Project Guidelines: RECTC 5-9 – Strategic business development

Introduction

This document provides guidance for Level 5 Diploma in Recruitment Leadership learners on submitting a Project for RECTC 5-9 – Strategic Business Development. Three appendices are included:

A. Proposal Form - to be completed and submitted to Study Coach/Tutor

B. Business Plan Cover Sheet – to be completed and submitted to the RECAO with your project

C. Assessment sheet – to be completed by the Assessor/Examiner post-submission.

1 Timetable

- **Submission deadline for the Proposal**   - As soon as possible after enrolling
- **Feedback/approval from Study Coach/Tutor**   - Within two weeks of receipt
- **Deadline for REC to <u>receive</u> the final Project**   - 5pm on Day of the L5 Diploma examination
- **Results will be issued**   - Six weeks after submission deadline

2 Initial steps

We strongly recommend you talk to your employer about producing the Strategic Business Development project which will be a practical and comprehensive strategic business development plan.

The Strategic Business Development project should take the form of a business presentation and must demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the need and consideration for strategic business development, how to effectively identify potential clients and market places, along with implementation

and review of the strategy. Owners/managers undertaking this Unit should discuss (where possible) their ideas with other senior staff, advisors or appropriate stakeholders.

The Strategic Business Development project may be based on an entire organisation, a section of it or at a branch/office level. If you require further guidance on the scope of the Strategic Business Development project, you should contact your Study Coach/Tutor as soon as possible after enrolling.

3   Step 1

Discuss your outline ideas for the Strategic Business Development project with your Study Coach/Tutor; they will advise you about the suitability.

4   Step 2

When your Strategic Business Development project proposal has been verbally agreed, you will need to complete the Proposal Form, submit it to your Study Coach for sign off and then send a copy to the REC Professional Development Department in London (REC, Dorset House, First Floor, 27 - 45 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT).

5   Step 3

Once your Strategic Business Development project proposal has been agreed, you should begin work on the project, remembering that you may only have a few weeks or months to complete the work before the final deadline.

6   The Purpose of the Strategic Business Development Project

The Strategic Business Development project is designed to encourage you to apply what you have learned during your studies into a practical based situation and to produce evidence of a sound, well thought through Strategic Business Development plan that can be implemented and evaluated/reviewed effectively.

Your Strategic Business Development project should be well structured, in several sections, and each of these will provide clear evidence of knowledge and learning. Marks are awarded for different parts of the Strategic Business Development project, and while a good performance in one section may compensate for a poorer performance in another, the project should be well presented demonstrating the standards expected of a professional business document.

7 Project Length

Whilst there is no maximum length for the Strategic Business Development project, you should aim for a word count of around 7,500 words. Projects with fewer than 7,500 words are unlikely to achieve the necessary marks to gain a pass. The word count does not include appendices or the bibliography.

8 Content

It is essential that the International Business Considerations project is consistent with Learning Outcomes identified in the syllabus for RECTC 5-9:

1. Understand the need and consideration for strategic business development
2. Understand the how to effectively identify potential clients and market places
3. Understand how to implement and review a business development strategy

Where a project consists of a strategic business development plan, it should conform to the accepted structures for typical strategic business development plans, but must incorporate learning outcomes listed above.

9 Using the typical Business Plan structure

Where students opt to produce a Strategic Business Development plan for the project, this should follow the recognised structures. A typical Strategic Business Development plan structure is given below, showing the potential word count allocation (this is given for guidance – individual Strategic Business Development plans may require more weighting in particular areas to be effective).

