

IT 550 Final Project Guidelines and Rubric

Overview

The final project for this course is the creation of an information technology strategic plan (ITSP). IT managers are often called upon to craft, critique, or revise ITSPs for entire IT departments or subgroups within the larger context of an IT department. You will have the opportunity to create an ITSP using **one** of the three Harvard Business Review case studies available for purchase (“Strategic IT Transformation at Accenture,” “Peak Experiences and Strategic IT Alignment at Vermont Teddy Bear,” or “Richter: Information Technology at Hungary’s Largest Pharma”). You will create several artifacts (an organizational profile, an IT department SWOT analysis, and a document of strategic IT initiatives) that a typical IT manager would encounter. These will be submitted as milestones throughout the course and will allow you to practice the skills necessary for your final submission.

The project is divided into **three milestones**, which will be submitted at various points throughout the course to scaffold learning and ensure quality final submissions. These milestones will be submitted in **Modules Two, Five, and Seven**. The final submission will be due in **Module Nine**.

In this assignment, you will demonstrate your mastery of the following course outcomes:

- Articulate the role, strategic importance, and impact of information technology in sustaining organizational health and influencing emerging and changing business models
- Evaluate the impact of emerging technologies on new business opportunities and the competitive advantage of organizations
- Assess the value of information technologies within the context of business processes, quality management, and organizational impacts
- Integrate information technology, strategy, and management principles into project planning and implementation to inform sound decision-making within organizations
- Model best practices of information technology governance through the application of established regulations and professional standards
- Analyze competitive issues related to information technology within business to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

Prompt

For the final project, you will develop an ITSP for an organization of your choosing, based on the case study you purchase. The ITSP should provide value by supporting the overall mission and vision of the organization’s IT department, articulate the value of IT through an analysis of existing and proposed technology implementation and performance metrics throughout the department, reinforce IT policies, and clearly explain the roles and responsibilities of each key member in the IT department.

Specifically, the following **critical elements** must be addressed:

I. **Organization**

- A. **Structure and Organization:** Describe the current organizational structure and background information of the company as a whole. How does the organization organize its internal and external communication? What is the age of the organization? What is the organizational structure? Include the following:
 - 1. What is the number of employees?
 - 2. What is the organizational decision-making structure?
 - 3. What is the size of the IT budget (summary amount, not detailed, at this point)?
 - 4. What kinds of technology are used in the organization?
- B. **Customer Profile:** Analyze the customer profile of the company as a whole to determine possible competitive issues that could be IT-related. What is the size and type of community? Who is the primary customer? What is the size of the customer/end-user base? What is the demographic profile of the customer or end user?
- C. **IT Values:** What are the IT values of the organization? Analyze the organizational values as indicated by policies, public releases, or noted actions of the company. Some things to consider include:
 - 1. How does the organization deal with intellectual property rights?
 - 2. What is the privacy policy of the organization?
 - 3. What is the technology usage policy?
 - 4. How does the organization ensure the accuracy of the data it stores?
 - 5. How does the organization ensure data accessibility, while ensuring data security?
 - 6. What, if any, governance policies are implemented within the organization?
- D. **Internal Standards:** What are the existing internal rules and standards for information technology governance? Describe the existing policies and standards within the organization to establish a baseline for appropriate practice.

II. **IT Visions and Missions**

- A. **IT Vision:** What is the ideal vision of how your information technology department fits into the overall organization? What is the role that IT plays in the organization? Articulate your clear and reasonable ideal vision for the roles and responsibilities of the IT department (or IT subgroup) within the organization.
- B. **IT Mission:** What is the IT mission of the organization? Craft an IT mission statement that represents your vision, represents the values of the organization, and speaks to the impact of IT on business opportunity and competitive advantage.

III. **IT Department SWOT Analysis**

- A. **Strengths:** What are the internal strengths of the organization's IT department as they pertain to the use of technology? Analyze the organization to determine the strengths regarding use of technology.
- B. **Weaknesses:** What are the internal weaknesses of the organization's IT department as they pertain to the use of technology? Analyze the organization to determine the organizational weaknesses that are related to information technology.
- C. **Opportunities:** What are the opportunities of the organization's IT department as they pertain to the use of technology? Analyze the organization and use of information technology to determine opportunities related to IT that could add to the competitive advantage of the organization or present business opportunity.
- D. **Threats:** What are the threats to the organization's IT department as they pertain to the use of technology? Analyze the organization and use of information technology to determine pertinent threats to the organization.
- E. **SWOT Summary:** Based upon the SWOT analysis, summarize the conclusions you've reached and issues you've identified related to information technology within the context of the organization's IT department, its sustainability, and its health.

