

# University / Business Co-operation

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International Project Management course

## Master program Business in Emerging Markets

### **Aim and benefits of the co-operation**

For companies: Get fresh perspectives and solutions for your business related issues. Let intercultural teams of master degree students from FH-Joanneum and our partner universities in Chile, China, India, Mexico, Russia and Taiwan work for you.

For students: By working on an assignment for a company students of the Master Program on Business in Emerging Markets experience solving real tasks for real companies within the scope of international business and hone their skills in teamwork, project management and customer relationship.

### **Recent projects**

#### **AVL Skills Center: 360° feedback and benchmarking**

The 360° AVL Skills Center team assessed the current set up of the Skills Center in terms of trainers, administration, management, trainer education, resource sharing, global workshops and trainings for global customers by using an online questionnaire and 10 interviews.

#### **Henkel Egypt: Product and communication concepts for addressing low income customers (LICs)**

Working together in two virtual teams, students from FH Joanneum (Graz, Austria) and BIMTECH Birla Institute of Management (Delhi, India) focused on 1) product innovation ideas and 2) a communication strategy in the area of **toilet and washroom cleaning (TWC) products of Henkel for the LIC market in Egypt**. Students were required to get a thorough understanding of the customer needs and wants, the competitors and the substitutes in a market, which was unfamiliar to mostly the Austrian students. They were supported by their Indian colleagues, who were able to provide emerging market experiences and insight by actually visiting shops and consumers to find out where and how TWC products were sold and used at the homes of low income customers.

## **SIEMENS Mobility: Between Austria and India - Challenges in Leading International Projects**

The management was interested in putting a team of students to the task of analyzing practical problems and suggesting solutions ranging from the investigation of the development of technical standards in India to dealing with cultural differences at the factory. Diemo Wojik, Head of Bogie Projects and Bettina Hiller, Project Manager at Siemens Rail Systems Bogie Graz, who had briefed the students and enthusiastically supported them throughout the project said: "We are both positively surprised by the quality of the outcome. Some of the suggestions are already being implemented and we are very interested in another co-operation with the MEM program."



## **Organization of the work**

The class work is structured into 6 phases which are described in the following paragraphs.

### **1) Preparation**

In the months before the start of the class the instructor approaches companies that are active in international markets with the proposal to let a team of smart and eager students work on a subject of choice. Of course the subject has to fit into the scope of the Master program and should also provide a real benefit to the company. Due to the number of students the cohort is split into two groups and two companies get the opportunity to become partners. Together with the instructor the selected companies develop a project definition.

### **2) Lecture on international project management**

This theoretical part provides information on the specific issues that project teams face when working on international projects. The content is also subject to an exam.

### **3) Briefing, re-briefing, proposal writing, team building**

For this phase, students are asked to organize in teams and each team has to nominate a project manager and a deputy project manager. The phase kicks off with a personal presentation from the representative of the partner company about the task which has to be solved and some background information. After this briefing session each team has to summarize what was understood and put it into a re-briefing document which is sent to the partner company. If necessary, the company representative replies with comments or clarifications or just confirms the accuracy.

Based on this information, each team submits a detailed proposal how to solve the problem that the company presented. The proposals are reviewed and evaluated by the company and the instructor.

#### **4) Project work**

Students assume the role of consultants while the instructor acts as manager of the virtual consultancy company, coaches the students and manages the relationship with the partner company. The two project managers report to the instructor and have to deliver a status report in each class session. The task of the project managers is to lead their teams and to monitor progress in terms of time spent and work packages delivered. They are also in direct contact with the partner company whenever support is needed or questions have to be clarified.

#### **5) Interim Presentation**

Approximately in the middle of the project, the teams inform the partner company about the progress in an interim presentation. This presentation is held online via Skype (audio only) and screen sharing and provides students with the opportunity to do such a presentation in a business context.

#### **6) Final presentation & report**

The project is concluded with a live presentation by each team where the attending company representatives also receive the printed final report.

Both the presentation and the report are graded by the company representative together with the instructor.

### **Contact**

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