

Assignment Details and Rubric



Assignment Project Part 1: Project: Strategic Decision-making, and Heuristics

In Unit 4 Assignment Project Part 1, you use CVP analysis and create a balanced scorecard using various types of financial and non-financial measurements regarding multiple stakeholder perspectives to give a more balanced view of business performance.

You have the opportunity to conduct research that will enhance your value as an asset to the organization for which you work. Your critical thinking and credibility as a communicator of information are vital, much desired, skills. Recent research conducted by Kaplan University's School of Business and Information Technology establishes that critical thinking and credibility in written communications are the two most important skills needed to meet the demands of the changing global business environment.

Part 1: Note: This is Part 1 of the Project — A case study due in Unit 4 (Part 2 will be completed in Unit 5).

Part 1 of the Project, due at the end of this unit, requires you to complete an analysis and evaluation of a **manufacturing** organization. This evaluation will also provide the foundation for Part 2 of the Project. "The Organization" may be understood and used in three ways:

- One, you may use your own employer as the basis for the Project – IF your employer is a manufacturer, is appropriate to the Assignment and has the requisite information to support a graduate-level analysis. Use of an organization that is not appropriate may result in a diminished score. If you have any doubts, please contact your instructor for additional guidance.
- Another possibility would be to use a local manufacturing company willing to help you with your Project, even if you are not an employee.
- Next, if you are not employed, or if your employer is not appropriate to the assignment, you may select a different organization. You may use any organization of your choosing, but it must be appropriate to the Project.

NOTE: If you are self-employed or own your own company – it would NOT be an appropriate research subject. You must select another company to meet the requirements of the Project. One method for choosing a company will be to do an on-line search for a company that might interest you; then you may search the company's website as the basis for your Project.

Project Part 1 Checklist:

1. Begin with an introduction to the organization. Identify the company's manufacturing segment. Detail briefly the products manufactured by your organization, and the company's market niche and/or customer base.
2. Identify significant costs in your organization. Some of the topics to research and present about your organization would include, but not be limited to: (a) costs associated with environmental concerns, (b) cost behavior, (c) prevention costs, (d) appraisal (detection) costs, (e) internal failure costs, or (f) external failure costs.
3. Include a section devoted to Cost -Volume-Profit Analysis (CVP). Review Chapter 3 in your textbook. The level of detail you include in this section is flexible. But, make sure your analysis is related to actual financial data from the company. Suggested metrics might include the contribution margin, Degree of Operating Leverage (DOL), breakeven point, and others. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are unable to access actual financial data for your organization, then that company would, by definition, be inappropriate for the assignment.
4. Discuss budgeting considerations. Include the organization's budget process, the organization's budget variances and discuss management decisions related to budgeting.
5. Based on **independent research** and **additional** textbook Readings, create a Balanced Scorecard, incorporating all four of the organizational dimensions (financial, customer, internal business (BSC), and learning and growth). Identify 2 or 3 critical success factors (CSFs) for each dimension, and evaluate and analyze your organization's performance in relation to these critical success factors. (To help you with this part, review the material found on pages 16 and 17 of the textbook. Additionally, read pages 590 to 599 in the textbook in Chapter 11). **NOTE:** Do not simply cut and paste a BSC collected from an on-line source. Create your own BSC. Exhibit 11.10 on page 599 demonstrates the proper BSC format.
6. Create (again, the term "create" is very important — do not simply cut and paste a version collected from an on-line source) a "strategy map" for your organization. Your organization's strategy map should resemble Exhibit 11.9, seen on page 596 of your textbook. Include an explanation for each element in your strategy map. One thing to particularly note – The BSC and strategy map must be aligned. Please compare Exhibits 11.9 & 11.10 on pages 596 and 599 in the textbook. Please note that the elements in the BSC & the strategy map are coordinated.
7. Finally, end with a summary review (A formal "Conclusion" section is required) of the performance evaluation. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the organization? What changes would you recommend be made to the current organizational strategy?
8. Use critical thinking to:

- Evaluate the role of heuristics in managerial decision-making.
- Evaluate how heuristics may bias management decision-making related to the identification of Significant Costs, use of CVP Analysis, and the BSC/Strategy Map.

You should have a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages not including the abstract, title page, and references pages required. Your properly formatted paper using APA 6th edition format with the appropriate running head and citation style will be evaluated for content, analysis, critical thinking, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Therefore, be sure to proofread and then proofread again! Be certain that you do a “Spell and Grammar” check on your Project paper.

Include the appropriate use of headings and sub-headings. A good strategy will be to use the assignment rubric as a basic outline for headings and subheadings.

The 9–10 page minimum/maximum does not include the required title, abstract and reference list pages. Please do not incorporate enlarged type, extra line spaces, extra points at the end of a line, over-sized graphs and charts, or unusual margins to artificially inflate the page length.