IV. **Strategic Initiatives:** You will craft four to six strategic IT initiatives for your department or subgroup that, as a set of initiatives, adhere to the following:

- A. **IT Department SWOT:** Your strategic IT initiatives should represent your conclusions from the IT department SWOT. In other words, the initiatives you create should be aligned with identified strengths and opportunities of the IT department and address identified weaknesses and threats.
- B. **Vision, Mission, Values:** Your IT initiatives should align to the values of the organization and the IT values of your own department, as well as with the vision you articulated for your group and the mission statement you crafted.
- C. **Ethics and Law:** IT initiatives should also model best practices in IT governance, as supported by external and internal IT standards.

V. **Action Plan:** Develop an action plan based on two to four of what you believe are your highest-priority strategic IT initiatives that encapsulates the IT vision and mission, IT department SWOT, and two to four strategic IT initiatives. Your action plan should include all of the relevant considerations for your department and company, as it would if you were to create one for your own company of employment. Your plan should address and include the following:

- A. **Plan:** Articulate the steps, timeline, and responsibilities for the action plan in a professional manner by integrating aspects of IT, strategy, and management principles to inform sound decision making.
- B. **Regulations and Standards:** Analyze regulations and external information management standards to ensure ethical and legal compliance for each action item. Defend the adherence of each to relative standards, regulations, and internal controls.
- C. **Value Assessment:** Provide the rationale for each action item. In other words, assess the value of each action item within the context of the business processes, quality management, or organization impact.
- D. **Fiscal Management:** Discuss the high-level impact of each action item on the department and organization in terms of finances and budgetary considerations. This is not intended to be a detailed budget proposal, but a higher-level, broader discussion on the fiscal benefits and costs of the actions you plan to bring forth. You may need to perform some research depending on the type of action plans you are creating.

You are encouraged to use this prompt section as a guide for how you should structure your final submission.

Milestones

Milestone One: Organizational Profile

In **Module Two**, you will submit an **organizational profile** on your chosen organization. This organizational profile should give a brief overview of the company you choose from an enterprise level and then start to focus on the IT department of that company. In the Milestone One Rubric document, you will see an outline of **critical elements** that must be addressed. Make sure that you craft a vision and mission statement for your IT department that is different from your company's enterprise-level vision and mission statements but that aligns with the greater company as a whole.

The organizational profile should be submitted in the form of a 2-3 page paper. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone One Rubric.** Feedback should be incorporated into the final project as warranted.

Milestone Two: IT Department SWOT Analysis

In **Module Five**, you will submit a complete a **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis** on your chosen organization's IT department. It is key here to focus on your IT department and not the company as a whole. Your case study will be your best resource. Address each construct as well as all internal strengths and weaknesses as they pertain to information technology. Research the opportunities that would allow your chosen organization's IT department to gain a competitive advantage, and identify threats that could decrease that advantage. During this assignment, you are encouraged to think about the potential strategic IT initiatives you plan to craft after completing the SWOT analysis. Keep in mind that these will be aligned to the conclusions from your SWOT analysis. You will explore this in greater detail in Milestone Three. Also keep in mind that you are creating an information technology strategic plan (ITSP), so the work you conduct here should make sense in that context and will provide the foundation for the strategic IT initiatives and action plans you will create later.

The IT department SWOT analysis should be submitted in the form of a 2–3-page paper. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Two Rubric.** Feedback should be incorporated into the final project as warranted.

Milestone Three: Strategic IT Initiatives

In **Module Seven**, you will submit a complete **strategic IT initiatives document** that synthesizes the information from the first two milestones. In Milestone Two, you performed a SWOT analysis on your IT department and identified a number of weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Now you will select a subset of these items to focus on to develop **four to six strategic IT initiatives**. Develop the strategic IT initiatives that are aligned to the conclusions from your SWOT analysis in order to mitigate threats, strengthen weak areas, and capitalize on organizational strengths and opportunities. In addition, your document should map back to the mission and vision statements of your IT department and should model best practices in IT governance supported by the standards and regulations of your organization's industry. Additional legal and regulatory implications, as they pertain to the acquisition, implementation, and general use of information technology, should also be addressed.

