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SUBMIT TOUCHSTONE

 Currently, it takes about 3-7 business days for a Touchstone to be graded.

Touchstones are projects that illustrate your comprehension of the course material, help you to refine skills, and demonstrate application of knowledge. You can work on a Touchstone anytime, but you can't submit it for grading until you have completed the unit's Milestone(s). After you've submitted a Touchstone, it will be graded and counted towards your final course score.

Touchstone 4: Organization Analysis & Strategic Recommendations

SCENARIO: Select an organization you are familiar with or have worked for (currently or in the past). You are tasked with analyzing the organization both internally and externally using some of the tools and frameworks you have learned in this course. You are also tasked with recommending changes to the organization's strategy and structure, in addition to considering associated ethical implications. This assignment requires you to apply SWOT analysis, PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces of Industry Analysis, Porter's Generic Strategies, and organization design concepts related to strategy-structure fit. You will prepare a slide deck containing your analysis and recommendations that could be presented to the organization's Board.

ASSIGNMENT: Your presentation will be 11-14 slides long, not including the title and references slides. It must include the following slides:

- Title
- Executive Summary
- Organization Background
- Internal Strengths
- Internal Weaknesses
- External Opportunities
- External Threats
- Macro Environment Analysis: PESTEL
- Micro Industry Analysis: Porter's Five Forces

- Generic Strategy Recommendations
- Organization Design Recommendations
- Ethical Considerations
- References

If you've never used a presentation tool like PowerPoint or Google Slides before, don't worry! The assignment template below will help you create slides for a basic slide presentation. Then you'll be able to practice using the presentation technology as you put the finishing touches on your presentation.

 [Touchstone 4 Template](#)

 [Touchstone 4 Sample](#)

Before you get started, let's look at how you'll be building the presentation, step by step.

A. Directions

Step 1: Choose an Organization

Select an organization that you are familiar with.

The most successful Learners select an organization that is a public company with readily available information to meet the analysis requirements of the rubric. These successful learners do not rely solely on their personal knowledge but instead use evidence from references to support points in the touchstone.

Learners that struggle with this touchstone are those who select an organization that is small, hyper-local, non-profit, or governmental; this includes municipalities or the company they work for. We suggest you avoid organizations in these categories.

Organizations that should not be used include:

- Amazon
- Amnesty International
- US Bank
- Walmart
- Tesla

Step 2: Create Presentation Slides

Use a presentation tool like PowerPoint or Google Slides to outline and organize your presentation. Your presentation must include the following:

Slide	Component
Title Slide	Your title slide will be the first slide and should include your name, the date, and the name of the organization you selected.
Executive Summary	An executive summary should include the main points of your presentation in 1-2 slides (no more than 2). It should also include your recommendations in 1-3 bullet points. As a general rule, it is usually best (and easiest) to write the executive summary last—after the rest of your presentation is completed.
Organization Background	The organization background should be brief—no more than 1-2 slides. It should include a brief history of the organization, in addition to the major products or services offered and the markets that are served. Other possible categories include the founding date, mission statement, annual profits, sales regions, etc.
Internal Strengths	Using what you have learned about SWOT analysis, identify 4-6 strengths internally within the organization. You may have to make some inferences based on what you know or perceive about the organization.
Internal Weaknesses	Using what you have learned about SWOT analysis, identify 4-6 weaknesses internally within the organization. You may have to make some inferences based on what you know or perceive about the organization.
External Opportunities	Using what you have learned about SWOT analysis, list 4-6 opportunities facing the organization externally. Opportunities and threats are generally easier to identify than internal strengths and weaknesses, and are typically shared across the same industry.
External Threats	Using what you have learned about SWOT analysis, list 4-6 threats facing the organization externally. Opportunities and threats are generally easier to identify than internal strengths and weaknesses, and are typically shared across the same industry.
Macro Environment Analysis: PESTEL	Applying the PESTEL framework to the organization, identify 1-3 factors for each of the following: Political Factors, Economic Factors, Sociocultural Factors, Technological Factors, Environmental Factors, Legal Factors.
Micro Industry Analysis: Porter's Five	Analyze the industry the organization competes in by applying what you have learned about Porter's Five Forces of industry analysis. You should list 2-3

