

Business Planning and Execution for Canadian Entrepreneurs

Course: APS1088H Fall 2025

Delivery: Hybrid Mode: In-person in WB219 & simultaneously On-line from WB219

Instructor: Professor Steve Treiber
meeting weekly @professor's hours
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See his Bio at the end of this document.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Overview:

[APS1088](#) a course on how to start and run a successful Canadian business that is profitable on day one. That business could be a start-up from scratch, a franchise, or an acquired or inherited business. The course was developed and is taught by successful Canadian entrepreneurs who imagined, built and later sold their successful businesses. The course materials, lectures, and assignments are based on personal experience and published best practices. Using a real start-up as an example, the course and materials provide students with a toolkit for starting and running a business, and through the course project an exercise in how to do it. The key to entrepreneurial success is focused execution of a great business plan. [APS1088](#) teaches aspiring entrepreneurs how to start a business in Canada. The business could be for profit or non-profit. Each lecture focusses on an important aspect of starting and running a business and supports a component of the business plan that students write as the course project. Financing taught addresses all forms from [bootstrapping](#) to seeking funding from VCs and Angel investors.

If you already have a business idea the course will assist you in making that business idea a success. If you don't have an idea the course will teach you how to find and develop a business idea. Join this course and meet your entrepreneurial peers.

There is no final exam.

All the lectures are pre-recorded and will be made available to students in advance of the weekly professor's hours in class. All professor's hours will be conducted in classroom and simultaneously on ZOOM for those who can't make it to school. Weekly professor's hours will be used to discuss student's questions, discussion about the assignments, clarifications of the pre-recorded lectures, and attending presentations by guest lecturers. At strategic points during the course subject matter experts are invited to address the students in their area of specialty such as marketing strategy, sales, finance, accounting and law.

The instructors may introduce students with exceptionally good business plans to [The Hatchery](#), or one of the many incubators on campus, or even operating businesses that might be interested in their idea.

Taking Notes:

APS1088 Entrepreneurship is unique in content and structure. All the lecture notes used in the classroom are available to you on your Quercus Class website. All lectures are pre-recorded and available on Quercus but live(synchronous) participation is recommended. Live sessions will be recorded and posted on Quercus in case you miss the class.

Recommended Reading:

[Hurdle: The Book of Business Planning](#)

Tim Berry, Palo Alto Software, ISBN 0-9712185-0-1

The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It

Michael E. Gerber, Harper Collins e-Books

Professor's Classroom Hours:

Mondays: 6:10pm – 9:00 pm in-person and via ZOOM, beginning Sept 8, 2025

Guest Speakers during class hours:

TBD

Details

The course is on Quercus, so you should sign in as soon as possible and read the handouts. I will post all handouts on Quercus as the course unfolds on the dates shown in this document – so visit often.

Assignments

Business Press Review

As part of your class participation mark you are expected to read an appropriate article from a reliable business publication (Globe and Mail ROB, National Post – Financial Section, Financial Times, Canadian Business, etc.) and prepare a written *half page* report.

Submit your report by midnight of the day *before every lecture*. Submit on Quercus and do not forget to reference the article you are reporting on.

Your report should be about economic, political or personal issues *affecting small businesses*. These may be: a drop (or rise) in interest rates; recently released trade figures; import/export news; currency issues; government actions; approvals of financing; bankruptcies; tax matters, entrepreneurs, success stories, etc., etc. We expect you to write a thoughtful report on the meaning of the issue, not a précis of the article.

At the start of each lecture, a few students will be asked to make a 60-second oral presentation of their report. Each of these five assignments is worth 2%. If you are called to present and are not present you will get zero(0) for this assignment.

Successful business people read the financial news every day! This assignment is meant to help you understand the importance for entrepreneurs of “keeping on top of the business news” and to help you hone your speaking skills.

What is your business idea?

New business ideas tend to be the result of the recognition of a market opportunity by the entrepreneur, but there are many ways to come up with an idea for a business. The best place to start is to share ideas with family and friends. Sharing ideas and observations will lead you into hypotheses of what the value proposition of your start up should be. See the "**Pre-course information**" document on Quercus for more details.

Business Model BMC/Business Plan Proposal

Once you have come up with an idea for your Business Plan, you should submit the idea to Professor Treiber for approval as soon as possible. While this is **not** a “marked” assignment, you must have this approved before you proceed with your BMC/Plan.

The Value Proposition Canvas Assignment

The Value Proposition Canvas is a visualization tool that allows entrepreneurs to focus their attention on how their product or service allows a customer to do their work better. Being able to express a compelling value proposition is an essential ingredient for any business.

Market Research Assignment

Conducting Market Research is necessary to understand whether your business is likely to be successful. This assignment will help you find the data that you will need for your Business Model Canvas and ultimately your Final Business Plan.

During the class at which this assignment is due some of the submitted student presentations about their assignment submission will be played in class or the student can present live about their assignment. The objective of market research at this stage is to determine if there is a business to be made from your business idea.

The Business Model Canvas and Final Business Plan Assignment

The Business Model Canvas(BMC) is a tool that will help you define your start up and its business strategy. The BMC is a visualization tool of how your business will create value for it's customers and therefore for you. During this course you will have the unique opportunity to develop the different sections of the BMC and use them as the building blocks to create your final Business Plan. The term project is a full Business Plan and it is intended to give you "hands-on" experience in developing a document that is *absolutely essential* to get into business for yourself.

Final Business Plan

The final term project involves the preparation of a *full and complete Business Plan* for a company you selected as “Your Business” and of course this will be on the idea that you brought to the first lecture (or another approved) you worked on in the BMC and the materials you developed there. The Business Plan, on the average, should be 10-20 pages (cover page, table of contents, appendices etc. are not included in the count), for details, see the assignment rubric in Quercus.