Note: This strategic initiatives paper should be more oriented to *what* needs to be done, not *how* those items will be accomplished. The “how” will be addressed in the creation of action plans that are part of your final project submission.

The strategic outcomes document should be submitted in the form of a two- to three-page paper. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Three Rubric.** Feedback should be incorporated into the final project as warranted.

Final Submission: IT Strategic Plan

In **Module Nine**, you will submit your final **IT strategic plan**. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the critical elements of the final project. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. The final IT strategy plan should be submitted in the form of a 10–12-page paper. **This submission is graded with the Final Project Rubric.**

Deliverables

Milestone	Deliverable	Module Due	Grading
One	Organizational Profile	Two	Graded separately; Milestone One Rubric
Two	IT Department SWOT Analysis	Five	Graded separately; Milestone Two Rubric
Three	Strategic IT initiatives	Seven	Graded separately; Milestone Three Rubric
	Final Submission: IT Strategic Plan	Nine	Graded separately; Final Project Rubric

IT 550 Major Milestones and Final Project Flow

IT 550 Management of Information Technology



The Scenario

The final project for this course is the creation of an information technology strategic plan (ITSP). IT managers are often called upon to craft, critique, or revise ITSPs for entire IT departments or subgroups within the larger context of an IT department.

You will create several artifacts (an organizational profile, a SWOT analysis, and a document of strategic outcomes) that a typical IT manager would encounter. These will be submitted as milestones throughout the course and will allow you to practice the skills necessary for your final submission.

Milestone One Organizational Profile

2-3 Pages

Detail your chosen company's Structure and Organization, Customer Profile, IT Values, and Internal IT Standards. Also state the Vision and Mission of the IT Department.

See Milestone One Rubric for more details. Make sure you cover all of the critical elements. Use the rubric structure to guide your submission.

Milestone Two IT Department SWOT Analysis

2-3 Pages

For this Milestone you will be analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of your Organization's IT Department. Make sure you include a SWOT Summary.

See Milestone Two Rubric for more details. Make sure you cover all of the critical elements. Use the rubric structure to guide your submission.

Milestone Three Strategic IT Initiatives

2-3 Pages

From the IT Department SWOT Analysis you performed last milestone, you will now take 4-6 weaknesses, opportunities or threats and craft Strategic IT Initiatives to address them. This should focus on the what not the how. That will be accomplished for the Final Project in an Action Plan which will focus on the 2-4 highest priority Strategic IT Initiatives.

Refer to the Milestone Three Rubric for more details.

Final Project

10-12 Pages

In Module Nine, you will submit your final IT strategic plan. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing all of the critical elements of the final project.

See Final Project Rubric for more details. Make sure you cover all of the critical elements. Use the rubric structure to guide your submission.

Preparing for Success

💰 You will have the opportunity to create an ITSP using one of the three Harvard Business Review case studies available for purchase. Plan ahead and purchase now!

👁️ Review the Final Project Document Guidelines and Rubric in Week One!

💡 It is critical for students to keep in mind that the Milestone Assignments and Final Project focus on the IT Organization of a selected company -- NOT the selected company as a whole!

Before you Start!

💰 Purchase your Case Study!

💰 Remember! The Case Study document should be the primary source of information utilized for the Milestone Assignments and Final Project.

Also, put yourself in the shoes of being your organization's IT Director. Congratulations! You've been promoted! Focus all of your assignments on your IT organization, NOT the company as a whole!

Before you Start!

Make sure you use the Case Study you have purchased as your main resource!

Make sure you focus on the organization's IT Department!

Notice that each Milestone is building off of each other to help you finish your Final Project by Week Nine!

Before you Start!

Look back at your SWOT Analysis from Milestone Two. You have identified a number of potential initiatives for your IT Department.

Here in Milestone Three you will be identifying 4-6 of those to be undertaken as major initiatives within your IT Department.

