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11.958 Getting Things Implemented: Strategy, People, Performance, and Leadership
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Reading Tips and Study Questions: DAY ONE—JANUARY 5TH

Required reading

1. Read the syllabus carefully. The recommended list of “Professional references” is for your information only.
2. “How to prepare a case” (brief study note).
3. *(Case: Discussion A)* Upwardly Global
4. Pp. 1-6 only in Guclu et al., “The Process of Social Entrepreneurship: Creating Opportunities Worthy of Serious Pursuit” (Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship, 2002).
5. Mark Moore, *Creating Public Value*, pp. 13-21.
6. *(Case: Discussion B)* Park Plaza
7. Mark Moore, *Creating Public Value*, pp. 105-134.

Overview

This week, we will cover a variety of cases and implementation lessons quickly. These study questions sheets are guides to help focus your preparation. Read these sheets all the way through before doing any of the reading. Please don't rely on the syllabus to determine *what* to read, let alone *how*. Always use these sheets or updates announced via email. This is the first sheet, so it runs a bit long. Most will be a page at most.

For simplicity, I've organized each Day into two halves: Discussion “A” and Discussion “B.” Except for the last day, each Discussion has its own case and a supplementary reading or two to go with that case.

Beware what you print! ... and how you read. Complex problems with important implementation lessons can naturally generate extensive detail in these cases, so be a critical reader and print out only what you need. For example, some case documents are more than half appendices (“exhibits” or other supporting data behind the main narrative text) that you do not need to review closely. The Park Plaza case document is 38 single-spaced pages long, but much of that is detail in the Exhibits (skim them on-screen to have a sense of what's there), and much of the main narrative text (21 pages) you don't need to learn in detail either. By comparison, one of Tuesday's cases is just 3 pages long. Regardless, this is why you have the questions and tips below to guide you. And in general, I recommend saving all the reading to your computer, printing the narrative of each case (for



starters) plus the supplementary reading in full (unless you prefer to read everything on-screen), reading what these sheets recommend, and consulting additional evidence only if necessary or if you're curious.

An aid to note-taking: After each session, I'll prepare and post to Stellar a set of simple summary slides (PowerPoint) to capture the main concepts of our discussions. So you won't have to rush, during our discussions, to take notes on any of the main ideas I cover. You should take notes to help you capture links between events in the cases and those ideas or, perhaps more importantly, key ideas you find new and useful for your work.

The problem set is already posted. There is a single written assignment for the course: a set of word problems due on January 14th. To help you focus your learning this week, the problem set is already available for your review (Stellar course website>Homework section), and you may discuss the problems with classmates and Xav as you wish. See instructions in the assignment.

A Simple Model of "Getting Things Implemented"

In general, getting things implemented includes the following, though usually not in this neat-and-clean linear sequence:

1. Defining a problem clearly
2. Developing a sense of urgency that something ought to be done about it
3. Analyzing it effectively
4. Charting a smart course (developing a strategy)
5. Assembling the means to act ("produce") on that course, which includes developing and deploying both capacity and resources (analogy: capacity is to a car's engine as resources are to the car's fuel).
6. Producing results, assessing, and continuously improving (which includes, back to the top if the sequence, periodically re-defining problems and strategies).

We will be focused on elements 4, 5, and 6 and especially 6, but as the cases make clear, implementers often get involved in 1 through 3 as well.

As an aside, "entrepreneurship" is the term commonly used to refer to a decentralized, risk-taking approach to getting things done, at odds with traditional "planning," which was methodical and centralized. Successful entrepreneurs commonly "skip steps"—doing 1, 2, 4, a little bit of 5 and then a great deal of 6 really well so as to create more urgency (2) and gather many more resources (5) to produce more (6). This is why so much discussion of entrepreneurship, whether commercial or "social" or "civic," is about *starting up* smart and then finding ways to *scale* operations.



Learning Objectives: Days 1 to 3

The first few days of the course should help you learn:

- Why **strategic management** and “managerial imagination” are something more than “being the boss,” making plans for what others should do, holding authority in a hierarchy, or (conversely) accepting orders or laws from above and acting on them. Management, in the broad sense, is all about envisioning change and influencing the people and institutions that can deliver it. Put differently, it is about *creating and deploying the capacity to make things happen*, to make the state of the world different. A part of that is learning how to recognize implementation issues for what they are;
- What it means for an individual, organization, alliance, or other grouping to have a **strategy**—not just an overall purpose (mission) or goal, no matter how noble and urgent the purpose may be. Strategy is what helps the person or organization, and very often partners as well, make progress on the mission. Rarely is the best strategy clear from the mission or goal itself. For much important change in the world, ambiguous and mixed goals are the order of the day, keys to implementation may not be clear, and much learning and adaptation are needed along the way. This is a human process, with much room for entrepreneurship (risk taking and support winning) and many emotional and intellectual demands;
- The concept of **creating value** as a fundamental aim and discipline for strategy-making and for structuring work to fulfill strategies. The value can be public or private or a bit of both;
- Direct versus indirect management as contexts for implementing ideas. Indirect management is often known as “**political management**,” since we must win the cooperation of those over whom we do not have direct, formal authority (for example, in an organizational hierarchy). In a world of flatter hierarchies, networks, expectations of collaboration and negotiation, and more, much important implementation is about effective and ethical political management—the focus of today’s second case; and
- Why measuring **performance** and linking the measures to one’s strategy matter, how the efforts to do this create pitfalls, and why performance *measurement* and performance *management* are often not the same thing.



Questions + tips for preparing Case “A”:

One reason I have assigned this first case is that it allows us to think about the most basic questions: What is worth implementing and why? How does one go from concept to capacity and then “production”?

1. Read “The Process of Social Entrepreneurship” and the first Mark Moore reading (first excerpt of *Creating Public Value*, pp.13-21) and then read the case.
2. Thinking about **case**, how can Jane Leu be certain what is worth doing to assist immigrant professionals? Based on the information given, do you share her conclusions about the options?
3. According to the **social entrepreneurship article**, what’s the difference between having a well-defined goal and having a “social impact theory”?
4. Thinking about the **Moore** reading (and for our purposes, it is not important that he is focused on managers in public sector organizations) what is the difference between “creating value” and simply implementing rules and expectations that others have defined? Moore’s focal actor—the “public manager”—is not in the same position as Leu, the social entrepreneur starting up a nonprofit organization. But Moore is likewise is focused on the importance of *defining value* and then pursuing it with imagination.

Questions + tips for preparing Case “B”:

1. Read the **Park Plaza case** before the second Mark Moore reading (pp.105-134). Unlike most material we will use, that reading does some of the case analysis for you, which is fine after you’ve done your own. This case is very different from the first one. This one features a senior planner in a public sector “political bureaucracy,” but it likewise covers a fundamental concept we want to use to start the week: How to get things done responsibly and ethically when decisions cannot simply be imposed, downward and in a straightforward way, in a hierarchy?
2. Analyzing the case: Did Mahoney make the right decision on Park Plaza in June? Did Sargent and his staff make the right decision in ratifying Mahoney’s position? Why did their agreement dissolve by November, and what should each player—Mahoney and Sargent—do to repair the breach? What other stakeholders seem important in this case, and what resources and expectations do they offer?
3. Now turning to the supplementary reading, why, according to **Moore**, are the tools of political management so important for implementers, and how is this approach to making things happen different from traditional notions of “management” or “administration”? You may skim the latter half of the excerpt; focus on the main concepts in the first half.