

## **The “Make-It” Project**

Few students in Managerial Accounting have managed or made anything. The “Make-It” Project provides this experience and more. Project criteria and phases are introduced early in the course. Phases correspond to content coverage with progress update submissions required. The project culminates with a peer and instructor reviewed presentation of the process and product. These evaluations are summarized to award “Best Project” and provide feedback for presenter reflection. Students consistently rate the project the best experience of the course.

### **-Learning Objectives**

Upon project completion students will be able to

- identify, account for and analyze the costs associated with product development and manufacture using traditional models in an electronic spreadsheet format.
- identify the operational problems associated with product manufacture and offer alternative solutions with appropriate justification.
- effectively communicate their results to peers using PowerPoint in a manner that demonstrates mastery of accounting/manufacturing terminology and calculations, appropriate grammar and professional delivery.
- assess the quality of others’ projects and presentations based on pre-established criteria and provide constructive feedback. This evaluation will demonstrate the ability to articulate the strengths and weakness of the work of others and to prioritize criteria to determine overall value.
- self assess and reflect on feedback from others to propose and justify more effective courses of action for future projects

### **-Core Competencies Addressed**

1. Role of the Management Accountant in developing products and identifying, measuring and accumulating their costs.
2. Use of accounting information to plan (budget) and produce (actual) products.
3. Preparation of variance analysis of planned vs. actual results.
4. Determination of relevant costs for decision making.
5. Communication skills
6. Presentation skills
7. Assessment skills

### **-Detailed Description of the Case/Activity**

The “Make-It” project requires students to:

1. Chose something to make in compliance with established criteria (see sample outline)
2. Create a budget for the project.
3. Purchase the necessary raw materials (tracking hours and costs)
4. Acquire necessary production skills (tracking hours and costs) where applicable
5. Actually produce the project tracking: materials used, inventory, direct labor hours, sub-contract hours, overhead costs
6. Determine total actual costs

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7. Compare budget to actual and analyze variances
8. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation that indicates how the project satisfied the established criteria and answers specific questions (see attached outline)
9. Attend and evaluate all presentations EXCEPT their own (see blank evaluation)
10. Respond to a summary of peer evaluations in a reflective memo.

These activities are spread across the course with project updates submitted at intervals that correlate with course content (see sample outline which is included in the student's course outline as is a blank project evaluation form). Students seek input at various stages of the project: e.g., advice on what to do, where to find materials, how to price labor and sub-contractors, how to value overhead. I usually provide class time once per week for project related questions. All submissions are transmitted electronically and returned electronically. All analysis must be completed using an Excel workbook. PowerPoint presentations are dropped in a Blackboard digital drop box so that all presentations are submitted at the same time. A 10 week completion period has been optimal. It allows depth of relevant course content, but a buffer before final exams. The project is given a significant enough grade weight to encourage engagement. The final project grade is based on the timeliness and quality of submissions, peer impressions of the project and presentation, my impressions of the project, presentation and student's evaluation of others, the average overall score compared to class and recent classes, and the demonstrated growth over the project period (I look for "light bulb" moments and have had the pleasure of many). I provide my feedback on the project evaluation document.

The reflective memo is an important part of the project since it allows students to grapple with sometimes conflicting peer feedback and correlate their own perceptions with those of others. Students understand that I value this work and have made relevant and constructive comments overall. The memo is considered part of their class contribution grade which alleviates some of the efforts to write to please rather than reflect.

I also include a make-it question on the final exam relating the project to the topics covered in that testing period. It provides another evaluative tool to assess the degree of student learning and retention.

The projects could be team oriented. For example, the project might require multiple processes with each team member serving as a processing department. To date I've used the project as an individual only project with class sizes of up to 30. It is consistently cited as the best part of the course.

### **Bio**

Priscilla (Penny) Wightman, MS, CPA is an Associate Professor of Accounting at Hartwick College, Oneonta, NY 13820. She has taught across the traditional accounting curriculum and operates a consulting practice in personal financial planning and government/not-for-profit governance and information systems. She currently chairs the NYS Society of CPA's Public Sector Oversight Committee, and is a member of its Higher Education and Public Schools Committees, and is a member of the NYSSCPA's Foundation for Accounting Education's Scholarship Committee. She chairs the Audit Committee of the Oneonta City School District where she is a member of the Board. She also serves on several local for profit and not-for-profit Boards of Directors.

**Make It Project = 60 points = 10% final grade**  
*Extra points will be awarded for outstanding work.*

One of the challenges of managerial accounting is to track the costs of a given activity. The "Make It " Project will immerse you in the world of small scale manufacturing. The project must meet the criteria below and culminates with a 5-6 minute Power Point presentation on November 20. If you are aware of conflicts on this date please notify me in advance.