Keep in Mind: Your goal is to clearly state your initiative, justify why it is important in the context of your IT department's Vision and Mission from Milestone One. Focus on what the initiative is not how it can be done. That comes later in the Action Plan.

Before you Start!

📄 Make sure to incorporate feedback from Milestones One, Two, and Three. Here is where your hard work all term pays off! You have been working on your Final Project since Module Two. Bring it all together now! Good luck!

ITSP
Final
Project!
Module 9


 Southern New Hampshire University
Final Project Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Your IT strategic plan must follow these guidelines: 10–12 pages not including cover page and references, double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and APA citations. Papers should be clearly and professionally written and organized, with all necessary illustrations, examples, and sources integrated logically.

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (90%)	Needs Improvement (70%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
Organization: Structure and Organization	Meets “Proficient” criteria and description evidences keen insight into organizational and management-level considerations and importance	Accurately describes the structure and organization of the selected company	Describes the structure and organization of the company, but with gaps in accuracy or detail	Does not describe the structure and organization of the company	5.4
Organization: Customer Profile	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences keen insight of the key aspects of organizational profiles and competitive environments	Critically analyzes the customer profile of the organization to determine competitive issues or threats that could be related to IT	Analyzes the customer profile of the organization to determine competitive issues or threats that could be related to IT, but with gaps in logic, detail, or accuracy	Does not analyze the customer profile of the organization to determine competitive issues or threats that could be related to IT	5.4
Organization: IT Values	Meets “Proficient” criteria and draws insightful conclusions or inferences about the values of the company from the documentation or actions cited	Analyzes in detail the values of the organization related to IT, based on available information and inferences from company actions	Analyzes the values of the organization related to IT, but not based on available information and inferences from company actions or lacks detail	Does not analyze the values of the organization related to IT	5.4
Organization: Internal Standards	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences keen insight into the relevance of internal policy to IT practices	Describes in detail the existing policies and standards within the organization to establish a baseline for appropriate IT practice	Describes the existing policies and standards within the organization to establish a baseline for appropriate IT practice, but lacks detail	Does not describe the existing policies and standards within the organization to establish a baseline for appropriate IT practice	5.4
IT Vision and Mission: IT Vision	Meets “Proficient” criteria and management or organization-level insight into IT’s role in organizational strength	Articulates a clear and reasonable ideal vision for the role and responsibilities of the IT department within the organization	Articulates a vision for the role and responsibilities of the IT department within the organization, but with gaps in clarity or reasonable representation of what would be ideal	Does not articulate a vision for the role and responsibilities of the IT department	5.4

Southern New Hampshire University

IT Visions and Missions: IT Mission	Meets “Proficient” criteria and IT vision statement is memorable, concise, or fully illustrative of the information technology environment or value within the company	Crafts a mission statement that clearly represents the IT vision and the values of the organization and speaks to the impact of IT on business opportunity and competitive advantage	Crafts a mission statement, but does not clearly represent the IT vision or the values of the organization or does not speak to the impact of IT on business opportunity and competitive advantage	Does not craft a mission statement for the IT department or subgroup	5.4
IT Department SWOT Analysis: Strengths	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences an organizational perspective or high-level understanding regarding strengths in IT usage	Accurately analyzes the organization to determine the strengths regarding use of technology	Analyzes the organization to determine the strengths regarding use of technology, but with gaps in accuracy or detail	Does not analyze the organization to determine the strengths regarding use of technology	5.4
IT Department SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences an organizational perspective or high-level understanding regarding weaknesses in IT or use of technology and the impacts to organizations	Accurately analyzes the organization to determine the organizational weaknesses that are related to information technology	Analyzes the organization to determine the organizational weaknesses that are related to information technology, with gaps in accuracy, detail, or relevance	Does not analyze the organization to determine the organizational weaknesses that are related to information technology	5.4
IT Department SWOT Analysis: Opportunities	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences an organizational perspective or high-level understanding regarding opportunities in IT or use of technology and the greater impacts to organizations	Analyzes the organization and use of information technology to accurately determine opportunities related to IT that could add to the competitive advantage of the organization or present business opportunity	Determines opportunities related to IT that could add to the competitive advantage of the organization or present business opportunity, based on analysis of the organization and use of technology, but with gaps in accuracy, detail, or relevance	Does not determine opportunities related to IT that could add to the competitive advantage or present business opportunity based on analysis	5.4
IT Department SWOT Analysis: Threats	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences keen insight into management-level identification of threats to organizational success related to IT and technology use	Critically analyzes the organization and use of information technology to determine pertinent threats to the organization	Analyzes the organization and use of information technology to determine threats to the organization, but analysis is lacking detail or identified threats are not pertinent	Does not analyze the organization and use of information technology to determine threats to the organization	5.4
IT Department SWOT Analysis: IT Department SWOT Summary	Meets “Proficient” criteria and evidences management-level perspective and logical evolution from SWOT analysis to conclusions reached	Concisely summarizes the conclusions reached and issues identified related to information technology within the context of the organization and its sustainability and health	Summarizes the conclusions reached and issues identified related to information technology, but not concisely or not within the context of the organization and its sustainability and health	Does not summarize the conclusions reached and issues identified related to information technology	5.4

