The Intent

This seven-week course is intended – more than anything else -- to enhance participants’ developed talent in “making strategy” for public program- and government organization-like ventures.

Public program- and organization-like ventures are the public sector analogue to business- and company-like ventures in the private sector. Public program- and government organization-like ventures are present throughout the public sector: in any jurisdiction or international body, and in any functional domain – such as organizing, training and equipping the military and protecting against environmental degradation or harms to worker health and safety.

Every venture – like every artifact or organism – requires multiple, interdependent functions to be carried out, by some practical means.

Historically, the functions of ventures were identified as technical, commercial, security, financial, accounting, and administrative. The administrative function was identified as consisting in the interdependent functions of planning, command, and control.

Strategy-making has much in common conceptually with the administrative function of planning. The core subject matter of the course thus deals with strategy making, as a required function for all ventures, when the venture is

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public program- and government organization-like (as contrasted with business- and company-like).

In seeking to enhance participants’ talent for making strategy for public program- and government organization-like ventures, the course gives priority to examining a “design-thinking” style of professional practice.

Like any practical activity, the intent of professional practice is to convert existing into preferred conditions; in this context, the existing and preferred conditions relate to a venture’s functioning when its forms are stable and the changing of a venture over time.

A characteristic of design-thinking is to consider critically and constructively those conditions to be regarded as preferred. In the context of ventures, such conditions are enterprise-like (e.g., public program-like) and organization-like.

A second characteristic of design-thinking is to presume that preferred conditions – however formulated -- have to be undergirded -- if they are to be attained -- by institutional-behavioral and technological conditions, arranged in a stable pattern.

A third characteristic of design-thinking, critical in the context of ventures, is the view that converting existing into preferred conditions is an institutional-behavioral process, with conditions and causal structures that are history-like.

Finally, design thinking needs to be directed at integrating these different lines of thinking.

The course is intended to draw participants into this design-thinking style of professional practice and, further, to do as much as an educational experience can in developing their inclination and capability to pursue this style when the more specific practical intent is to help carry out the strategy-making function for public program- and government organization-like ventures.

The course is also intended to develop its participants’ ability to design strategy development projects.

Any project is a formalized activity and, as such, relatively impersonal way to carry out a function, or a practical task, however conceived. As a formalized activity, strategy development projects are practical means to expand the range of participants in strategy-making beyond those whose roles sit within a venture’s “strategic apex”. Every concrete strategy-making project has to be custom-made; but knowing about, and understanding, concrete strategy-
making projects that have transpired in life courses of particular ventures is an essential and valuable input to design-thinking about strategy-making.

As such, the course will teach participants how to examine concrete experiences – such as those presented as case studies – so that they can serve as design precedents, when the intent to be served by professional practice is to carry out the strategy-making function as a formalized and relatively impersonal activity.

Finally, the intent of the MGMT 834 is to develop participants’ ability to contribute to intelligent discussions about strategy content and change in relation to public program- and government organization-like ventures.

Strategy content is conceived as intentions about a venture’s *functioning* in future stages of its life course.

Strategy change is conceived as intentions about the history-like process through which a venture changes, yielding the forms that enable and limit its functioning in future stages of its life course.

As such, the course will teach participants how to identify sources of impersonal knowledge about types of public program- and organization-like ventures and bring representations of them into strategy conversations, particularly those where the strategy development activity is formalized. Further, the course will help participants utilize their previously acquired impersonal knowledge about history-like institutional-behavioral phenomena when the practical task is to contribute to making strategy for a particular public program- and governmental organization-like venture.

In sum, MGMT 834 is intended to enhance participants’ developed talent in “making strategy” for public program- and government organization-like ventures, with due attention to styles of professional practice (including design-thinking), the intentional formation of formalized and somewhat impersonal strategy development projects, and the intentional shaping of a venture’s history.