Forces	observations for each of the following factors: Threat of New Entrants, Threat of Substitutes, Supplier Power, Buyer Power, and Industry Rivalry.
Generic Strategy Recommendations	Given what you have learned from your internal and external analysis of the organization, are they pursuing the right strategy? If so, why? If not, what might you recommend? Is the recommended (or current) strategy the right “fit” for the environment in which the organization competes? <u>Be sure to select one of Porter’s three generic strategies and provide your rationale: Cost Leadership, Differentiation, or Focus.</u>
Organization Design Recommendations	Is the organization optimally designed (structured) for either your recommended or their current strategy? For example, if they are pursuing a Cost Leadership strategy, do they have a low-cost operating model? The objective here is to determine and demonstrate the degree of “fit” between strategy and structure.
Ethical Considerations	What are some of the ethical considerations for your recommended (or current) strategy? Is the organization positioned for long-term sustainability? Are there issues which may ultimately affect the organization’s ability to attract and retain talented employees or maintain the credibility of their brand? Are there potential ethical dilemmas in executing any recommended changes? The need to potentially layoff thousands of workers or stop paying for benefits such as healthcare to lower operating expenses, for example?
References	This touchstone requires you to use at least four sources, including the course tutorials. Ideas for outside sources include (but are not limited to) organization websites, annual reports, or news articles from reputable magazines or newspapers. Following APA formatting, your sources should appear in alphabetical order.

Step 3: Add Speaker Notes

For this assignment, you are not actually giving a presentation, but rather just preparing a slide deck that summarizes your findings and recommendations.

An important step in the preparation of a speech is writing speaker notes. Speaker notes are notes added to a slide presentation as a reference for the presenter and can be found below each slide. For this touchstone, add your speaker notes to explain your analysis using information from your sources. If you were giving an oral presentation, these notes wouldn't be visible to your audience when you're in Presenter View. But you would be able to see them, and they would guide you through your presentation.

The screenshot shows a presentation software interface with a slide titled "Organizational Background" and its corresponding speaker notes. The slide content is as follows:

- History of the Organization
- Major Products and Services Offered
- Markets Being Served

The speaker notes section contains the following text:

History of the Organization
 U.S. Bank was founded in 1863 and remains "committed to serving its millions of retail, business, wealth management, payment, commercial, corporate, and investment customers across the country and around the world as a trusted and responsible financial partner (U.S. Bankcorp Annual Report, 2020, p. 20).
 According to the most recent 10-K report, "U.S. Bancorp is a multi-state financial services holding company headquartered in Minneapolis." It has significant deposits of roughly \$443 billion. "It is one of the largest providers of corporate and purchasing card services and corporate trust services in the United States" (10-K, 2020, pp. 2-3).

Major Products and Services Offered
 The company currently offers the following products and services: "Corporate and Commercial Banking, Consumer and Business Banking, Wealth Management and Investment Services, Payment Services, and Treasury and Corporate Support" (10-K, 2020, p. 3).

Markets Being Served
 U.S. Bank is a Minneapolis-based entity with branches in roughly 25 states. It occupies a segment in the U.S. banking market, operating in the West and Midwestern United States.

Your speaker notes will be used to evaluate your project, so make sure you write in complete sentences and pay attention to spelling and grammar. Also, make sure you're citing the information from your sources using in-text citations in APA style. These citations should include the author's last name and the year of publication for the source, for example, (Mitchell, 2014).

Most presentation software will automatically display a field for speaker notes. If using Keynote, you can access the speaker notes by clicking on View, then Show Presenter Notes.

Step 4: Submit Presentation

Once you have completed your slides and corresponding speaker notes, it is time to submit your presentation. If you are using PowerPoint, you simply need to save your presentation and upload this file to Sophia. If you are using another slide presentation technology, download the slide deck as a Microsoft PowerPoint (.pptx) and upload this version to Sophia.