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Strategic Initiatives: IT Department SWOT	Meets "Proficient" criteria and evidences sophisticated skills in creating outcomes that align to key and pertinent conclusions of SWOT analysis without focus on superfluous or unnecessary information	Crafted outcomes clearly and logically align and address the SWOT analysis conclusions	Crafted outcomes do not clearly or do not logically align to and address the SWOT analysis conclusions	Does not craft outcomes in consideration of the SWOT analysis conclusions	5.4
Strategic Initiatives: Vision, Mission, Values	Meets "Proficient" criteria and outcomes exemplify the identified mission, vision, and values of the IT group and organization in a balanced or nuanced manner	Crafted outcomes clearly and directly align to the mission, vision, and values of the organization and IT group	Crafted outcomes align to the mission, vision, and values of the organization and IT group, but alignment is not always clear or direct	Does not craft outcomes in consideration of the mission, vision, and values of the organization and IT group	5.4
Strategic Initiatives: Ethics and Law	Meets "Proficient" criteria and outcomes embody the ethical and legal guidelines relevant for the outcomes, IT group, and organizational industry without unnecessary restriction to strategic action on the outcomes	Crafted outcomes model best practices in IT governance through adherence to established standards and ethical codes of the organization	Crafted outcomes do not always adhere to established standards and ethical codes of the organization to model best practices	Does not craft outcomes in consideration of best practices in IT governance	5.4
Action Plan: Plan	Meets "Proficient" criteria and articulation exemplifies the integration of best management practices through professional delivery and attention to key considerations for the organization	Accurately and comprehensively integrates aspects of IT, strategy, and management principles to articulate the action plan	Integrates aspects of IT, strategy, and management principles to articulate the action plan, but with missing detail or gaps in accuracy	Does not integrate aspects of IT, strategy, and management principles to articulate the action plan	5.4
Action Plan: Regulations and Standards	Meets "Proficient" criteria and qualifies defense with real-world examples of applicability, keen analysis of key pertinent standards for each action, or sophisticated insight into the intent of regulations for information management	Defends the adherence of the action plan to regulations and external information management standards through analysis of standards and supportive sources	Defends the adherence of the action plan to regulations and external information management standards, but with gaps in analysis or supportive sources	Does not defend the adherence of the action plan to regulations and external information management standards	5.4

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Action Plan: Value Assessment	Meets "Proficient" criteria and establishes considerations beyond the immediate fiscal impact to highlight the opportunities, organizational value, and potential business values enabled by each plan	Logically assesses the value of each action item within the context of the business processes, quality management, or organization impact	Assesses the value of each action item within the context of the business processes, quality management, or organization impact, but with gaps in detail or logic	Does not assess the value of each action item within the context of the business processes, quality management, or organization impact	5.4
Action Plans: Fiscal Management	Meets "Proficient" criteria and evidences management-level insight into importance and weight of fiscal considerations for organizations	Discusses the high-level impact of each action item on the department and organization in terms of finances and budgetary considerations	Discusses the high-level impact of each action item on the department and organization in terms of finances and budgetary considerations, but with unnecessary detail or specificity, or lacks necessary detail for comprehensive explanation	Does not discuss the high-level impact of each action item on the department and organization in terms of finances and budgetary considerations	5.4
Articulation of Response	Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format	Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization	Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas	Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas	2.8
Total					100%