

DEADLINE, IF INTERESTED: 1 December, 2009

Dear Colleague,

I am writing you from my “other position,” as Adjunct Professor with Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service/CERES—from which position I have taught for the past 15 years/presently teach a unique course entitled “Business Dynamics in Eurasia”—the only course taught at a major US university on how to do business in Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union.

BOTTOM LINE: A virtually “free” business and/or marketing plan. The most important class requirement of the students is to write a business plan/marketing plan for “live” clients. This allows for the client (YOU) to get, virtually cost-free, some deep thinking and analysis on a particular business undertaking. It allows you to significantly advance your business interests and plans, while contributing to students’ learning. We have a track record of doing these successfully and confidentially for over 11 years, for Fortune 100, as well as many small/medium-sized businesses. Everyone wins.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED: If you and Your Firm need a plan or study on any region in Eurasia (any of the former Soviet Union- 12 countries), and would like to have your proposal to do such considered by these students, please see below.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

1. A group of usually 3 students form a “business plan team,” all of which have a *great degree of Russia/Eurasia experience* (virtually each team has a near-fluent Russian linguist and area specialist), many of the individuals have solid business experience behind them already. All of the students are “graduate level” MBA’s, Master of Science candidates in Foreign Service, Russia/East European Area Studies students amongst other specialties. Emphasis in Team formulation is placed on developing a complementary, yet strong skillset amongst the Team, for their and your benefit.
2. *Do not expect “heavy” financial analysis*—however, there are exceptions, which will emerge from your dialogues with your Team, if Your Firm’s plan proposal is selected.
3. *Confidentiality:* Every item that your firm submits to me, and extending up to the time that the students submit their final business plan (even beyond, as your written and verbal agreements may stipulate) are strictly confidential. → I strongly encourage the usage of Non Disclosure Agreements, where all parties agree this is the best “track.” ** NOTE: Perhaps the most important contributing reason for student frustration is the inability or unwillingness for the Client Firm to enable their Business Plan Team with enough information (chiefly about their own firm’s thinking and activities) to “do the job.” **
4. *Expenses Limited to Out-of-Pocket Expenses:* Whereas students do not receive any stipend for doing the plan, the Client Firm shall pay reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by their Business Plan Team members in unique pursuit of a successful business plan submission. Students, however, do business plans in order to satisfy an academic requirement for the course.

Usually the costs are limited to a) phone costs, b) mailing costs, c) supplies and materials, and additional reasonable costs (usually never to exceed \$400-500). The real cost is your time, engagement and responsiveness as outlined under “What Students Expect,” below. However, if you, as a Client Firm, opt for a higher degree of student-engagement (such as to

show them your operations, or anything else which could bring them a deeper “real-life” understanding of Your Firm, products and services—very much welcomed!), this is an issue between Your Firm and Your Business Plan Team. Any financial arrangements which result from this type of effort are equally the domain of Your Firm and Your Business Plan Team, should you be selected.

5. *Professor Engagement:* If you are selected by a Business Plan Team, my role is to see that communication channels are working well and to see to it that other concerns that any of the parties might have are addressed forcefully and promptly. I am equally “plugged in” during the Term to ensure that the Plan conforms to Georgetown University’s Academic Requirements and other requirements students are asked to balance to achieve success in this course. Finally, my role is to ensure that expectations and requirements from all parties more/less conform to “the reasonable.”
6. *Quality Product:* School of Foreign Service is consistently ranked as the top International Affairs school in the country, with very competitive entry requirements (usually requiring a fair amount of work experience or international experience before students start). The products that I have seen in the past are very impressive, and those not in this category are not many. The quality greatly depends on the commitment of the company, as much as it does that of the students.

WHAT THE STUDENTS GENERALLY EXPECT

1. *ONE Central Contact Person (*and a backup*)* One specific person must be designated within your organization who would be their chief dialogue partner and the person within your organization ultimately responsible for navigating any communication or any other issues within your organization. Another person in your organization should be appointed backup, who should be conversant in the Plan’s details and direction. Others within your organization may be equally or in many cases more involved.

