

Managing the Family Enterprise
BUSI 3611 A
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dennis Sakalauskas

Office Hours: Available upon request by email or requested at class/lectures

Email: dennis.sakalauskas@carleton.ca

Modality: In-person on campus lectures

Pre-requisites & precluded Courses:

Third year standing, and BUSI 2018 or BUSI 1005 or BUSI 1002, and one of BUSI 2101, BUSI 2121, BUSI 2702.

Carleton University Calender Description

How family businesses are different, what makes them different and how to effectively manage these differences. Challenges arising from the tension between family and business pressures from governance, management and succession planning perspectives.

Instructor's Additional Description

Moreover, this course seeks to synthesize learning from previous courses taken, particularly related to entrepreneurship, business development, organizational management, strategy, marketing strategy and/or strategic management. Emphasis is on the role of family-based entrepreneurs starting a new venture (business) and the management of *growing their company, while also implementing novel strategies and necessary supporting tactics for long-term viability.*

This course also explores the *knowledge* of growing a family-based small business, but more importantly the *practical application* of truly developing a business idea, but also the management of the business over various generations. This includes concepts and decisions involved with the family-based decisions, managing of people, marketing, social media, online marketing, management strategy and strategies to build, but also to sustain the growing *family business.*

It will involve the development and management of a *real* evolving family enterprise management plan, which includes transition of next generations as well as the rigorous review and strategic recommendation of various case study situations. The overall thinking behind this course is that of a seminar course format that will focus on class discussion and involvement of each student in the class. Between cases, family enterprise and start-up business models, participants will have a thorough understanding of well over 100 new ventures, start-up companies' strategies and family enterprises.

Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, each participant should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an improved knowledge of the key differences between family and non-family businesses. Students will leave the course with an appreciation of the advantages / disadvantages of family ownership and how to manage these effectively.
2. Comprehend the unique challenges arising from management and ownership succession in a family-owned firm as well as recognizing and responding to common issues.
3. Apply the points of view of an effective action-seeking family-based business owner / entrepreneur and/or board of directors who are required to grow the business, generate significant investments, and brand awareness, retain an extensive customer base, motivate employees in a growing family-based enterprise, but also to take those points-of-view and make effective marketing, management and financial business decisions.
4. Appreciate the special importance of governance in family-owned enterprises and form a working knowledge of critical governance structures and leverage the most relevant and modern business, sales and marketing techniques and working knowledge of best practices and how to apply / customize them for family businesses.

Contribution to Learning Goals of the Program ([BCom](#), [BIB](#)):

Program Learning Goal	Competencies Not Covered	Competencies Introduced (only)	Competencies Taught But Not Assessed	Competencies Taught and Assessed
BC1 Knowledge <i>Graduates will be skilled in applying foundational business knowledge to appropriate business contexts.</i>				X
BC2 Collaboration <i>Graduates will be collaborative and effective contributors in team environments that respect the experience, expertise and interest of all members.</i>				X
BC3 Critical Thinking <i>Graduates will be discerning critical thinkers, able to discuss different viewpoints, challenge biases and assumptions, and draw conclusions based on analysis and evaluation.</i>				X
BC4 Communication <i>Graduates will be effective and persuasive in their communications.</i>				X

Required Material

A **relevant course pack** of family enterprise and entrepreneurship **articles and case studies related to each lecture theme** from Harvard Business Review, M.I.T. Sloan and other education peer-review centres.

Please see each article and case study listed in the clearly marked folder on Brightspace. Each article is available through the ARES link provided in that folder, directly to the article at the University Library.

Price: the course pack articles and cases are \$0 (each article and case is provided by the Library). The articles and cases are all available at the University Library. The same list of articles and cases are listed in this syllabus via the course schedule for a key theme based on the topics to support each reading article.

Methods Used to Evaluate Student Performance

Student assessment involves both individual and team components and requires students to use both classroom and field learning from readings, discussions and case studies. Specifically, the assessments are:

Class Lecture Individual Participation	5%
Team Case-based Application Exercises (Best 2 / 3 cases)	20%
Team Family Enterprise Management Plan	20%
Individual Outlook Memo – Report	20%
Final Exam	35%

Teams

Teams will be formed of 5 or 6 people and will be grouped at the first class. Each team must designate a person to coordinate the delivery of projects (see due dates in course outline).

NOTE: You are responsible for managing your team, including highlighting opportunities for the group to improve and to continuously offer recommendations for the team to work effectively and efficiently together. If groups have serious differences, then it required to show the Professor a detailed record of performance problems (i.e. a file describing the problem, detailed challenges, detailed missed meetings, etc). This is in line with the human resources management of a modern company or organization.

