YOUR EXTENDED ESSAY GUIDE

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Starting, surviving, and succeeding in your EE journey

DR DEAN WEST

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Published by Elemi International Schools Publisher Ltd

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The author and publisher would like to acknowledge the very valuable input of:

Kai Yoo, who reviewed and commented on the manuscript. Kai is an experienced Economics and Business Management educator at Dwight School London, an IB World School, where he also serves as Head of Careers. He specializes in IB Business Management and Economics pedagogy, Extended Essay supervision, and curriculum design.

The IB DP Extended Essay Coordinators and educators around the world whose feedback and comments helped shape this new resource, including:

Amal Al Hammadi, Subject Area Leader, Individuals and Societies Department, IB DP Business Management Teacher, World Academy of Tirana, Albania

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First published 2027

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A catalogue record of this title is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-7394670-9-8

Page layout/design by EMC Design Ltd

Cover design by Elena Spiers

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How to use this book

This book is designed to guide you through the Business Management EE step by step. You can read it from beginning to end as you move through the process or return to individual steps when you need help with a particular stage, such as choosing a topic, refining your research question, finding sources, structuring your essay, or preparing for reflection.

Here is an overview of the features of this book:

Argument A clear line of reasoning where you present a claim and support it with evidence and explanation.

You will find important EE and Business Management terms highlighted in **magenta**. These terms are explained in the **glossary** at the end of the book.

Keep a note of why a business issue interests you and what evidence might allow you to investigate it. This will help when you refine your research question.

Tip boxes These boxes give you advice to help you through your EE journey. They are designed to make the process feel more manageable.

Get it right!

⚠ Your Business Management EE must not duplicate work submitted for your Internal Assessment. If there may be an overlap, discuss it with your teacher, EE supervisor, or IB Coordinator before proceeding.

Get it right! These boxes offer warnings and reminders of important things to consider while you work on your EE.

Assessment skill

Applying a Business Management tool is not enough on its own. Explain what it shows and how it helps answer your research question. This supports **Criterion C: Analysis and line of argument**.

Assessment skill These boxes help you to understand which EE criterion the examples or explanations may support.

Use AI for support

AI can be a useful assistant who can explain difficult concepts in simple words. Remember to check the output against other sources and discuss your findings with your supervisor.

Use AI for support These boxes explain how AI can support your thinking and organization, without replacing your own research, analysis, or writing.

Which methods will best support my research, help me look for answers, confirm, or challenge my initial thesis?

Examples, activities and planning frames These practical features help you move from understanding the EE in theory to doing the work in practice.

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STEP 7

Crafting your essay – Show how your understanding has grown

This chapter will help you to:

- develop analytical paragraphs using claims, **evidence**, Business Management understanding, and **evaluation**
- maintain a clear Business Management lens throughout your essay
- write an **introduction** that frames your **research question (RQ)** and a **conclusion** that answers it
- show how your understanding has developed through research and **analysis**
- turn your complete essay plan into a well-structured EE
- organize your arguments into a logical and connected sequence.

By the end of **Step 6**, you should have moved from raw research to a complete working essay plan. That plan should identify:

- the main purpose or claim of each section
- the academic, company and independent evidence you intend to use
- the Business Management concepts, theories or tools that may help interpret the evidence
- the **limitations** and **alternative explanations** you need to consider
- how each section contributes to answering the RQ.

Step 7 will show you how to turn that plan into a connected academic **argument**. **Academic writing** is clear, structured, evidence-based writing in which claims are developed through **analysis** rather than unsupported opinion.

Writing the essay is not simply a matter of expanding each plan point into a longer paragraph. As you write, you need to:

- ✓ select the most relevant evidence, including evidence that supports, qualifies, or challenges your emerging answer to the RQ
- ✓ explain what the evidence shows
- ✓ connect evidence from different sources
- ✓ apply Business Management understanding accurately
- ✓ test your **interpretation** against **limitations** and alternative explanations
- ✓ show how each paragraph advances the answer to the RQ.

