

## **Bourjaily: My Favorite Assignment 2018 Context assignment**

**Capstone Project: Report Deck** (*This assignment provides the context for My Favorite Assignment, Stand Up and Deliver, which is the 1<sup>st</sup> team oral presentation referenced below*).

**The report deck assignment is the capstone project for BCaP. It will incorporate writing, speaking, and visual design. As a group project, it will also demonstrate your team's ability to work together in creating a decentralized design approach (everyone contributes to figuring out the plan) to a deliberately open-ended assignment (no one right answer).**

**Project scenario:** With unemployment down and consumer spending up, several organizations are looking to expand in Iowa. Based on financial and economic indicators, these companies will **build new commercial space** (rather than buy or lease existing space).

You work for a consulting firm that specializes in sustainability. Firm management has identified an opportunity to provide valuable advice to expanding businesses: assessing in an industry-specific way the advantages and limitations of green building. Green building is defined by the EPA as “the practice of creating and using healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction. . . .” Within that category of “green building” are many different ways in which a building can be “green” and varying degrees to which companies may pursue a green-building objective. Whether or not to engage in green building practices is not a simple yes/no decision.

Six clients have hired your consulting firm, and each team has been asked to prepare a report for one of these organizations. **While each client believes green building is a good idea that supports its mission**, the client seeks evidence and analysis from your team to help make decisions regarding the degree to which the client organization should pursue “going green” in building its new public/commercial space.

**For the 1<sup>st</sup> team oral presentation, aka Stand Up and Deliver**, you will complete some initial investigative research and make preliminary recommendations addressing **how and why green building practices support the client organization's mission**. In presenting your initial research, your team should focus on both the meaning of the mission statement and the current state of green building as it relates to your business/industry.

For this 1<sup>st</sup> team oral presentation, the audience is a group of your peers—other consulting teams working on behalf of different clients. You are not trying to sell the concept of green building—you are investigating it and offering your ideas for consideration and further inquiry. When you deliver this presentation, your team should be ready to zero in on an overarching position (thesis) that is specific to your client's mission statement. That overarching position (thesis) will then provide you with the basis of your overarching position (thesis) for your written report deck.

While the overarching position (thesis) of your Stand Up and Deliver presentation will supply you with a kind of “first draft” position/thesis of your written report deck, your team will need to narrow that position/thesis to be able to provide more targeted and relevant evidence and analysis to its client in the report deck. Teams will want to conduct additional research, such as investigating certifications, design, and cost-related factors as well as other topics suggested below.

Your report deck must address three broad areas of consideration. Your team may wish to focus more on one or two of these three broad areas, but all three must be covered to some extent. Research on

comparable businesses in the industry should help guide you towards which areas are most relevant to your particular client.

1. **Cost of green building/construction.** Topics may include but are not limited to: short term expenditures and long-term savings, industry and/or product specific costs and savings, economic and regulatory factors including corporate tax credits and other government incentives
2. **Environmental impact and quality of life.** Topics may include but are not limited to: climate change, availability of natural resources, federal/local standards pertaining to construction and sustainability, employee satisfaction and output, consumer choice and wellbeing (are consumers better or worse off as a result of green building practices)
3. **Public and investor relations.** Topics may include but are not limited to: impact of green building on brand, mindshare (development of consumer awareness through local and national media), community support

Remember, your client is willing to invest in green building now. The areas you focus on, and the evidence and analysis you present, will help the client determine the best way to move forward. Your goal is to take a position on the opportunities for green building for your client's specific type of business. Depending on which client you choose, you may want to consider the following questions:

**Is LEED certification advantageous? Why or why not?**

- **What level of certification do you recommend?**

**Are there other certifications that pertain to your specific client's organization and/or industry?**

**Is your client's chosen location in Iowa a factor?**

- **What are the relevant space/size-of-building considerations?**
- **Is urbanization a consideration?**
- **Has the state, city or county adopted any standards and/or regulations for green building?**

**How do environmental factors in the client's chosen location present specific challenges and opportunities for your client's business (e.g. climate variability, water quality, soil behavior)?**

