

Introduction

The overarching goal of my individual portfolio this semester will be for me to move Fit Education Consulting out of my attic and my brain and into the real world. I hope that my micro-change project will address the necessary steps that the business needs for internal growth and that my professional development will help me to reach out to potential allies and partners.

Micro-Change Project

My micro-change project will be to write down the college application process for a typical student and develop appropriate tools and forms that a future employee could use while executing the Fit system. I have subcontracted for a college admissions consulting firm in China, and I find their system of documentation to be unnecessarily cumbersome and not in touch with the reality of the pieces of the college admissions process. I would like to improve upon this system for my future employees. Further, I would like everything to be electronic in order to be instantly referenced by me and by my future employee regardless of geographic location.

Fit Education Consulting has been in operation since 2008 and was formally incorporated upon my move to Pittsburgh in 2015. I have been incredibly lucky because of a strong referral network and the blessing of social capital. This success, however, has led me to a place where I never thought that I'd be. Fit Education Consulting has grown beyond a client base that I can serve alone, and I need to either start hiring people or start turning away clients. Of those two options, only the former is tolerable to me.

I am excited to start hiring my first employees, however, I have no business experience. I am an educator both by design and by training. I have only worked in the public school system that had unnecessarily bureaucratic human resources structures, a culture of contempt, and little excitement over innovation. Our readings and this course philosophy have made me begin to think about what I want both our corporate culture and our processes to be as I begin to involve more people. For the purpose of the micro-change project, however, I will be focusing on the process.

In order to accomplish this, I will evaluate the usefulness of my current forms for student information and meeting reports and will improve upon them. Then, I will be tracking what I do with two students this spring and project what their meeting schedule will look like this summer in order to develop a standard protocol for college applicants. Finally, I will edit and reformat some of the college admissions information materials that I have developed over the years and update them for use by employees. Ultimately, my project will be measured by the creation of an electronic employee handbook that includes informational materials, forms and meeting reports, and a protocol for standard service.

Personal Development Project

This semester, I want to get Fit Education Consulting out of my head and attic-office and into the real world. I want to prepare myself to start hiring my first employees and to start

reaching out to potential allies and clients in greater Pittsburgh. As such, the personal development experiences that I intend to pursue all accomplish the goal of building my presence and preparing to grow over the next year.

- On February 2, I have arranged a meeting with my State Representative Dan Frankel. Some other members of my cohort will be joining us. I am planning to ask about higher education funding, but also his vision for public/private partnerships related to k-16 education.
- I will try to meet with an institutional leader of a local college's enrollment management office. This will help me to understand some of the challenges that they are facing and their upcoming goals. I will also explain ways that I can assist them.
- Complete a webinar on coaching. I hope that this will help me to develop the skills necessary to train employees and help them to improve their practice. I also hope that I can apply some of the learning to my interactions with student-clients.
- I plan to do the building social capital exercises from the experience list on CouseWeb. I believe that building my network will allow me to increase the number of clients that I am serving and will help me to hire the best people.
- Develop a problem of practice that aligns with these goals, my research interest, and the current capabilities of Fit Education Consulting.