ESSENTIAL PROBLEM SOLVING
Course Introduction

Overview	Business professionals must solve problems and make decisions daily—whether to invest in new equipment, how to market a product, which candidate to hire. The ability to make good decisions is a fundamental skill for managers in all businesses or organizations. But, most managers never learned how to make decisions in a systematic way based on sound critical thinking and decision-making tools. Thus, managers frequently have trouble making tough choices. • What do I do first? • What are my alternatives? • How will this decision affect future decisions? Developing a capacity for making decisions is a critical part of management education. This course teaches the fundamentals of such decision-making through highly acclaimed "PrOACT" decision-making method, in course textbook: Smart Choices (Harvard Business School Press). PrOACT provides a framework that can substantially redirect decision-making, widening possibilities and increasing possibility of reaching satisfying solutions.
Topics	The 8 elements of PrOACT decision-making method Pr Problem O Objectives A Alternatives C Consequences T Tradeoffs Uncertainty, Risk Tolerance, and Linked Decisions Cases: Nissan Motors M&A with Renault, Dave Armstrong (A&B), Growing Pains, VC Vignettes, Collabrys Inc.
In-Class	Syllabus is built around core course textbook, "Smart Choices", integrated with various notes, articles, exercises/problems, and case studies also from Harvard Business School. Classes will be interactive, lively and participative.
Pre-Class	Students will need to spend on average about 3-4 hours per week preparing for each session including doing assigned readings and analyzing cases, as well as outside class team homework in week 5.
Class Time	Thursdays 19:00 – 21:40 *5 weekly sessions
Instructor	**Nigel Denscombe** Denscombe Corporation http://www.denscombe.co.jp/2010/CEO_profile.html

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Course Syllabus

Week1	**Topic: Course overview/introduction; Defining problems** Discussion: "Smart Choices" Chapter 1-2 (Making Smart Choices/Problems) Team project: Analyze Nissan Motors decision-making in M&A with Renault (1999)
Week2	**Topic: Identifying/structuring objectives, creating alternatives** Discussion: "Smart Choices" Chapter 3-4 (Objectives/Alternatives) Discussion/team project: Case "Dave Armstrong (A) & (B)" Team Project: Recommend decision in Dave Armstrong (A) and (B)
Week3	**Topic: Describing consequences, making tradeoffs** Discussion: "Smart Choices" Chapter 5-6 (Consequences/Tradeoffs) Discussion: Case: "Growing Pains" Team project: Decision-making scenarios connected to "Growing Pains"
Week4	**Topic: Dealing with uncertainty, and addressing risk tolerance** Discussion: "Smart Choices" Chapters 7-8 (Uncertainty/Risk Tolerance) Discussion/team project: Case "VC Vignettes" Team project: Decision-making scenarios connected to "VC Vignettes"
Week5	**Topic: Making linked decisions** Discussion: "Smart Choices" Chapter 9 (Linked Decisions) Discussion: Case "Collabrys, Inc.: The Evolution of a Startup" Team project: Decision-making scenarios connected to "Collabrys, Inc."
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