The creation of your business plan will be an organic process once you have completed all the elements of your BMC. Make sure you give credit by citing the sources of your claims.

Keep in mind that this is a business document – not a novel. Good communication is essential, so keep your language short and to the point. Always proofread to ensure accuracy of facts and language – *do not just rely on spell check!*

In-Class Presentations

Every major assignment listed below has a marked component that requires submission of a narrated powerpoint presentation. During the term every student will get at least one opportunity to present their submission either live or via submitted pptx and mp4 file. This will give you feedback from the Professor and your classmates.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

	Report or Assignment	Due
1	Market Research Assignment	Oct 4
2	Value Proposition Canvas (VPC)	Nov 8
4	The Final Business Plan (BMC).	Nov 29

Please respect the fact that we will enforce these dates. Do not make any excuses because we will not be *sympathetic*! If you encounter any problems we will always try to help you just set up an appointment and we will make time for you. **There will be a 40% discount** on the mark if an assignment is handed in late, but we will not accept assignments handed in after we have returned that marked assignment to the class and you will get ZERO for that assignment.

MARKING SCHEME

Class Participation (Five(5) Business Press reviews 2% each)	10%
Value Proposition Canvas Assignment/Presentation	30%
Market Research Assignment/Presentation	30%
Final Business Plan	30%

HELPFUL HINTS

A word about course management

In the business world, deadlines are very important and missing them usually costs a firm dearly. For example, if you are bidding on a contract or tender, missing the deadline by even one minute can result in **your bid not being considered at all**. Similarly, in this course, missing deadlines will cost you. All assignments are due on Quercus by the appointed time. Email submissions will not be accepted.

WHY TAKE THIS COURSE

Things change rapidly in the world's economy and Covid 19 is a game changer in work and education. In recognition of this I have pre-recorded every lecture and broken those recordings into a maximum length of 30 minute segments. Also, we have regularly scheduled live classes which will be delivered as webinars and workshops so that we can discuss the important parts of the videos and lecture notes and their relevance to your term project and so students can make presentations on their assignments to the class and get feedback from professor and classmates. All the live sessions will also be recorded and available to students.

In today's economy the most successful people are those who have entrepreneurial skills. Whether you wish to be your own boss or you decide to work for a large or medium-sized corporation you will find this course invaluable. In fact, today organizations actively search for *intrapreneurs* (an entrepreneurial individual who prefers to work within a larger firm rather than start their own). So, if you have the "talent" for business or if you can hardly wait to leave university to pursue a career in business, whether you start it yourself, or aspire to lead in a larger firm, this course is for you.

Hatchery Speaker Series

Entrepreneurs and subject matter experts from the business community (even past students who started successful businesses) speak for 45-50 minutes about their business, life, experiences, successes and failures.

The guest speaker's talk is followed by a lunch, Q & A's and an opportunity to network, which you should take advantage of. You will find the guest lectures at the Hatchery website <http://hatchery.engineering.utoronto.ca/calender/>.

The Hatchery

The University of Toronto is dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship. Besides this course one of the ways it is supported in the Faculty of Engineering is through The Hatchery. If you have the entrepreneurial spirit or an entrepreneurial idea, The Hatchery will provide you with the tools and resources to take you to the next level. This course is the perfect place for you to start. Visit: <http://hatchery.engineering.utoronto.ca/>

APS1088, Lecture Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments Discussion</u>
1	8-Sep	Organizational meeting The Canadian Entrepreneur and the Business Model Canvas - Introduction to the “Entrepreneur” - The Business Model Canvas – its role and value	
2	15-Sep	Business Plan and Finding a Business - Business Model Canvas/Plan - Business Idea Brainstorming	Bus Press Review I
3	22-Sep	Market Research	Bus Press Review II
4	29-Sep	Marketing Strategies	Bus Press Review III
5	06-Oct	Sales	Mrkt Res & BPR IV
6	20-Oct	Accounting, Financing and Analysis	Bus Press Review V
7	03-Nov	Business & the Law	
8	10-Nov	Financing Your Start-up	Value Proposition Canvas
9	17-Nov	Risk Management & the Exit	
10	24-Nov	Buy/Sell/Franchise	
11	01-Dec	Business Plan Presentation	Final Business Plan Class

Resumé

Steven Treiber, Ph.D., P.Eng

[Steve Treiber](#) was born in a refugee camp in post-world war II Europe and emigrated to Canada as a child with his parents. His background gave him a perspective on success that is common to recent immigrants to Canada and provided a unique advantage in entrepreneurial endeavour. He brings that experience and point of view to teaching.

Steve has always had an interest in business. Although he started out working for others, he always had an eye on "doing his own thing" – and he did that after just 7 years in the corporate world. So, in 1984, after an engineering career in the pulp and paper and oil industries with Scott Paper and Shell Oil, respectively, he started his own software and engineering firm in Toronto and later Houston, TX. Treiber Controls Inc. developed process control and real-time optimisation software and applications for the oil, petrochemical, pulp and paper and other process industries. In 1998 he sold his company to a NASDAQ listed competitor, Aspen Technologies, and served in various senior management roles.

He left Aspen in 2002 to launch a new business start-up – the entrepreneurial drive was still there. He continues to work with technology start-up companies to apply his knowledge and experience in engineering and business. He is now President of [Manufacturing Technology Network, Inc.](#)

After receiving a Bachelor of Engineering from McGill University he volunteered to work as a high school teacher in Uganda from 1969-1971. He also holds a Master of Applied Science from the University of Toronto, and a PhD from McGill University, all in Chemical Engineering. He has published over 40 papers in the fields of process control and optimisation, and is an author of 6 patents in the same field.