

CO-OP CONSULTANT ACTIVITY



Grade level & Curriculum Connections:

- Suitable for Grades 9-12
- Entrepreneurship: The Venture, (BDI3C) Grade 11, College Preparation
- Entrepreneurship: The Enterprising Person, (BDP3O) Grade 11, Open
- Entrepreneurship: Venture Planning in an Electronic Age, (BDV4C) Grade 12, College Preparation
- Marketing: Goods, Services, Events, (BMI3C) Grade 11, College Preparation
- Marketing: Retail and Service, (BMX3E) Grade 11, Workplace Preparation
- Business Leadership: Becoming a Manager, (BOG4E) Grade 12, Workplace Preparation
- Launching and Leading a Business, Grade 10, Open (BEP2O)
- Building the Entrepreneurial Mindset, Grade 9, Open (BEM1O)

Materials

C1: [Consultant Case Study #1](#) (Shareable Google Document)

C2: [Consultant Case Study #2](#) (Shareable Google Document)

C3: [Consultant Case Study #3](#) (Shareable Google Document)

C4: [Consultant Case Study #4](#) (Shareable Google Document)

A1: [Reflection Worksheet](#) (Shareable Google Document)

Learning Goals & Timing

- Identify common obstacles for small businesses - Students should be able to recognize and explain the challenges that small businesses often face, such as limited resources, administrative demands, and high costs.
- Explore solutions through cooperation - Students should brainstorm and discuss how collaboration among sole proprietors can help address these challenges, such as sharing resources, splitting administrative tasks, and pooling funds for marketing.
- Learn about the concept of scaling - Students should understand what it means for a business to scale and how collaboration can facilitate scaling by providing access to resources and expertise.
- Develop teamwork and communication skills - Students should work together in groups to come up with solutions, practicing collaboration, and communication.
- Apply critical thinking to real-world scenarios - Students should analyze the scenario of sole proprietors collaborating to overcome challenges and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

This activity should take approximately 60 minutes.



Lesson Introduction & Instructions

Introduce the activity and review tasks.

Sample teacher script:

- During this lesson, you will work in small groups. You will act as business consultants, and each group will be given information about a different company that's in dire need of a new business plan in order to help them survive.
- You will 10 minutes to review your "business case study". You will need to identify and record key information and brainstorm a few ideas that could help the business overcome their challenges.
- We will then have each group share the key information and results of their brainstorming session with the class.
- Lastly, you will use the information provided by all the groups to re-assess your ideas and propose additional solutions.
- By the end of this activity, you should be able to determine whether collaboration and cooperation among entrepreneurs can lead to innovative solutions for overcoming common challenges faced by small businesses.

01

Part 1

Divide class into four equal groups. Give each group one of the four different consultant cases to review. (C1-C4). They will have 10 minutes to record key information and brainstorm possible solutions.

Part 2 (a): Teacher's Guide

While students are working in groups, draw the table below on a white board so that the whole class can view it. You can fill in the top column with the business names, but **leave the rest of the columns blank**. This is where either you or the students will record their key facts and ideas.

Teachers Reference Guide to Key Facts for each Consultant Case Study: These are the facts you are looking for students to provide.

Yoga Studio	Art Classes	New Parents Centre	Tutoring Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon., Wed., Fri., 7:30 pm to 10 pm • Sat., 9 am to 11 am • Very busy studio at these times • Instructors too busy to do all administration work • Need someone to fill this role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes only on Tues. and Thurs., 8 pm to 10 pm • Classes all day Sunday • Downsizing because one of teachers leaving business • Will have to fire secretary due to lack of business and high cost of studio rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Mon. to Fri., 8 am to 12 pm • Operates out of a member's house – but group getting too large for house • Need to find new space, but can't afford high rent. • Amount of administration work growing due to grants, government funding, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon. to Fri., 3 pm to 6:30 pm • "Demand growing, but can only tutor one student at a time, as tutor travels to their homes" • In need of an inexpensive space where she could tutor a few students at once

02

Part 2 (b)

Have each group share the results for their Consultant Case with the class. Record each groups *key facts about their business* along with any solution ideas briefly on the chart, OR you can have each group come up to the board and fill in the column for their business, then review results as a class. (20 minutes)

03

Part 3

Challenge students to look now at all *four businesses as a whole* and consider whether there might be some additional or alternative solutions that could solve the problems of more than one business. Class discussion (10 minutes).

Teacher prompts:

- If you stop focusing only on your own business and look at the challenges facing all four business; are there commonalities between the four situations and the proposed solutions? What are some of the common challenges or issues?
- Can you identify opportunities for collaboration that could help all four businesses solve some or all of their challenges?

Additional prompts:

- Look at the each businesses schedule of days/hours of operations. (Could all four businesses could share the same space and split the rent four ways.)
- Are there opportunities to share resources or staff? (Could they share the cost of having one full-time administrator, so no one needs to be fired.)
- Could they share operating costs? (Utility bills, cost of office supplies, advertising expenses, internet etc.)

04

Part 4

Working in their small groups, ask students to examine the information provided for *all four of the businesses, and* come up with 2-3 strategies or ideas that could potentially help all four businesses collaborate to overcome their challenges. (15 minutes)

05

Part 5

Have students complete the *Reflection Worksheet (A1)* and submit it for assessment. (15 minutes)

Teacher Support

Thank you for choosing the *Co-op Consultant Activity*, we hope you had a positive experience!
 For lesson delivery support email mchristmann@ontario.coop
 To provide feedback, please fill out this 5 minute survey: [Teacher Survey](#)
 For more lesson plans and activities, visit cooperativeminds.ca