EI 101: First-Year Business Experience
Individual Research Assignment

DUE DATE: 2/21/17 100 POINTS POSSIBLE

OBJECTIVE:
This assignment will allow you to use the skills and library resources that were introduced during the library sessions while gathering important information for your team business plan project. You will be required to apply what you learned about identifying, locating and critically evaluating sources of business information. Additionally, you will be required to demonstrate your understanding of the proper use and citation of reference information from those sources.

PROCEDURE:
1) DETERMINE INFORMATION NEEDS - As a team, develop a list of questions you need to answer to further analyze and define your team’s business opportunity. Consider the following (and see attached Examples of Possible Research Questions):
   - Industry Analysis
   - Competitor Analysis
   - Customer Analysis
   - Economic Analysis
Divide the questions evenly among your team members. These questions will be the basis of your Individual Research Assignment.

2) LOCATE at least five credible sources that will answer your questions. The sources you select need to answer your questions so you can build your team’s overall business strategy. Use at least three of the following source types: trade resources (associations and publications), general business resources (WSJ, regional business journals such as the Indianapolis Business Journal, etc.), market research reports (company profiles, industry reports, etc.), government resources (Form 10-K and other government sources). Utilize the attached Search Log to help track and record your research process and preliminary findings.

3) SUMMARIZE the key findings from your research (the answers to your questions). Be sure you are objective and include information that might pose threats as well as information that will support your business idea. When summarizing your findings, you must use proper internal citations whether paraphrasing or using direct quotes.

4) Draw CONCLUSIONS about the information by describing how it will help you turn your business idea into a viable business reality. Specify how your findings will impact decisions regarding other aspects of your business plan (product, marketing, operations, etc.).

5) Include a reference list that correctly cites your sources. The required citation style in the Lacy School of Business is APA.

This assignment must be typewritten, single-spaced writing with double spaces between paragraphs, Times New Roman 12 point font, one inch margins with page numbers, and a title page. Your paper should be at least three but no longer than five pages, excluding cover page and references.
NOTE: You can access all of the related handouts, search logs, and resources to complete this assignment at http://libguides.butler.edu/spring2017fbe.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES:

1) Page one is your title page. Type the title in upper and lowercase letters centered in the upper half of the page. All text on the title page, and throughout your paper, should be 12 point type-face, Times New Roman, single-spaced. Beneath the title, center and type your name followed by course number and section and the date your assignment is due.

2) Page two should start the body of your paper. The paper should be single-spaced writing with double spaces between paragraphs. Please label each section of your paper as follows:

   **Introduction:** Clearly identify the purpose of your paper including:
   a. Your team’s business idea.
   b. What aspect of the business environment (economic, industry, competitive, customer) you are individually examining.
   c. The purpose of your research and the questions that you developed.

   **Research Findings:** Concisely and objectively:
   a. Summarize the information you found that is relevant to your business plan.

   **Conclusion:** Clearly describe how and why this information will be helpful in developing your business strategy.

   **References:** Your last page must be titled and correctly list your source(s) using APA formatting.

RESOURCES:

For help see the Business Research tutorials that will be available on the FBE LibGuide.

You can access all of the related research handouts, search logs, and resources to complete this assignment at http://libguides.butler.edu/spring2017fbe.

For questions pertaining to this assignment and your Search Log contact: Teresa Williams (twilliam@butler.edu), Irwin 126, Ph. 940-8467. Check the LibGuide for office hours or email for an appointment.

WRITERS STUDIO RECOMMENDATION:

You are encouraged to take a completed draft of your paper to the Writers’ Studio (JH 304) before submitting your final copy. In order to ensure that you have adequate time to make the suggested revisions, you should visit the Studio at least two days before your paper is due.
EVALUATION:

Your paper will be worth 100 points and will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

EI 101: First-Year Business Experience  
Individual Research Assignment – RUBRIC

Name: __________________________  Business Idea: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction clearly identifies the purpose of the paper including: nature of business, aspect(s) of business environment being examined, purpose of research and research questions. (20 pts.)</td>
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<td>Research findings are relevant, credible, objective and accurately summarize content. (35 pts.)</td>
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<td>Conclusion clearly describes how and why this information will be helpful in developing business strategy. (20 pts.)</td>
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<td>References are correctly cited in text and in reference list using APA method. (10 pts.)</td>
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<td>Writing is clear, concise and well-organized using topic sentences, paragraphing, transitions and headings. Adheres to writing conventions regarding spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spacing. Writes in objective third person. (10 pts.)</td>
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<td>Professionalism of execution regarding appearance (cover page, page numbers, font type and size) and compliance with assignment requirements. (5 pts.)</td>
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EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Business databases by topic and subject are found at: http://libguides.butler.edu/business/dbchart

Starting points for the Industry, Competitor, Customer, and Economic Analyses can be found in the "Your Individual Topic" tab on the FBE LibGuide home page.

**Industry Analysis:** Describe the size and current trends in the industry including:

- How large is the industry? (Total industry sales in volume and dollars)
- Is the industry mature or are new companies successfully entering it? (Growth rate of industry sales in past three years and projected industry sales for the next three years)
- What opportunities exist in the industry? What threats?
- Are there any recent industry trends regarding product or service innovation, distribution, pricing etc.? What are they and how will they impact your business?

**Competitor Analysis:**

- Who are your major competitors’ in the industry? (Specifically identify 2 key competitors by name)
- What are your competitors’ strengths and weakness regarding:
  - Product/services?
  - Price?
  - Distribution?
  - Promotion?
  - Overall awareness of company and product?
  - Reputation and image?

**Customer Analysis:** Who buys this type of product or service?

- What is the number of consumers in the marketplace who purchase this type of product each year? (This information will be necessary for estimating sales).
- What are the characteristics of consumers who purchase this type of product?
  - Demographic: age, gender, income, education, occupation
  - Psychographic: Lifestyles (how they spend their time and money) and values (what is important to this consumer)
- Are there any demographic and/or lifestyle trends that will impact customer demand in the future? What are they and how will they impact demand?

**Economic Analysis:** What are the current and anticipated economic trends that will affect:

- Your firm’s ability to get credit, buy resources, labor, raw materials, finished goods?
- Your consumers’ desire for and ability to buy your product/service?
- Examine measures of economic health: economic growth (GDP), employment (the unemployment rate); and price stability (Consumer Price Index, CPI).
**Global Analysis:** (if applicable)

- Will your company be involved in international markets (buying, manufacturing or selling in other countries)?
- What obstacles might you face regarding doing business with another country? (culture, language, level of economic development, legal regulations, etc.)

**Supplier Analysis:** (if applicable)

- Where will you source the materials/ingredients/parts/talent needed for your product or service?
- What’s the financial condition of the supplier?
- How will the supplier ensure that it provides high quality goods or services?
- What is the supplier’s industry reputation?
- How does the cost of the supplier’s products compare with other firms you may be considering?
## SEARCH LOG

### Industry:

### Relevant NAICS Code(s):

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<th>Information Needed</th>
<th>Resource Consulted (where you searched)</th>
<th>Search Terms/Phrases you used</th>
<th>What You Found*</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
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*Information to help you find this source later for citing purposes (title, publication date, etc.)*