**How should the client respond to public relations and/or investor relations opportunities and concerns (media coverage by journalists and bloggers, analyst reports, etc.)?**

- **How should the organization report on sustainability practices?**
- **How would a new green building impact the community, and in what ways would it benefit your client's ability to engage the community?**

**How do competitors and other comparable businesses approach sustainability and/or green building?**

- **Is "greenwashing" (spin or disinformation used to create an environmentally responsible public image) a common practice in the industry, and would it inhibit positive environmental change?**

**Do tax credits or other subsidies provide additional incentives available to your client?**

**If your client is a non-profit or public entity, what impact (if any) might the availability of grants have on its approach to green building?**

Your team will need to take a position and support it with effective claims. Your analysis must build on solid evidence that demonstrates credibility, and your recommendations must be specific and realistic. New construction/business expansion will take place in the near future (2 – 3 year timeframe).

UI librarians have set up a BCaP course guide: <http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/BUS3000>. Here you will find articles and reports on green building and sustainability programs. Please visit this page as a starting point. You will likely want to locate additional sources to complete your research.

There is no single “right” answer in planning and completing your report deck. It is possible, depending on the organization you examine, that your team may decide that some limitations associated with green building outweigh the upside potential. Teams should not approach this project as a yes/no recommendation on whether the client organization should pursue green building practices. You should keep in mind that the client approached your consulting firm because the client’s senior management wishes to explore green building opportunities. It’s your job to recommend a smart course of action for your client, taking into account both the strengths and limitations of green building.

The document you provide to your client’s senior management will be a PPT report deck, which they will read in advance of your presentation. This is a written report—it is not designed to be projected on a large presentation screen—and you should focus on the quality of your writing. After your team submits its written report deck, senior management will read through your report before you present your findings in an oral team presentation.

For your **2<sup>nd</sup> team oral presentation**, your team will condense its report deck findings and recommendations to a 20-minute presentation featuring more visual slides (including original graphics) rather than a written deck. Each BCaP team will serve as senior management for another team’s presentation and will be assessed on the quality of questions they ask of the team presenting. Questions should be based on their prior reading of the report deck and their own general knowledge of green building opportunities from their own report deck research.

**Each client has provided a brief description (below) of plans for expansion into Iowa and its organization’s mission statement. You should assume these clients have identified the listed target locations based on market research, and it’s your job to specifically analyze green building in the specified region.**

**The client has not asked you to evaluate the chosen location or mission statement (please do not recommend alternatives). Your job is to focus on evaluating green building opportunities in the chosen location, given the organization’s mission.**

Choose one (only one team per BCaP section may choose each client):

1. A global retailer and warehouse club headquartered in Washington State seeks to build a **premium poultry processing facility** in western Iowa, in or near Council Bluffs  
*Mission statement: We provide wholesome food and sustainably produced products for our community by working in partnership with farmers, animals, and the natural world.*
2. An organic grocery store chain with multiple locations throughout Wisconsin seeks to expand into Iowa with a **natural food store** in Cedar Falls.  
*Mission statement: We nourish our community by providing the highest quality groceries and supplements at an affordable price.*
3. A high-end coffee company headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area seeks to develop a **coffee roasting facility with retail space** in or near Des Moines.

*Mission statement: We roast and brew organic, fair trade coffee, building long-term friendships and direct business relationships with farmers and their communities.*

4. A Minnesota-based craft brewery seeks to expand to Okoboji with a **brew lab and indoor/outdoor restaurant space**.

*Mission statement: We brew quality beer and provide a community place where families, friends, and neighbors feel at home to engage in worthwhile conversation.*

5. The City of Cedar Rapids seeks to build a **public senior housing development**.

*Mission statement: We create stable and healthy communities by developing, financing, and operating affordable senior housing while promoting self-sufficiency and neighborhood revitalization.*

6. The City of Davenport seeks to build a new **indoor hockey and soccer complex** with two ice sheets and three turf fields.

*Mission statement: With the goal of promoting health and wellness in our community, we provide access to high-quality indoor sports and activities for people of all ages and abilities.*