**Key Characteristics, Resources, and Selected Features**

As designed, key characteristics of the course are built-in opportunities for the participants to contemplate:

- Reasons to think that established strategy-making frameworks for business and corporate management are highly serviceable for strategy making and strategy change for public programs and public bureaucracies.
• Reasons to think that public programs and bureaucracies are sufficiently different from businesses and companies that success factors for managerial action are qualitatively different between the two categories.

The course capitalizes on several resources:

• Routines for learning through case discussions and experiential exercises;

• Reading materials about strategy-making and strategy change that are relevant to both public and private management; and

• The instructor’s experience in teaching this topic for 30 years in degree programs and in executive education and his extensive experience as an independent consultant for government organizations and international public institutions.

The key features of the course are:

• Instructor-led discussions of traditional Harvard-style management teaching cases, affording an opportunity to assess lines of managerial action and adaptations to the enterprise and/or organization that occurred.
  
  o The cases expose participants to various contextual settings such as U.S. Department of Defense and Brazil’s Ministry for Planning, Budgeting, and Management.
  
  o There is coverage of different procedural forms of high-level strategy making.
  
  o There is an in-depth treatment of monitoring and control activities.

• Team exercises to forward engineer lines of managerial action and/or adaptations to the program and organization for a situation described in a teaching case.

• Keeping a journal that highlights the results of reflecting repeatedly on the case discussions and course materials.

• Assessment for grading purposes on (a) individual and team class participation and (b) on the personal plan to formalize, refine, and expand a knowledge-base for strategy making and change for public programs and government.
Course Layout

March 28

Introduction to the Course

Readings:


March 30

Initiating Formalized Strategy-Making Projects, For New Ventures (I)


Readings:


April 4

Incubating Formalized Strategy-Making in Established Ventures through Scenario Development

Guest Presentation by Enrique Rueda-Sabater, former Director of Corporate Strategy of the World Bank.

The session will include a presentation on theory and practice of scenario development, drawing specifically on experience with scenario development at the World Bank.

April 6

**Structuring Strategic Conversations for Ventures with Multi-National Public Governance Structures and Heterogeneous Program Portfolios**

Guest Presentation by Enrique Rueda-Sabater.

The session will include a presentation on the use of a variety of planning products and tools in formalized activities that were adapted to the venture characteristics of the World Bank.

April 11

**Interlude: Transforming Success Stories into Impersonal Knowledge for Use as Design Precedents**

**Readings**

Case: “Brazil’s Study of Axes of National Development and Integration”

Readings:


April 13

**Strategy-Making and Change for Headquarters-type Functions: Overseeing New Major Projects in a Realigned Center of Government**

Case: “Developing Management Systems to Implement Priority Projects: The Case of “Brazil in Action (Abridged)”

Readings:


April 18

**Strategy-Making and Change for Headquarters-type Functions: Established Employment Programs/Multi-level Governance Structures**

Case: “Realigning Execution of the European Social Fund Budget: Implementing the European Commission’s Integrated Internal Control Framework in a EU Structural Fund.”

Reading:

April 20

**Strategy-Making and Change for Headquarters-type Functions: Standard-setting Programs/Science Agencies**

Case: “Managing the Review and Clearance of Public Information as a Core Business Process at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (A)"


Readings:


April 25

**Strategy-Making for Defense Programs/Military Services & Departments**


Reading:


(Book can be purchased through the instructor at author’s discount price.)
April 27

**Incubating Strategy Redirection through ‘Studies and Analysis’ Projects (I)**


May 2

**Incubating Strategy Redirection through ‘Studies and Analysis’ Projects (II)**

Role-Playing Exercise

Reading:


May 4

**Implementing Strategy Change for Reconceived Operations of Established Environmental Programs/Regulatory Agencies (I)**

Case: “Preventing Pollution in Massachusetts: The Blackstone Project”

http://case.hks.harvard.edu/preventing-pollution-in-massachusetts-the-blackstone-project/

Readings:


or

May 9

Implementing Strategy Change for Reconceived Operations of Established Environmental Programs/Regulatory Agencies (II)

Team Presentations on the Blackstone Project