AI Use AI for support

At this stage, the argument, structure, and interpretation must remain your own.

AI may help you:

- ✓ identify unclear wording in a sentence you have written
- ✓ suggest alternative transitions between two existing ideas
- ✓ check whether a paragraph appears to repeat an earlier point
- ✓ help you create a checklist for reviewing clarity and academic tone
- ✓ explain an unfamiliar writing term.

Do not ask AI to:

- ✗ generate the argument or line of reasoning
- ✗ write complete analytical paragraphs for submission
- ✗ decide what the evidence proves
- ✗ invent sources, quotations, data, or references
- ✗ rewrite the essay in a way that removes your own voice and thinking.

A useful rule is that AI may respond to reasoning you have already done, but it should not carry out the reasoning for you. **Step 9** provides fuller guidance on using AI responsibly. Your supervisor and school remain the appropriate sources of guidance about what is permitted.

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Recognizable features of an EE Introduction

The introduction is the foundation for everything that follows. It is also the first section the reader, and eventually the examiner, will encounter, so it should make the purpose and direction of the investigation clear.

You do not need to make the introduction perfect before beginning the rest of the essay. There are different ways to approach it:

- Some students write a provisional introduction before drafting the main body, and return to refine it once the argument has developed.
- Others write only a brief opening at first and complete the introduction after drafting the main analysis.

Both approaches are valid. Whichever method you choose, the final introduction should accurately reflect the investigation you have actually completed. If you draft a provisional introduction early, it can also help keep the investigation focused by making you clarify the **business issue**, **scope**, and direction before the main argument develops.

Your introduction should normally include:

- ✓ relevant business context and background
- ✓ a clearly defined business issue or problem
- ✓ the exact RQ
- ✓ the organization, market, stakeholder group, and time period, where relevant
- ✓ a clear explanation of the scope
- ✓ a brief indication of the **research strategy** and main evidence base
- ✓ any important definitions or measures needed to understand the RQ
- ✓ the overall direction of the argument.

The introduction should indicate the direction of the argument without suggesting that the conclusion was decided before the research began.

Your introduction should contain enough information to establish the investigation clearly, but it should remain focused. Avoid turning it into:

- ✗ a lengthy company profile
- ✗ a chronological history of the organization
- ✗ a literature review
- ✗ a description of every source used
- ✗ a list of **Business Management tools**
- ✗ a summary of the whole essay.

Get it right!

⚠ The example that follows is fictional and is included only to demonstrate the structure of a Business Management EE introduction.

It should not be copied, treated as factual evidence, or used as a source. In your own essay, factual statements about the organization, market, or business issue should be **supported with appropriate references**.

Vestra Sportswear and all organizations, evidence, figures, and source descriptions used in this example are **fictional** and have been created for teaching purposes. **They must not be used as evidence in an EE.**

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Model introduction

RQ: To what extent did the use of social media influencers strengthen the brand positioning of Vestra Sportswear among consumers aged 18-25 in the UK between 2022 and 2025?

Context

Between 2022 and 2025, the fictional company Vestra Sportswear increased its use of social media influencers in campaigns aimed at consumers aged 18-25 in the UK. The organization presented these campaigns as a way of increasing relevance, authenticity, and engagement within a competitive sportswear market. However, increased campaign engagement does not necessarily demonstrate that the position of the brand changed in the minds of consumers. Product design, pricing decisions, wider market trends, and competitor activity may also have influenced consumer perceptions. This creates the central business issue examined in the essay: whether influencer marketing made a meaningful contribution to the organization's brand positioning among its intended target market. The investigation is limited to the organization's UK activities, the specified consumer group, and evidence covering the period from 2022 to 2025. It focuses on brand positioning rather than attempting to assess the overall success of the organization's entire marketing strategy. A secondary-research case-study approach is used. Academic research into influencer credibility, authenticity, consumer attitudes, and brand positioning is compared with company campaign material, independent market and brand evidence, and relevant competitor information. Engagement figures are treated as evidence of audience response but not as direct proof that brand positioning is strengthened. A position map is used only where reliable consumer perception evidence supports the positions shown. The aim of the essay is to assess the extent to which influencer marketing strengthened Vestra Sportswear's brand positioning among younger UK consumers. It examines the organization's campaign aims and available evidence of outcomes before considering alternative explanations, including product, pricing, and competitor activity. The emerging argument is that influencer marketing may have contributed to stronger positioning among younger consumers, but the extent of this contribution depends on whether company claims are supported by independent evidence, and whether other marketing decisions provide a more convincing explanation.

