Can a Student Run Business Capstone Course Generate Relevant Forces That Last a Life Time– You Bet it Can
A Grounded Theory Investigation of a Student Run Business in an Undergraduate Industrial Engineering Program and Its Impact on Students, Instructors, and a Department over a 30 Year Span - Pragmatic Insights for Business Management Educators

By
Mr Ken Ward

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Abstract
Stakeholders demand greater accountability for student learning in today’s competitive world of business education. HR departments, using a human value approach, continually expect more from graduates. A potential contributor in graduate preparation is the capstone course. Considered a ‘rite of passage’ for various professional schools such as nursing, education, or engineering, the capstone experience remains a point of debate among business scholars. This qualitative study explores one particular capstone design, the Student Run Business (SRB). Using a ground theory methodology, I probed a unique and highly endorsed SRB capstone. This 30-year old course resides in an Industrial Engineering department located at a Midwestern U.S. university. A student led course, participants implement and operate a functioning manufacturing system after designing their product. Using data gathered from alumni, instructors, and students, I present a grounded theory describing how the course awakens a ‘professional development cycle’ and spurs business acumen via a ‘tumbler effect’ resting in Aristotle’s Phronesis. I will share potential contributions to the business pedagogy literature associated with experiential learning theory, competency modeling, and power dynamics and offer practical insights for business instructors considering the SRB.

All interested are welcome.