

Small Scale Business Management (SSBM)

The Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning (BOCODOL) was Established by an Act of Parliament in December 1998. Its creation marked a milestone in educational development in Botswana, and a significant step towards the realisation of Vision 2016, which emphasises the elimination of poverty through the provision of knowledge and skills.

Summary of Programme Content

Module 1: Starting and keeping the business going

This topic helps the student answer the question: How do I start or keep the business going? It will, among other things, define what a small scale business is and examine qualities of a successful business person, how to survive in a small business, as well as the pitfalls to avoid when running a business. The topic also draws learner's attention to the different types of business one can opt for.

- Topic 1: What does it mean to be a business man or woman?
- Topic 2: How feasible is your business idea?

Module 2: Making the business idea real

In this module, sources of ideas for a business, and ways of finding whether such ideas are feasible, are explored. Students will be able to come up with practical ways of developing own business ideas, and undertake feasibility studies on the viability of one or two ideas they may have about a business type.

- Topic 1: Developing the business idea
- Topic 2: How feasible is your business idea?

Module 3: Financing your business

This topic answers one of the most important questions any serious business person asks, namely, Where do I get funds to finance my business? It then offers valuable information about possible sources of finance in Botswana. The student will be exposed to essential steps required in determining the actual amount, expenses normally faced in a business, procedures followed when applying for loans, and drawing up a business plan.

- Topic 1: How much money do I need to start the business?
- Topic 2: What types of finance are available?

Module 4: Marketing the small business

This topic raises those basic ideas the business person requires in order to promote the new or the already established business. It discusses how best to sell products or services by appealing to customer instincts. Issues such as the marketing mix and devising the market plan most suitable for a given business will be explored.

- Topic 1: The marketing plan
- Topic 2: Market research

Module 5: Pricing the product / service

This topic discusses factors which influence pricing as a marketing and promotion strategy. The business person normally asks: How do I price this service or these goods so that customers are happy? Part of the answer lies in establishing the demand for a given product and other businesses selling the same product in the community. The topic will, therefore, examine all these issues.

- Topic 1: Product planning
- Topic 2: Pricing policy

Module 6: Keeping business records

Without exception, any type of business requires a systematic way of keeping information about how much money comes in, and how much goes out of the business. This is the only way to help the entrepreneur determine whether a profit or loss is being made. This topic will deal with that very important management matter thereby assisting the business person in justifying the importance of record-keeping and preparing business records. The learner will learn how to structure simple records.

- Topic 1: Basic financial records
- Topic 2: Stock control

Module 7: Selling and the customer

One of the indicators of a successful business is the way customers are treated. Customer care is a skill that can be consciously developed. This topic, therefore discusses some of the skills which include the ability to assess customer attitudes, and what motivates them to buy. Then there is the question of the different types of customer. Each type requires specific ways of dealing with. Thus, learners are exposed to a broad range of customers. That way they become successful salespersons.

- Topic 1: Different types of customers
- Topic 2: Persuading the customer

Module 8: Finding and motivating staff

In this topic a very important issue in business management is dealt with. This is the question about workers. A business has to employ workers if it has to realise its goals. It is important for the business manager to develop skills on how to identify the right staff, how to motivate such workers, resolving conflicts within the business, and how to train workers for better performance. The topic discusses these ideas in order to empower the entrepreneur to handle labour issues more effectively.

- Topic 1: planning staff requirements
- Topic 2: Caring for your staff

Module 9: Business communication

A business, whether a service or trading venture, is essentially sustained by the way the manager communicates. Some of the situations in which communication has to be handled effectively by the entrepreneur are: interacting with customers, the bank, the workers, the manufacturer, the wholesalers, family members, etc. There is a variety of ways one can use to communicate to good effect. It is about such ways that this topic is concerned. After exposure to types of communication and channels of communication, the business person will never be the same again. He / she will be a more effective manager.

- Topic 1: The nature of communication
- Topic 2: The means of communication in business

Module 10: Business and the Law

Running a business involves employing people to assist; dealing with suppliers of goods or services to be sold; and interacting with the general public. Procedures requiring basic knowledge of the law ought to be followed, but also, problems often arise as you interact with the public. Such problems require that the business manager has a sound knowledge of basic business law. The two topics in this module are intended to provide this important background.

- Topic 1: The law of employment
- Topic 2: Marketing and the law