Section Heading	Sample content	Possible word allocation
Project title	Brief, succinct title	
Table of contents	Section headings and appendices	

Section Heading	Sample content	Possible word allocation
Executive Summary/Introduction	• Provides a summary and overview of the main objectives and activities in the strategic business development plan. Ideally (but this is not essential), this will have input from senior management to set the plan in context. Should include reference to the overall business aims and objectives. • This part of the plan should enable the reader to understand the salient points of the plan. • Should summarise each of the other sections of the strategic business development plan • Should inform help the reader to quickly understand and (where appropriate) support your strategic business development plan • This should be based on the evidence-based research used to justify the strategic business development plan	700 words
Situation/International Market Analysis	• Outlines evidence-based research background information about the market(s) in which the recruiter operates or being considered for diversification. Provides the results of any market research/analysis into the market and the forces affecting it, clients (lapsed, existing and potential), candidates, competitors, stakeholders and shareholders, customers and target customers, sales, costs and so on. • Investigations will include relevant market demographics (market/sector) size, market/sector trends (growth, static or contracting), market needs, any critical factors facing the organisation, knowledge of the external environment, market place and key drivers that will impact on the recruitment consultancy. • Evaluation and interpretation of evidence used to formulate the plan. Highlights of competitor analysis,	1,750 words

	PESTLE, SWOT, Porters and other tools used. • Historical information will help input further evidence into this analysis, which can then be subjected to assessment. Key findings of the analysis, research and preparation work undertaken. • In short, this section is effectively stating: 'this is the situation we are in' - 'this is the market and business environment in which we operate'.	
Business Development Strategy	• Links in to the business plan. It should include a statement about the recruitment consultancy and the services it delivers (including the marketing mix adopted). This serves as a way of focussing the mind on what the recruitment consultancy mission is and ensures that the strategic business development activities planned are in sync with this. At this stage, information about the organisational brand and client strategy will be presented. It will include a breakdown of target customers, groups, segments and needs that have been identified. • The strategic business development plan should outline the input required or to be received from other parts of the organisation to ensure implementation is possible. The strategic business development plan will outline the actions required (how and when these will happen), to achieve the agreed objectives.	2,000 words
Financial Projections	• Finance, budget and financial resources, including capital investment required, financial projections (such as sales, costs, break even analysis, cash flow forecasts). • Financial projections are a key to a successful implementation of the strategic business development plan at the next stage, when evaluation is undertaken • Financial projections should enable the setting of realistic goals and check points • Objectives should be SMART	1,250 words

Section Heading	Sample content	Possible word allocation
Implementation Controls	• Metrics and key performance indicators, explaining how to monitor, evaluate, control and adjust implementation of the plan. This provides clarity since it demonstrates how well the plan is working in real time. • KPIs may be both financial and non-financial. • Analysis of ROI. • Variance analysis. • Tools for monitoring the plan • Trigger/check points to amend or adjust the strategic business development plan	800 words
Summary & Conclusions	• Summarise and offer conclusions based on evidence-based research. • Describe any unexpected outcomes. • Who has been involved? How successful has this involvement been? • What have you learnt about the current external and internal environment affecting the marketing of your business? • What has been learnt about competitors, new areas of activity, new services and so on? How has this been useful? • Is the plan to be implemented and, if so, are all the requirements for control outlined in the previous section in place?	500 words

Section Heading	Sample content	Possible word allocation
Reflective learning and learning outcomes	• Commentary on why you chose to look at this particular topic. • Which diagnostic tools have been used? How useful were they and outline any shortfalls in the quality of decision-making information that you have noted? • Identify any difficulties in completion of the strategic business development plan. • If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently? • Are there any areas for further research and assessment that may be necessary to complete the strategic business development plan to your satisfaction?	500 words

Note: The project <u>must</u> be presented as a business presentation, so do make effective use of appendices, a bibliography and supporting documentation

10 Drafting the title for the Project

The choice of a succinct and clear title can never be overstated. As a guide, the title should give the reader a full feel for the subject and content that will be covered; it should not be drafted as a newspaper headline, but should reflect the aims and objectives of the project in unambiguous terms.

For example, let us assume that a project is looking at corporate brand management, the following title would be appropriate:

The impact of a new corporate brand personality on the marketing strategy of the permanent recruitment division of XYZ Recruitment Limited

Whereas, the title below is too loose and fails to give the reader any idea of what may be contained:

Out with the old and in with new

As well as assisting the reader, a good title will ensure that you keep on track within the defined parameters that you are looking to cover. Projects that have long winded, verbose and broad generalisations in the title often suffer from precisely these issues in terms of the content. Candidates are therefore recommended to constantly remind themselves of the title that they have chosen, to ensure the content remains relevant and consistent.