Individual Participation

Family-based business and entrepreneurs must work in teams, present and must always be active participants in all aspects of the business. This will also be the case for this course, whereby several opportunities will occur ***during the lectures and discussions*** through case studies, facilitation exercises and the team presentations.

The lectures are designed to be very interactive, so opportunities for class participation are *at each* lecture class. In addition, countless opportunities for contribution and/or participation will be available during the case study discussions, following group presentations and during brainstorm/team workshops throughout all lectures. Participation will be self-assessed each week starting the second session.

The evaluation will consist of approximately three to four key questions:

1. Preparation
2. Class participation
3. Qualitative assessment of your classroom interventions (4 – 5 brief questions after each class)
4. Professionalism and conduct, positive contribution directly to the course content.

To help you evaluate your quality of your participation in class, a grid is proposed below. Note: The Professor of this course reserves the right to change your score if your review does not match my (and/or your peers) perception and actual reality of your contribution in the course. Should this occur, the Professor will communicate the change of your score to you by email.

Recommended Individual Participation Self-Evaluation Grid

5/5 Excellent

Student participation demonstrates serious preparation. The student has excellent skills in terms of expressing his/her ideas as well as *active listening*. Regular value-added ideas shared with the group. The student encourages group discussion. Always offers new ways of thinking to better the overall group's strategic ideas. Attends and participates in a meaningful way with relevant, useful questions and discussions at all presentations for which they are not presenting.

4/5 Very good

Ideas shared are relevant and often pushes discussions in the right direction. The student's opinion is well argued and defended. Arguments are always consistent. The student is an important person to the group's discussions. Attends and actively participates in all presentations, for which they are not presenting.

3/5 Good

Students ideas are shared with the class are often relevant, but generally do you not guide discussions to new paths or to help present new ideas. Arguments are sometimes coherent and structured. This person is a positive element to the class. Attends most of the presentations for which they are not presenting.

2/5 Non-participant

No participation. The student is not prepared and/or does not share ideas in the class. Does not attend the presentations for which they are not presenting.

1/5 Non-satisfactory

Might provide conversation or dialogue, but the ideas are rarely relevant. The student's arguments are not coherent, and the dialogue is often disruptive to the class. The participation does not help guide the discussion in an effective direction or to be beneficial to the class. Does not attend presentations for which they are not presenting.

0/5 absent; unjustified

Value: 5% of total course grade

Team Case-based Application Exercises

The aim will be to implement a specific or series of family enterprise, strategic start-up and business management and operations techniques which is related to sessions prior to the presentation dates, so to apply learning from the course to the presentations.

Content must always consider strategies related to the management of a family enterprise, helping a family business which has already started and to enhance family enterprise business development, building brand awareness and driving brand preference, managing customer relationships, e-business and online marketing solutions, customer service management and/or sales management strategies.

These exercises also give students the opportunity to practice strategic family enterprise factors, recognize emerging new entrepreneurship business strategies and analyze web business for marketing and sales tactics as well as managing customer relationships and growing family-based businesses and organizations.

Case studies occur during the sessions and all students have the opportunity to contribute.

Process, Outline and Evaluation Criteria:

Note: Please see **APPENDIX #1** for the process, format, guidelines and a Sample of a grading rubric evaluation criteria for the Team Case-based Application Exercises for this course.

Value: 20% (Best 2 out of 3) 10% per case submission

Team Family Enterprise Management Plan

Objective:

This team-based assignment should encompass the development and management of a family enterprise plan (e.g. a plan for governance, generation transition, growth, for repositioning, for internationalization, etc.). The plan should culminate with a series of recommendations that will help facilitate the future family management of the business, drive long-term management, future investment and appeal to consumers.

The aim will be to implement governance, management and marketing techniques which is related throughout the semester, so to apply the specific family enterprise management learning from the course to the analysis and recommendations of the family enterprise. Teams are required to identify a suitable family enterprise for which to analyze and provide relevant recommendations, and this process should begin as soon as is possible after the course start dates.

Process:

Teams will analyze and develop strategies, so to create a management and marketing plan for family business viability and transition over generations for the business to grow, continue to gain market leadership, and be viable over a long period of time (i.e. 10 years). This should also include the implications of the recommended strategies. The family enterprise management plan will be delivered via a completed **team presentation**, which is developed with the assumption that it is being delivered to ownership, CEO, family board of directors and/or potential investors and partners of the business. ***The completed family enterprise management plan should be developed with the assumption that it is delivered to: ownership or CEO, Board of Directors, Investors and the Media, Future Collaborators / Partners.***

Primary Research:

Primary market research must be a key part of the information students have obtained to make strategic recommendations for the business and development plan. This market research must include a discussion / interview with at least one person involved in the family business or within the industry.

