



## *Course Syllabus*

Welcome to the Operation Boots to Business program. Boots to Business is designed as an experience that we hope will help you realize your entrepreneurial dreams and aspirations – whatever they may be.

This online program is designed to give you the instruction and training that you will need to launch or continue to grow your entrepreneurial venture. Guided and taught by top-notch instructors, the content and exercises you will complete are positioned to further your understanding of the steps and activities associated with successfully launching and/or growing a business venture.

Good luck! We look forward to helping you on your entrepreneurial journey.

### **I. Course Overview:**

The purpose of this online course is to help you begin the process of developing a set of skills and competencies focused on entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, innovation, and small business management...*But more than that*, this course - is about dreaming and action. We will challenge you to think and act boldly, and to break with conventional thinking when it comes to the realities of the marketplace and your own business ideas. You will learn from each other - so don't be shy to share your opinions and suggestions. Your Boots to Business classmates will represent your 'entrepreneurial social network,' and you will find that you will become valuable resources to each other, as you pursue your entrepreneurial dreams.

We have designed for you a comprehensive and structured program; however in the end what you take from the experience will be a function of the work that you put into the initial preparation and participation.

### **II. Course Objectives:**

Upon completing the online course you should be able to:

- Understand the nature of the entrepreneurial process, and the many contexts and environments in which that process is relevant.
- Evaluate new venture ideas, and the underlying opportunities that give rise to those ideas.
- Identify the requisite components of a comprehensive business venture strategy; to include market analysis, basic approaches to competition, marketing, selling, and financing.
- Explain the interrelationships of marketing, accounting/finance, operations/production, and human resources required to formulate a business plan for either a "for profit" business or a nonprofit organization.
- Perform an objective review of business/nonprofit plans for completeness and logic.
- Know and understand the practical tools and needs of actually starting the business, including finding and overcoming hurdles, regulations, financing, and getting others involved.
- Design a marketing and operations plan.

- Recognize many of the legal, administrative, and financial requirements of starting a business.
- Understand growth and what is needed to achieve it.

### **Instructors:**

Your Boots to Business instructor will be introduced to you once you log in.

### **III. Texts and Resources:**

There are two required textbooks for this course, which are included in your package:

- 1) **The “Boots on the Ground” Guide to Entrepreneurship** (2012) The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- 2) **The Nuts & Bolts of Great Business Plans** (2012) Syracuse University: Department of Entrepreneurship

These books will be used throughout the course, but also represent great resources for you throughout the course of your ongoing activities related to growing your business.

### **IV. Moodle Website:**

The Boots to Business course will be administered through a learning management website called “Moodle.” Each student will be assigned a username and password to log into the site.

To access the Moodle site please visit the Boots to Business website and select the Course Log In tab: <http://boots2business.org/>. The username is your email address with the password “changeass”. Please log into the site and familiarize yourself with the organization of the website.

### **V. Schedule:**

You will find your weekly schedule of events detailed in the online forum under your specific week of instruction. Specific assignments, readings, and other exercises are assigned to correspond with the set of topics to be addressed throughout the online module. Specifically:

- a) ***Readings:*** Specific reading assignments are indicated on the schedule. Each assigned reading should be completed on (or prior to) the date indicated on the schedule.
- b) ***Lectures:*** Adobe Connect lectures will be prerecorded and available on the Boots to Business course page.
- c) ***Office Hours:*** Using Adobe Connect the instructor will hold office hours per the online schedule. During the office hours you will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the lectures, reading assignments, homework, and guidance with your business planning. If for some reason, you cannot attend the Adobe Connect office hours, it will be recorded and posted on the course page.
- d) ***Assignments:*** Specific written assignments are indicated on the schedule. Each assignment should be completed on (or prior to) the date indicated on the schedule.
- e) ***Discussions:*** Every week you will be asked to participate in a web-based discussion. This means that you will ‘post’ your thoughts and comments about a particular issue, question etc., to the discussion page and follow-up with responses and comments to the posts of your classmates.

### **VI. Summary:**

In summary, as stated earlier we ask that you think about the Operation Boots to Business program as a way to kick-start and set out on your entrepreneurial journey. In spite of what many think, successful entrepreneurs don’t do it alone. Instead, the entrepreneurial process is about seeking and being receptive to the support of others. This is what the Operation Boots to Business program is all about.

## Operation Boots to Business

In what follows you will find a schedule of learning objectives and readings for all eight weeks of the Boots to Business program. Every week you will be asked to participate in discussions based on the readings and lectures from that week. Office hours will be held in Adobe Connect. Your instructor's schedule is maintained within the Course Communication Tools on the Moodle website. Attendance is highly encouraged, but if for some reason you cannot attend the office hours, it will be recorded and then posted afterwards. The Adobe Connect sessions give you a chance to ask one-on-one questions about any of the assignments or discussions from that week. Much of this course is 'self-study' and as such it is up to you to remain focused and complete the readings and assignments on the day they are assigned. Put differently, you will take from the online course what you put into it.

### Prior to Week 1

**Topic:** Orientation

### Week 1

**Topic:** The Right Idea

**Objectives:** -Looking for opportunity  
-Forming a great business concept  
-Business planning  
-Determining your goals

**Reading:** "Boots on Ground" – pages 3 – 147

### Week 2

**Topic:** Your customers & will they buy?

**Objectives:** -Basics of segmenting and targeting  
-Understand feasibility analysis, including market size  
-Learning what you need to know before you start  
-Primary & secondary research needs, resources, and how to get these

**Reading:** "Boots on Ground" – pages 148 – 208

### Week 3

**Topic:** Your competitive space

**Objectives:** -Define your industry, key factors and trends  
-Examine competitors  
-Determine differentiation, including a SWOT analysis  
-Specify your space and niche, including geographic location

**Reading:** "Boots on Ground" – pages 211 – 229

### Week 4

**Topic:** The economics of small business

**Objectives:** -Understand what you do and don't do  
-Determine your mission, strategy and meaning  
-Establish resource needs and their implications on economic model  
-Pricing and costing strategies

**Reading:** "Boots on Ground" – pages 245 – 263

## Week 5

- Topic:** Entrepreneurial marketing
- Objectives:**
- Base understanding of marketing
  - Key promotion techniques, including word of mouth and generating buzz
  - How to make/use a website and take advantage of social media
  - Getting started on selling (eBay, Amazon, trade fairs, etc.)
  - Understand what it takes to get in to a distribution network, retail store, and managing these relationships
- Reading:** “Boots on Ground” – pages 230 – 244

## Week 6

- Topic:** Funding & legal issues
- Objectives:**
- Learn sources of capital and what is right for you
  - How to bootstrap and use family & friends
  - Understand differences in legal forms and finding the right one for you
  - Take care of some of the ‘mundane’ yet vital issues of how to actually start the business
- Reading:** “Boots on Ground” – pages 296 – 361

## Week 7

- Topic:** Practical issues
- Objectives:**
- Thinking ahead about potential hurdles and key assumptions you’re making
  - How to do basic financials, including cash management and projecting the future
  - Dealing with some of the back-office issues of evaluating suppliers, figuring out operations, dealing with inventory, the concept of quality, etc.
- Reading:** “Boots on Ground” – pages 362 – 489

## Week 8

- Topic:** What’s next?..Growth!
- Objectives:**
- Understand types of growth, growth strategies, and what makes sense for you
  - Teamwork and finding partners
  - How to look for, hire, and manage employees
  - How all of the lessons fit together as part of a business plan
- Reading:** “Boots on Ground” – pages 490 – 519

