

Syllabus for the Start Up Issues Module

Welcome to Start Up Issues, the first step toward mastering entrepreneurship! Graham Greene, the novelist, once said, "*There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.*" We're at that moment now! If we do a good job in *venture planning*, it can be the tool that we need to launch a venture and bring a vision into being. We define *entrepreneurial vision* as *seeing what is not there*, but venture planning is the tool to *make it be there*. It is the door to the future; to *your* future! Let's get started!

First, download the *Plan Outline*. This document lists the steps in the *Venture Planning Process*, and the contents of a written *Business Plan*. Keep this document beside you as you move through the process, and keep the questions in the Venture Planning Process foremost in your mind as you study and learn. These are the key issues which you must master in order to open that door to the future!

Secondly, download the sample *Business Plans*. These are actual plans, so you must keep them confidential. The businesses in these plans are real, and might still be damaged if the contents became public, even though the plans are dated. Don't read these plans as a blueprint of what you will do for your own venture. They are just illustrations. We are going to show you what we believe a plan should contain, but there are really no rules, and the best business plan is the one which works! However, we know that you are more than a little curious at what a plan looks like, so we wanted you to see some samples.

Third, view the *Entrepreneurship Basics* video. This video is also contained in the introductory material, so you might have already viewed it. If so, you can move on to the next step. The purpose of this video is to get you comfortable with some basic entrepreneurship concepts.

Fourth, view the *Entrepreneurial Vision* video. Read the pdf text which accompanies it. This video introduces you to the concept of what we call, *seeing what is not there*. Think about your own ideas for a venture as you view this video, and how you might describe it to others.

This video is an overview of the entire process, and it will introduce many issues which we will explore in more depth in the future videos and units. It will help you begin to think like an entrepreneur! Ideas are everywhere! We want you to be looking for them all the time!

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Fifth, view the *Choosing a Location* video. Read the pdf text which accompanies it. This video will introduce you to some key issues about locating your venture, and what makes for a good location.

Sixth, view the *Building Your Team* video. Read the pdf text which accompanies it. This video will introduce you to the concept of finding, recruiting, training, compensating, and managing people. Entrepreneurs are leaders, and we are starting here to help you master the aspects of leadership which will be critical to establishing and growing your venture.

Seventh, begin the *Venture Planning Process* for your venture. Write up a vision statement. As discussed in the video, and displayed in the Plan Outline, your vision for the venture should be expressed in one or two pages, preferably, one! Your write-up should *convince* the reader that the vision is *viable*. This is key! Don't worry about concerns or questions about the vision statement now. You will probably rewrite this statement dozens of times as you move through the modules and become more proficient. The more you think about entrepreneurship concepts, the more your vision will sharpen and deepen.

Begin right now to build a team. You need a partner with whom to share ideas, discuss issues and concepts. This can be a spouse, a close friend, mentor, or associate, but it needs to be someone you trust and respect. Ideas do not spring full fledged from the brow of a lone genius! Perhaps they do in the movies, but in the real world of entrepreneurship, ideas get kicked around from mind to mind, and they sharpen and crystalize a little more with each exchange. Get your team together and start discussing! And, remember! No negatives are allowed in your discussions!

Eighth, begin the process of choosing where you will locate your venture, and start accumulating information about the demographics and about costs. Start recording this information. If you don't write it down, you will never get your mind around it! You may change this a dozen times before you launch the venture, but start now!

Finally, begin the process of designing the team that you will need to recruit. Research what skills you need, what compensation levels will be required, the number of people that you will need, what insurance and other costs are going to be. Again, write it all down! This is Venture Planning!