Topic Choice:

NOTE: Specific topics for the family enterprise selected will be discussed during the first 1 – 2 lectures. Please note the chosen family business cannot be based on a business worked on in another course.

The following are the key milestones for the Family Enterprise Management Plan:

Timeline:

<u>Step</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Step #1:	Project Topic Proposal	January 30 th by 5:00pm (by email)
Step #2:	Primary Research (Interview/Survey)	Recommended by week #8
Step #3:	Team Presentations	March 11 th <u>or</u> March 18 th

Process, Outline and Evaluation Criteria:

NOTE: Please see **APPENDIX #2** for the specific process for each **Team-based steps** #1, #2, #3 of the Family Enterprise Management Plan and the Sample of a grading rubric evaluation criteria for the Final Team Presentation.

Value: 20% of total course grade.

Individual Letter to the Board of Directors

Objective:

This *individual* assignment involves a strategic **follow-up memo report** with **your own perspectives** based on your team's presentation for the chosen family-based enterprise. It also involves drawing on comparisons of other successful family-based businesses and providing **additional** long-term recommendations for the same company to further help its long-term brand success in the marketplace.

Essentially, the perspective will be of a family member (mother, father, cousin, etc.). Moreover, this individual assignment is aimed at facilitating concepts and theoretical with practical integration. Therefore, students are to write a memo (letter) **to the Board of Directors** outlining the company's current situation ***from the perspective of their position witin the family*** and discussing their major learning during the course and the family enterprise management plan. As a key part of this individual submission, students are also expected to apply relevant theoretic frameworks from the lessons learned. Moreover, a series of future recommendations must be included in this letter from the persepective of the position in the family.

Essentially, this follow-up individually written plan report consists of three key parts:

1. Your perspectives of the overall enterprise, the future of the business as well as the anticipated market reaction to the team's recently provided recommendations.
2. To further provide your own brief, but strategic consultation for additional long-term family enterprise management recommendations.

3. Drawing comparisons of your long-term strategic management and marketing recommendations with successful businesses competing in the marketplace, as well as successful enterprises reviewed throughout the semester with the course material.

Ultimately, this individual assignment provides participants with the opportunity to remain connected to what is happening in the marketplace by analyzing specific family-based businesses, but also enhance the previously provided strategic management and marketing recommendations.

Process, Outline and Evaluation Criteria:

NOTE: Please see APPENDIX #3 for the process, outline, format and the Sample of a Grading Rubric evaluation criteria for the Individual Memo Letter to the Board of Directors.

Value: Individual Final Future Plan Report 20%

Final Exam

The final 3-hour exam occurs in-person during the formally University examinations schedule. It is a closed-book exam and it will draw on all class material, supported by all articles, videos, lectures, discussions and case studies reviewed throughout the entire course.

Value: 35% of total course grade.

Course-specific policies:

The standards of professionalism apply.

E-mail guidelines:

- Account: Always use your university account. E-mail from other domains (gmail, hotmail, yahoo...) may be automatically treated as spam. A response will occur, as soon as possible, and within 48 hours.

Course Attendance:

- As indicated in the academic regulations of the Sprott School of Business, attendance at courses of instruction is mandatory. Students who are absent for more than 9 hours of class time will be excluded from the final examination.

Late submissions and Request for deferrals:

- Policy is 10% per day late (starting immediately after the beginning of the class of the submission date).
- Requests for a deferral for a report submission due to medical reasons or due to a scheduling conflict must go directly to Student Services and request a deferral.

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools:

AI use in this course varies by assignment. Some activities will explicitly invite you to use AI tools; others will require work completed independently. Please read each assignment's instructions carefully for permitted and prohibited uses. When AI is used, be transparent about how you used it and apply critical judgment to verify its accuracy and relevance.

Please note that it is not possible to submit extra course work to improve your mark.

Course Schedule: BUSI 3611 A Managing the Family Enterprise
Wednesdays 11:35am – 2:25pm

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture Theme & Topics</u>	<u>Relevant Article Readings</u>	<u>Case / Assignments</u>
January 7	Understanding Family Enterprises and Business Intelligence	<i>Course Syllabus & outline Review and In-class Lecture Notes / Slide Presentations</i>	Team Formation and Topics Discussed for the Team Family Enterprise Management Plan
January 14	Product and/or Service Idea Generation – Part I: Development and Market Launch	<i>Course Syllabus & outline Review and In-class Lecture Notes / Slide Presentations</i>	Brainstorm Exercise – Team Family Enterprise Plan
January 21	Family Enterprises, Opportunities and Prevalence Business Family Brand Planning Process – Part I: Decisions Impact and Business Drivers	<i>Why Great New Products Fail? (Simester)</i>	Participation #1
January 28	Business Family Brand Plan Process – Part II: Developing a Core Business Strategy for Family Enterprises	<i>The CEO of Canada Goose in Creating Homegrown Luxury Brands (Reiss & Dani)</i> <i>Worried About Strategy Implementation? Don't overlook Marketing's Role (Slater et al.)</i>	Participation #2 Brief Project Proposal due January 30th (email submission) by 5:00pm