NOTE: whoever is designated as the contact point shall be reachable at virtually all times by mail or other reasonable method. The greatest source of frustration of some past Business Plan Teams is the “disappearing executive,” phenomenon, where one or two week vacation’s amidst the most intense period of business plan preparation occur— significantly setting back Plan progress.**

If an executive will be out of reach of the Business Plan Team more than 3 days, that Central Contact Point, shall, prior to departure, designate an Alternate Point of Contact that will be fully conversant on the Plan’s objectives, methodology and progress. However, that person shall NOT supplant the Central Point of Contact for more than extremely short time periods.

2. *Your Guidance & Understanding and 'RESPONSIVENESS':* Your Team already has tremendously positive and “can do” attitudes, as well as, as a Team, strong “business basics.” However, perhaps the most important point of this whole exercise is a transfer of knowledge and experience—between You/Your Firm and your Your Team—concretely this means prompt and accurate answers to virtually ANY questions they may have about your firm’s undertaking and/or its business more generally. One of the greatest traditional complaints of student teams is lack of responsiveness of the client to reasonable information requests. Suffice it to say, you generally get what you give (from the client’s perspective) and the better info the team gets, the higher return on your investment.
3. *Information on Your Firm & its Activities:* Whatever you put in to educate the students will usually be paid back to you royally in terms of their commitment and professionalism. You need to give Your Team, if selected, the best information available in order for them to do their job. Please see point 3 above about the desire-ability of signing Non-Disclosure

Agreements (NDA's). If there is not a high degree of information provision from Your side, it will almost inevitably lead to a) poorly formulated plan, with an inordinate amount of unfounded assumptions and qualified guesswork, which does not meet your original objectives; b) an extremely frustrated Business Plan Team which does not know where to start and end its undertaking.

SPECIFICALLY: I suggest you think of anything that would bring Your Team in closer contact with you and your products. By no means obligatory, but items that might help Your Plan could include: a) facility tours, b) product literature and/or samples, c) local contact point- if you are located outside traveling distance from Washington.

BUSINESS PLAN TIMELINE

The work on the Plan shall be started about 20 January, 2010 and will terminate with final Business Plan Submission during the last week of April, 2010. The submission deadline to me for your short summary-proposal to the students is 1 December, 2009.

IF INTERESTED, THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

By NO LATER THAN *** December 1, 2009@ 1700 Hrs. EST *** you shall submit complete answers to the questions below. Hereby, I emphasize that your submission is CONFIDENTIAL. Replies need not exceed 2 written pages. If you want to submit supplementary materials, that is fine.

****Please Note**** Any submissions which are received after this date AND/OR do not address the following questions will not be forwarded to the Students for their consideration and rating.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF BEING SELECTED BY A TEAM?

Chances are good—depending on “demand” for business plans, in past years about 75% of proposals were selected to be pursued. It's a chance worth taking.

INFORMATION NEEDED IN YOUR REPLY PROPOSAL

- a. Plan Contact Point, Backup Pt of Contact and Coordinates (Position, Mailing Address, Tel and Fax & Email)
- b. Brief Background on Your Firm (generally, not only w/respect to Eurasia)
- c.
 - I. Plan Objectives & Chief Questions Which Plan Shall Address
 - II. Main questions Plan will address
 - III. What students can expect from doing a Plan with Your firm.
- d. In order to be successful, what specific things do you feel the Business Plan Team, if Your Firm is selected, will have to do to meet the objectives?

PROCESS

Amongst competing proposals, students call the shots. They are asked to rank their priorities from 1-3. To emphasize: your prospective team makes the decision on which proposal they wish to pursue.

*****NOTE: aside from ensuring Your Firm's submission is complete and timely, I do not hold any sway in the student rating process. (THUS, you should not address me, rather Your Prospective Teams *****

1. Companies who submit proposals are informed whether or not they are selected during the third or week of January, 2010.
2. Selected Firms are immediately linked by email with their Business Plan Team and work begins.

Apologies for the lengthy note. Contact me with any questions immediately.

Sincerely Yours,



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