

Back to basics



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It is surprising but true that many firms haven't fully thought through the fundamentals of their business model and client proposition. An investment in getting these basics right will result in a step change in performance across all measures.

The same is true for anyone engaged in a programme of continuing professional development such as the PSMG Cambridge Marketing College professional diploma. A focus on getting the basics right (and so removing the pressure of having to take higher risk options in order to make up lost ground) applies as much in a programme of study as it does in the business environment.

There are three core components which should be considered in either realm.

Firstly, at a fundamental level, simply choosing the right assignments is a great way of maximising one's chances of success. The business analogy is clear, choosing which markets in which to compete, which battles to fight and which to avoid, will be a key directional decision leading to success or failure.

Secondly, it is crucial to fully understand the issue which one is confronted with. In an academic context this can be translated to something as simple as ensuring that one answers the question which are asked rather than one which is broadly similar but ultimately tangential. It is sad but true that a number of delegates each year produce work which fails to answer the question and ultimately fail.

Finally, the ability to implement is a skill which may not be glamorous but which is a core competency of any successful manager. Often this ability relies on good project management skills, a recognition of how priorities and available resources interact and a clear view of where one is trying to get to. 'Begin with the end in mind' is not one of the *Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* in Covey's seminal work without good reason!

Of course, getting the fundamentals right requires both subject knowledge and the ability to apply it in the context of the situation faced. In our sector, this application will often centre on trade-offs between the 'intellectually perfect' solution and the compromises necessary for reasons of pragmatism, expediency, resources and expectations.

These are commercial judgments and ultimately it is this fusion of knowledge and judgment which marks out those able to carve a successful career in the world of professional services marketing.

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