February 4	Misconceptions of Family Enterprises Marketing Implementation and Management for Family Enterprises	<i>Demystifying the Family Enterprise</i> (Wing & Keulen)	Participation #3 Team Application Exercise #1
February 11	Investment Strategies for Family Based Start-Ups and New Venture Creations Family Enterprises Core Business Management Values – Part I	<i>Crowdsourcing in a Time of Empowered Stakeholders</i> (Wilson et al.) <i>Families in Business: Module 1 – The Family</i> (Wing, Keulen & Morton)	Participation #4 Team Application Exercise #2
February 18	Winter Break		
February 25	Family Enterprises Core Business Management Values – Part II Long-term Family Enterprise Planning Succession and Transfer of Ownership	<i>How to Balance a Family Business with Values: 13 Tips</i> (Forbes Coaches Council) <i>Build a Family Business that Lasts</i> (Lachenauer)	Participation #5
March 4	Family Enterprise Compensation Challenges and Opportunities Artificial Intelligence (AI): Increased Efficiency and Enhanced Strategy	<i>Compensating Family Employees in a Family Business</i> (Davis) <i>Transferring Power in the Family Business</i> (Barnes & Hershon)	Participation #6 Team Application Exercise #3

March 11	Influencers and Strategic Alliances for Family Enterprises, Start-ups and New Business	<i>Strategic Alliances That Work: Should You Build a Strategic Alliance? (Kelly & Schaan)</i>	Participation #7 Team Family Enterprise Management Plan Presentations
March 18	Family Enterprise Management Plans – Opportunities and Brand Plan Team Analysis	<i>In-class Lecture Notes / Slide Presentations</i>	Participation #8 Team Family Enterprise Management Plan Presentations
March 25	Future of Managing Family Enterprises	<i>Successful Governance in Family Business (Wing)</i>	Participation #9
April 1	Future of Managing Family Enterprises Final Exam Review	<i>In-class Lecture Notes / Slide Presentations</i>	Participation #10

DUE: Individual Letter to the Board – by April 8th by 11:59pm posted to the respective assignments folder on Brightspace

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Course Sharing Websites

Materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Required calculator in BUSI course examinations.

If you are purchasing a calculator, we recommend anyone of the following options: Texas Instruments BA II Plus (including Pro Model), Hewlett Packard HP 12C (including Platinum model), Staples Financial Calculator, Sharp EL-738C & Hewlett Packard HP 10bII

Group work

The Sprott School of Business encourages group assignments in the school for several reasons. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal, communication, leadership, followership, and other group skills. Group assignments are also good for learning integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks/assignments/projects in this course. Before embarking on a specific problem as a group, it is your responsibility to ensure that the problem is meant to be a group assignment and not an individual one.

Grading

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

Grades entered by Registrar: WDN = Withdrawn from the course DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline). You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy Accommodation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [Pregnancy Academic Accommodation Information - Equity and Inclusive Communities](#)

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [Academic Regulations for Students with Religious Obligations < Carleton University](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [Sexual Violence Prevention & Survivor Support - Equity and Inclusive Communities](#)

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>
For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity are a serious academic offence. Violations of academic integrity – presenting another's ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, misrepresentation, fabricating or misrepresenting research data, unauthorized co-operation or collaboration or completing work for another student – weaken the quality of the degree and will not be tolerated. Process: If an alleged violation occurs, all relevant documentation will be forwarded to the Dean. If the allegation proves true, the penalties may include; a grade of Failure on the submitted work and/or course; academic probation; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; suspension from full-time studies; suspension from all studies at Carleton; expulsion from Carleton, amongst others. **For a first offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally be a zero on the submitted work and at least a minimum full grade reduction of the final course grade. For a second offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally lead to a suspension from studies.** Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy which is available, along with resources for compliance at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Sprott Student Services

The Sprott Undergraduate Student Services Office offers program advising and overall student success support. Our team is available to discuss your academic goals and your program progression plans. We can also work with you to develop strategies for success, including study skills for Business. If you experience any difficulty this term or if you would like to access support, please contact our team at bcom@sprott.carleton.ca or at bib@sprott.carleton.ca.

Centre for Student Academic Support

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or online at: carleton.ca/csas.

Important Information:

- Students must always retain a copy of all work that is submitted.
 - All final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.
 - For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries, please send all email from your Carleton CMail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/>
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