NOTE: Do not use overly wordy phrases. DO use “economy of expression.” Use concise and precise language that avoids slang or colloquial expressions. For example: Instead of using “on the other hand...” simply use “alternatively...”

For additional help:

For help with your presentation and formatting, please review the Student Writing Help presented in Doc Sharing. Also, the Kaplan Writing Lab is a tremendous resource. So please take full advantage of the great help available there. You may access the Writing Lab by going to your “My Studies” tab located at the KU campus home page. Then, access the “Academic Support Center” link. The Writing Center will be located there for your access.

One very important suggestion will be to use the KU Writing Center’s “Paper review” service. You do not have to wait until your paper is fully completed to ask for a review. One thing to note, though – the Writing Lab will not be able to provide any feedback related to the specifics of the assignment content. But, they will be able to provide sample guidance about spelling, grammar, formatting, punctuation, and all elements of a formal written analysis.

Remember, this Assignment will be processed using the Turnitin software to determine the level of original content in the Assignment. Excessive similarity to existing works will result in varying consequences, depending on the precise nature of the similarity. To avoid potential violations of the Academic Honor Code, please review the document provided in the classroom under the Academic Tools tab titled “Plagiarism”; also consult the KU Catalog regarding Kaplan’s plagiarism policy.”

After you have completed the Project part 1 paper, upload your Word document to the Unit 4 Assignment Dropbox before 11:59 p.m. (ET), on Tuesday of Unit 4. Name your Assignment filename using this format: LastName_FirstName_Unit#_AssignmentName. For example, this Assignment will be named: Smith_Joan_Unit04_Assignment_Project part1.

Assignments submitted late will be subject to the Late Policy described in your Syllabus.

The Unit 4 Assignment Project Part 1 rubric has been provided here on the rubric icon. The rubrics are an integral part of all Assignment instructions. Please review the rubric document for a complete understanding of how your Assignments will be assessed. Doing so will help you successfully complete your Assignments.

One additional and extremely important note: You will not be eligible to complete the Project Part 2 PowerPoint Presentation unless the Project Part 1 has been submitted.

Assignment Project Part 1 Grading Rubric

Unit 4 Assignment Project Part 1 Rubric: Category/Description	Points Possible	Points Earned	Instructor Comments
Part 1) Introduction to Organization:			
Organization brief history	2		
Organization appropriate to assignment	2		
Clearly identified type & products manufactured	2		
Customer base/niche	2		
Other introductory comments as appropriate			
Part 2) Significant Costs			
Identified major costs	2		
Environmental concerns,	2		
Cost behavior	2		
Prevention costs,	2		
Appraisal (detection) costs,	2		
Internal failure or external failure costs.	2		
Part 3) Cost Volume Profit Analysis:			

Basic calculations – CM, DOL, other.	2		
Discuss how CVP Analysis affects management decision-making and how it benefits a company.	2		
Part 4) Budgeting Considerations			
Discuss the organization's budget process	2		
Include discussion of organization's budget variances.	2		
Discuss management decisions related to budgeting.	2		
Part 5) Balanced Score Card			
Includes all 4 categories	2		
Two or three CSFs each category	2		
Correct formatting (page 599 in text)	2		
Part 6) Complete Strategy Map -	2		
Matches elements of the BSC.	2		
Proper format (page 596 in the text)	2		
Part 7) Conclusion			
Strengths/Weaknesses	2		
Recommendations	2		
Coherent summary and conclusion information	2		
Subtotal:	<u>50</u>		
Part 8)			
Use critical thinking to:	30 Total points possible		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the role of heuristics in managerial decision-making. (For example, consider the old saying, "But we've never done it that way before.") 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate how heuristics may bias management decision-making related to the identification of Significant Costs, use of CVP Analysis, and the BSC/Strategy Map. 			
<p>APA Format/Grammar/Spelling – Important factors:</p> <p>Title page/Running head/Abstract</p> <p>Proper APA Margins</p> <p>Reference list (in proper format)</p> <p>Spelling/Grammar</p> <p>Headings and sub-headings used?</p> <p>Concise/precise language used?</p> <p>Is analysis fully cited using independent sources?</p> <p>Project page length requirements met using proper paragraphs, fonts, margins, etc.?</p> <p>Does the paper incorporate “economy of expression”?</p>	<p>20 Total points possible</p>		
<p>Final Score</p>	<p><u>100</u></p>		<p>Subtract late penalty if applicable.</p>

Elements of critical thinking:

- 1- Identify premises and conclusions,
- 2- Clarification of arguments,
- 3- Establishment of facts,
- 4- Evaluation of logic,
- 5- Final evaluation.