The wording you adopt for your title at the outset will have a huge impact on the quality of the work produced – so, do take great care with this stage.

11 Study Coach/Tutor support

You will be allocated a Study Coach/Tutor to support you with your Strategic Business Development Project.

Your Study Coach/Tutor will offer advice regarding your Strategic Business Development project, research methods and give you written feedback on your draft project.

12 Confidentiality of information

Your Strategic Business Development project will be seen by the RECAO Unit Chief Examiner, Awarding Committee members and RECAO staff. Whilst the RECAO will do all it can to keep information confidential, it is **your** responsibility to ensure that you do not include any information which candidates or clients would consider confidential.

13 Quoting from textbooks and other sources

You may wish to gather material and ideas from outside sources. This might include text books, articles in magazines or newspapers and websites.

Where you quote directly from texts to illustrate a point you must indicate who the author is, the book title, and the page number in the original text. Quotations and source material should be referenced as follows:

Example – Citing a textbook:

Refer to the author(s), the date of publication, the full title, where it was published, and the publisher:

Handy, Charles (1995). *The Age of Unreason.* London: Random House.

You can do this in the body of your International Business Considerations Project, e.g. "Handy (1995)" – or you can use footnotes. List all your sources in a **bibliography** at the end. Good referencing shows the examiner that you have done some background reading and also helps you to find sources at a later date.

The Internet:

The Internet is a source of useful research information. Where possible, be selective in the sites you choose, making sure that they have a sound theoretical basis. Information used from the Internet should also be included in the bibliography by indicating author, year of publication, article, and Internet address, e.g.:

Starke, A. (1996) *Internet recruitment shows rapid growth*. Online article available at: http:\\www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/0896rec.htm [Accessed 25 September 2002]

14 Plagiarism

When submitting your Strategic Business Development project, you do so on the basis that it is an original piece of work.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Verbatim copying of another person's work without acknowledgement
- Close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement
- Unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work
- Deliberate presentation of another person's ideas as your own
- Copying or close paraphrasing with occasional acknowledgement of source may also be deemed to be plagiarism if the absence of quotation marks implies that the phraseology is the student's own
- Copying of data

It is acceptable to *quote* from other sources, but you must give full acknowledgement to your sources. These may include text books, journal articles, Internet articles, company documents etc.

If you are working alongside someone else who is a current or past REC candidate, make sure that you do not submit any project material which has already been used, or will be used, by another candidate entering an REC Level 5 Diploma in Recruitment Leadership project.

Plagiarism may result in your work not being accepted for marking.

15 Statement of Authenticity

A Project Cover Sheet must be attached to your project when submitting and must be signed by you and by your employer (or other responsible person) to confirm that it is your work. The REC reserves the right not to accept for assessment any project which does not have an appropriately completed and signed Cover Sheet, or any project where plagiarism (see above) is suspected.

16 Late submission

Permission for late submission of projects is given *in exceptional circumstances*. Any request must be in writing to the RECAO (not to your Study Coach/Tutor) explaining the reason for late submission. The RECAO reserves the right not to assess any work submitted late without written permission.

17 Checklist on Format and Presentation

- ✓ Clearly written, spell-checked, grammatically correct and well-signposted
- ✓ Leave plenty of white space on each page – it's easier on the eye
- ✓ Keep standards up! Writer fatigue soon becomes apparent
- ✓ Write with clarity, use simple language and short sentences
- ✓ Proof read your project prior to submission
- ✓ Number all pages and appendices and ensure they are cross-referenced
- ✓ Only include appendices which are relevant and useful
- ✓ It is not necessary to produce your project in colour. However, a high standard of business presentation is required
- ✓ When binding your project, do not enclose each page in plastic
- ✓ Write as if you are preparing to present the document to senior executives in your organisation!