- **Project Criteria**

1. The project must be original: you must contribute 5 labor hours to the planning, buying, and creation.
2. Total Material cost must equal or exceed \$10. Materials maybe in the form of a kit, but you must cost out the individual material components for comparison purposes.
3. Total Labor hours must equal or exceed 5.
4. You may use "sub-contract" labor. You must track these hours and assign a "going rate" cost.
5. NO FOOD without permission
6. You must create a profit or balanced budget BEFORE beginning the project. See Text Appendix A & B.
7. A computerized information system must record labor hours, raw material and overhead costs, provide a budget comparison, and document the determination of selling price. Extra credit will be awarded to "paperless" project information systems that include original invoices.

- **Submissions**

You must submit your project idea and original budget via email with Excel attachment by noon, October 18.

- **PowerPoint Presentation**

1. Your presentation must indicate satisfaction of the above criteria and must answer the following questions:
  - What was your skill level commencing this project: information systems; technical manufacturing; buying and marketing.
  - How well did you budget? Explain with a budget vs. actual comparison and variance analysis.
  - Would you mass produce this product? Explain
  - What was/were the best lesson(s) learned from the project? Explain
2. NO Handouts.
3. You must present the actual product for quality examination.
4. You must submit a copy of your presentation (3 slides per page) to me before presenting.

You will be evaluated by your audience based upon:

<b>Conformity to guidelines</b>	<b>Quality of product</b>	<b>Quality of presentation</b>
<b>Demonstration of mastery of managerial accounting concepts/terminology/principles</b>		

You will receive a summary of peer feedback and your overall ranking via email. You must reply to this feedback in an email memo to me due at noon, November 27.

**Past projects**

~ fraternity sign ~ needle point ~ afghan ~ jewelry ~ keepsake albums ~ bookcase ~ pillows ~  
~clock ~ beer (we need to talk about this one) ~ key rack ~ tool pouch ~ quilt rack ~ fleece jacket ~

**Make it Project:  
Individual Presentations**

Evaluator:

**Name JD**

These are a summary of JD's ranking of others. Demonstrates JD's ability to evaluate work based on criteria.

Criteria

Presenter

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Project Quality	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	5
Technical	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
Delivery	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5
Visuals	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
Overall	4	4	4		4	4	4	4
Rank points best = 2					1		2	

<b>Producer: JD</b>	
<b>MIP grade out of 60</b>	<b>57</b>

<i>Presentation Feedback</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>Avg</i>
<b>Project Quality</b>	4.06	4.19
<b>Technical Merit</b>	4.26	4.09
<b>Delivery</b>	4.78	4.05
<b>Visuals</b>	4.43	4.09
<b>Overall Project</b>	4.28	4.13

This is JD's grade for the Project.

This compares JD's averages to the class

<i>Peer Comments</i>	<i>My comments</i>
good poise	
skipped slides distracting	
clear delivery	
confident	
great pictures	
knew info	
good details	
	I agree with the peer comments Better with more info on your time Clever presentation....captured the audience Conclusion slide...I think you meant time consuming rather than not timely Overall very effective presentation...good project

This summarizes the feedback from the instructor and peers.

Make It Project Blank Presentation Evaluation					
<b>Evaluator:</b>					
<b>Instructions:</b>	You must rate each presenter EXCEPT yourself. Please place one rating in each yellow/gray box. Please use whole numbers 1 - 5. Place comments in the space provided. Feel free to expand column width and row height as needed. Specific comments: louder; confident; spelling errors; great colors provide better feedback than good/nice Finally, after all presentations have been made please rank the 2 best projects: 1 = best. Each presenter/evaluator will receive a summary evaluation for the project (see worksheet two).				
<b>Producer Presenter:</b>	<b>PZW</b>				
<b>Project:</b>	<b>Example</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>					
<b>1 = low; 5 = high</b>					
<b>Project Quality</b>	<b>3</b>				
	poor craftsmanship				
<b>Technical Merit:</b>	<b>4</b>				
Language	good use of acct terms				
Calculations	correct				
Satisfied Requirements	missing 2				
<b>Delivery:</b>	<b>5</b>				
Poise	good eye contact				
Confidence	no ums				
Volume	easy to hear				
<b>Visuals:</b>	<b>4</b>				
Effective	not enough				
Correct	spelling error slide 2				
Clear	too many words				
<b>Overall Project</b>	<b>4</b>				
<b>Rank top 2</b>					