(s)
Starting a small business	Competitive analysis template	A template that can be used to describe the competitors, their product offering, strengths and weaknesses
Starting a small business	Small business metrics	A list of small business metrics
Starting a small business	Small business resources	A list of resources and tools available to small businesses
Strategic planning	SWOT matrix	A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) matrix users can fill out
Strategic planning	SWOT factor prioritization	A guide to help prioritize SWOT factors when doing SWOT analysis

Unique value proposition	Exploring your competition	A table to fill compare aspects of the user’s business to competitors. The table can be used to develop a statement about what will set the user’s business apart from competitors - the unique value proposition.
Your target audience	Target audience profile worksheet	A worksheet to summarize the user’s target audience including, gender, age, education level, occupation, and other information

Educator resources

HP LIFE e-Learning is a powerful tool for faculty and small business advisors. These resources provides models and information to help you easily adapt HP LIFE for your classroom, training center, or coaching sessions. Educator resources are available at www.life-global.org.

General implementation tools

- Overview presentation slides
- Quick start guide
- Course directory
- Course detail

Recorded presentation slides

- Presentation skills slides
- Running Lean slides
- Strategic planning slides



- Understanding Your Customers’ Problems slides
- Pitch Perfect: 4 easy

steps to a perfect elevator pitch slides

- Mastering social media slides

Marketing tools

- Printable posters
- Web banners