18 Assessment Criteria

Projects are assessed using eight **Assessment Headings**. Each assessment heading attracts a total of 100 marks.

Summary of Assessment Headings:

1. Executive Summary/Introduction
2. Situation/ Market Analysis
3. Marketing Strategy
4. Financial / Budgetary considerations/projections
5. Implementation & Evaluation
6. Summary & Conclusions
7. Reflective Learning/Learning Outcomes
8. Format and presentation

19 Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my Project is lost in the post?

Projects do get lost in the post which is why it is your responsibility to keep a hard copy of your submitted final project. We strongly recommend all projects to be sent via Recorded/Tracked delivery post.

What mark is required for a Pass?

The pass mark for each unit of the Level 5 Diploma in Recruitment Leadership is determined after all work has been assessed. Drawing on past examinations, it is likely that you will need to achieve approximately 60% to be awarded a pass in this module. Assessors do not, however, make a pass/fail decision; this is ultimately the responsibility of the Level 5 Diploma in Recruitment Leadership Awarding Committee.

What happens if my submitted Project does not match the approved proposal?

This will almost certainly require your project to be referred for special scrutiny and you may be asked to resubmit. It is fundamental that your project relates to your original proposal.

What if my Project is late?

Late entries will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix A: Project Proposal Form

RECTC 5-9 – Strategic Business Development

Name	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Study Coach/Tutor's Name	
Date of Submission	
Working Title	

Project Outline
(E.g.: Is this a strategic business development plan for an entire organisation, a section of it or a branch? Is this a review of a current strategic business development plan etc)

Approved by Project Study Coach/Tutor: YES/ NO (please circle)

Comments:

Project Study Coach/Tutor's Signature:	**Date:**

IMPORTANT NOTE: As part of the REC's quality assurance systems, a copy of a sample of candidates' submitted projects will be retained. Chosen projects will only be used to help the REC improve its quality assurance systems. By submitting your Strategic Business Development project, you agree to this copy being kept, and where your project contains confidential information relating to your employer, you must ensure that they agree to this too.

Appendix B: Project Cover Sheet

RECTC 5-9 - Strategic Business Development

Surname and first name ....
Company name ....
Address (for return of project) .... Telephone number (daytime) .... Email address .... Project Study Coach/Tutor's name .... Project title .... Please indicate word length excluding appendices and bibliography .... Date of submission ....
IMPORTANT NOTE: As part of the REC's quality assurance systems a copy of candidates' submitted projects will be retained. Projects will only be used to help the REC improve its quality assurance systems. By submitting your project, you agree to this copy being kept, and where your project contains confidential information relating to your employer you must ensure that they agree to this too.

Authentication by the candidate

I have produced this work without any help apart from that declared by the supervising employer/tutor (attach details if relevant).

Name in block capitals...**Signature**.......................................**Date** ....

Authentication by the employer

To the best of my knowledge, the work submitted is solely that of the candidate.

Name in block capitals...**Signature**.......................................**Date** ....

This form must be **fully completed and signed** and attached to the front of the candidate's work, and posted (Recorded/Tracked Delivery is strongly recommended) to: **REC Awarding,** Dorset House, First Floor, 27-45 Stamford Street, London, SE1 9NT.

Appendix C – Assessment sheet (to be completed by the assessor/examiner)
RECTC 5-9 - Strategic Business Development

Candidate's name: ……………………………………………………………

	Area of Assessment	Mark	Weighting	Score (MxW)
1	Executive Summary/Introduction	/100	0.15	
2	Situation / Market Analysis	/100	0.15	
3	Marketing Strategy	/100	0.15	
4	Financial / budgetary considerations / projections	/100	0.10	
5	Implementation & Evaluation	/100	0.15	
6	Summary and Conclusions	/100	0.10	
7	Reflective learning and learning outcomes	/100	0.10	
8	Format and presentation	/100	0.10	
	Total score (100%) & overall comments			

Name of Assessor/Examiner …………………………………………………………………………….

Signature ………………………………………… **Date** …………………………………….