**SDM CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES**

The capstone project will assess your learning in the course with two components. The first component will be a group project graded out of 60 marks. It will assess you on your ability to integrate concepts learnt in the course to solve a real world problem.

The second component will be an individual project graded out of 40 marks. It will assess you on your ability to collect primary data and solve a specific problem given by us.

1. Group project (60 marks)
2. Individual project (40 marks)

The detail of each component is given below-

**GROUP PROJECT**

Each group can have a minimum of 2 members and a maximum of 5 members. Participants can form their own groups. Members of the group should work together towards solving a real world problem related to selling, salesforce management or channel management. The project will be evaluated on the following subcomponents- a) topic selection, b) analysis of the problem, c) solution provided and d) adherence to the report guidelines. The details of each subcomponent with weightage is given below-

1. **TOPIC SELECTION *(5%)***

Think of a topic relevant to selling, salesforce management or distribution channels that is not covered in class. Topic should meet following criteria-

* 1. The topic should be specific to an issue (example-How can salespersons build resilience? How can managers support their sales representatives during a crisis?). Do not choose very generic topics such as “how to manage omnichannels”. Do not take up problems which we already discussed in detail in class.
  2. It would be best if the topic is related to a real-life problem.
  3. Your topic can be specific to a company or an industry.

1. **ANALYSIS**

Your analysis should have 3 components-

1. Problem description-Elaborate on the nature of the problem. Give a brief description of the firm/industry if your problem if your topic is specific to a company/industry*.* ***(15%)***
2. What are managers/industry doing to address this problem. Participants are encouraged to talk to relevant stakeholders/ collect primary data to analyse the information ***(20%)***
3. Are there any insights you can gain from books, secondary sources and industry reports? What is academic literature saying about this problem ***(30%)***
4. **SOLUTION *(25%)***
5. Based on analysis in Section 2, what is your group’s solution to the problem? What recommendation will you give to the firm/salesperson/channel manager to deal with the specific issue/problem?
6. Please try to apply concepts you have learnt in the course

*Note- your solutions should flow from the analysis in section 2*

1. **REPORT GUIDELINES**
2. Report should be in Times new roman, size 12 font, single spaced and justified. Report should not exceed 20 pages.
3. Adherence to project guidelines ***(5%)***

**INDIVIDUAL PROJECT**

In this component, you will individually work to solve the problem described below-

*B2B marketplaces have to work to the satisfaction of both sellers and buyers whom they service. In 2019, xxx started addressing the growing demand for freelance sourcing experts of products from Asia. It is a marketplace where buyers are connected with freelance sourcing experts who can attend trade shows on a buyer's behalf anytime and anywhere. With its wide sourcing expertise, xxx processed more than USD 100 million worth of product inquiries for multiple businesses.*

*One of the common problems of B2B marketplace is to keep both sellers and buyers in good stead all through the lifecycle of the marketplace. There is also an in built conflict of interest in the current market places (Alibaba, MadeinChina, Trade India, Indiamart etc), that they are advertising and listing led platforms. Suppliers are the ones who pay for these services and not buyers, therefore the platforms are skewed towards making sure the advertisers get inquiries. To avoid any overzealous buyer/seller control over the other, there should be a minimal demand-supply gap. This entails understanding the pain points of both parties.*

In your project, you will look do the following

1. **Analysis** ***(10%)***

Identify the benefits and limitations of using B2B marketplaces (listing platforms) like Alibaba, MadeinChina, TradeIndia etc.) for the buyers (***10%)***

1. **Primary data collection *(60%)***

Identify the major pain points of buyers on B2B marketplace platforms and also enumerate the extent of prevalence of these four-five major pain points. Specifically, look to address the following points-

1. Do buyers understand that the listing platforms actually only match them with advertisers?
2. What are the main challenges faced when buyers source from online market places like Alibaba etc.?
3. What are the other channels that buyers use for sourcing?
4. Identify factors that could help them source better on these platforms?
5. How are buyers using freelancers to help them source currently, what services of these freelancers do they use?
6. Identify other alternatives available to buyers for sourcing – including online search, referrals, sourcing experts, platforms like BuyHive etc.
7. What are the expectations of sellers who onboard the b2b platform?
8. What are the challenges that sellers face when selling on the b2b platform?

The data should be collected via interviews. Identify 3 buyers or sellers who use b2b market places and conduct indepth interviews with them to uncover the above. ***(60%)***

1. **Recommendations for XXX platform *(25%)***

What are your recommendations for xxx platform to reduce the pain points that you have uncovered from buyer side?

1. **REPORT GUIDELINES**
2. Report should be in Times new roman, size 12 font, single spaced and justified. Report should not exceed 20 pages. Please attach the audio recordings of your interview or textual transcripts to the project.
3. Adherence to project guidelines ***(5%)***

**SUBMISSION TIMELINES**

* Group project report to be submitted by ***August 25th, 2022*** in the link provided in the LMS.Each group should present their project during the in-campus visit.
* Individual project report to be submitted by ***August 30th, 2022***