B. Rubric

	Advanced (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Acceptable (75%)	Needs Improvement (50%)
<p>Depth and Comprehensiveness of Organization Background (10 points)</p> <p>A researched discussion of the organization's history and background is provided.</p>	Background slide(s) demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the organization's history, major products or services, and markets, and reference relevant external sources.	Background slide(s) demonstrate ample knowledge of the organization's history, major products or services, and markets, and reference relevant external sources.	Background slide(s) demonstrate basic knowledge of the organization's history, major products or services, and markets, and reference relevant external sources.	Background slide(s) demonstrate some knowledge of the organization's history, major products or services, and markets, but may be unclear, confusing, or make no reference to external sources.
<p>Application of SWOT Framework (15 points)</p> <p>A SWOT analysis of the organization is conducted.</p>	At least 4 strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are each identified. SWOT analysis is specific and evidence-based (makes reference to sources).	At least 3 of each factor are identified at the advanced level. Or, at least 4 of each are identified but analysis is less specific and may not be evidence-based.	At least 3 of each factor are identified, but analysis is vague and may not be evidence-based.	At least 2 of each factor are identified, but analysis is vague and may not be evidence-based.
<p>Application of PESTEL Framework (15 points)</p> <p>A macro environmental analysis of the organization is conducted.</p>	At least 2 macro environmental factors for each PESTEL category are identified. Analysis demonstrates a thorough understanding of the PESTEL framework and the macro environment of the organization.	At least 1 macro environmental factor for each PESTEL category is identified. Analysis demonstrates a moderate understanding of the PESTEL framework and the macro environment of the organization.	Macro environmental factors for some, but not all, PESTEL categories are identified. Analysis demonstrates a limited understanding of the PESTEL framework and the macro environment of the organization.	Macro environmental factors for some, but not all, PESTEL categories are identified. Analysis demonstrates confusion about the PESTEL framework and the macro environment of the organization.
<p>Application of Porter's Five Forces Framework (15 points)</p> <p>A micro environmental analysis of the organization is conducted.</p>	At least 2-3 observations for each of Porter's Five Forces are made. Observations demonstrate a thorough understanding of Porter's Five Forces and the micro environment of the organization.	At least 2-3 observations for each of Porter's Five Forces are made. Observations demonstrate a moderate understanding of Porter's Five Forces and the micro environment of the organization.	At least 1 observation for each of Porter's Five Forces is made. Observations demonstrate a limited understanding of Porter's Five Forces and the micro environment of the organization.	Micro environmental observations for some, but not all, of Porter's Five Forces are made. Observations demonstrate confusion about Porter's Five Forces and the micro environment of the organization.
<p>Strategy Recommendations (15 points)</p> <p>Strategy recommendations are made and supported with evidence.</p>	Organization's current strategy is identified and defended, or one of Porter's three generic strategies is recommended with rationale. Strategy recommendations are highly specific and supported by SWOT and environmental analyses.	Organization's current strategy is identified and defended, or one of Porter's three generic strategies is recommended with rationale. Strategy recommendations are moderately specific and supported by SWOT and environmental analyses.	Organization's current strategy is identified and defended, or one of Porter's three generic strategies is recommended. Strategy recommendations are somewhat vague or unsupported by SWOT and environmental analyses.	Organization's current strategy is identified and defended, or one of Porter's three generic strategies is recommended. Strategy recommendations may be very unclear or unsupported by SWOT and environmental analyses.

	Advanced (100%)	Proficient (85%)	Acceptable (75%)	Needs Improvement (50%)
<p>Organization Design Recommendations (12 points)</p> <p>Organization design recommendations are made and supported with evidence.</p>	Analysis of “fit” between the current organizational structure and strategy is comprehensive, and any recommendations for or against design changes are explained with evidence.	Analysis of “fit” between the current organizational structure and strategy is present but abbreviated. Recommendations for or against design changes are explained with evidence.	Analysis of “fit” between the current organizational structure and strategy is present but abbreviated. Recommendations for or against design changes may be unclear or unexplained.	Analysis of “fit” between the current organizational structure and strategy may be missing. Recommendations for or against design changes may be unclear or unexplained.
<p>Ethical Considerations (10 points)</p> <p>Ethical considerations for strategy recommendations are analyzed.</p>	Analysis of ethical considerations for current or recommended organizational strategy is relevant and insightful. Awareness of issues related to business ethics is strong.	Analysis of ethical considerations for current or recommended organizational strategy is present but less well-developed. Awareness of issues related to business ethics is moderate.	Analysis of ethical considerations for current or recommended organizational strategy is present but limited. Awareness of issues related to business ethics is somewhat weak.	Analysis of ethical considerations for current or recommended organizational strategy is present but unclear or irrelevant to strategy. Awareness of issues related to business ethics is very weak.
<p>Formatting and Mechanics (8 points)</p> <p>Conventions for standard written English are followed and sources are included.</p>	Presentation is polished and professional, and contains one or no grammar, spelling, or formatting errors. At least four sources are provided in the reference slide.	Presentation is mostly professional, but may contain a few grammar, spelling, or formatting errors. Three sources are provided in the reference slide.	Frequent grammar, spelling, or formatting errors detract from the overall professionalism of the presentation. Two sources are provided in the reference slide.	Presentation is unprofessional and/or contains a large number of grammar, spelling, or formatting errors. One source is provided in the reference slide.

C. Requirements

The following requirements must be met for your submission:

- All content must be appropriate for an academic context.
- Composition must be original and written for this assignment.
- Reference slide must include at least four sources.
- Presentation must include speaker notes for every slide.
- Plagiarism of any kind is strictly prohibited.
- Submission must include your name and the date.
- File format must be .pptx.

D. Additional Resources

The following resources will be helpful to you as you work on this assignment:

1. Purdue Online Writing Lab's APA Formatting and Style Guide

a. *This site includes a comprehensive overview of APA style, as well as individual pages with guidelines for specific citation types.*

2. Frequently Asked Questions About APA Style

a. *This page on the official APA website addresses common questions related to APA formatting. The "References," "Punctuation," and "Grammar and Writing Style" sections will be the most useful to your work in this course.*

3. APA Style: Quick Answers—References

a. *This page on the official APA Style website provides numerous examples of reference list formatting for various source types.*



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