The focus of the investigation

Scope of the investigation

Brief indication of the approach

Aim of the essay

Get it right!

⚠ This model is intentionally shorter and less detailed than some completed EE introductions may be.

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Useful sentence stems and key words

The sentence stems below are starting points rather than fixed formulas. Adapt them to suit your investigation and avoid using several stems mechanically within the same paragraph.

Strategy and business performance investigations	
Sentence Stems	This essay examines the extent to which _____ contributed to _____ at _____ between _____ and _____. The central business issue is whether _____ produced a meaningful improvement in _____. The investigation focuses on _____ because this provides a clearer measure of the strategy's outcome than _____. A secondary-research case-study approach will be used to compare _____ with _____. The essay considers whether the reported outcome resulted from _____ or whether _____ provides a stronger alternative explanation.
Key words	strategy • implementation • competitive advantage • growth • profitability • liquidity • efficiency • productivity • capacity • market share • performance • external environment • **causation** • limitations

Marketing, people, and stakeholder investigations	
Sentence Stems	This investigation examines how _____ affected _____ within _____. A central issue is whether _____ provides reliable evidence of _____. The essay compares the organization's claims with independent evidence relating to _____. The investigation is limited to _____ because the effects of the strategy may differ between stakeholder groups, markets, or periods. The developing argument is that _____ contributed to _____, although its effect may have been limited by _____.
Key words	segmentation • targeting • positioning • brand perception • customer attitudes • engagement • employee motivation • retention • organizational culture • leadership • stakeholder interests • conflict • satisfaction • reputation

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Sustainability, ethics, and organizational change investigations	
Sentence Stems	This essay evaluates the extent to which _____ achieved the organization's stated aim of _____. The investigation distinguishes between the organization's reported commitments and evidence of actual outcomes. The analysis considers the effects of the decision on _____ as well as its implications for _____. The research compares company-controlled evidence with **independent sources** relating to _____. The argument considers whether the decision created sustainable long-term change or mainly produced _____.
Key words	sustainability • corporate social responsibility (CSR) • ethics • stakeholder impact • organizational change • resistance • implementation • wellbeing • reputation • accountability • long-term performance • environmental impact • social impact

Your introduction establishes the direction of the essay. The next stage is to organize the main arguments so that each section builds logically on what came before it.

Before moving on, check that your introduction:

- ☐ provides only the background needed to understand the investigation
- ☐ identifies a specific Business Management issue rather than a general topic
- ☐ states the RQ exactly
- ☐ establishes clear boundaries
- ☐ briefly explains how the RQ was investigated
- ☐ defines any outcome that could otherwise be interpreted in different ways
- ☐ indicates the direction of the argument
- ☐ reflects the essay you have actually researched and planned.

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Organizing your arguments into a sequence

The body of your essay is where your answer to the RQ develops step by step. Each section should add something new to the argument. It may:

- establish relevant academic understanding
- apply that understanding to the organization
- examine evidence of an outcome
- compare sources or periods
- introduce an alternative explanation
- evaluate the strength or limitations of the evidence
- refine the developing judgement.

This does not mean dividing the essay mechanically into arguments 'for' and 'against.'

An alternative explanation or conflicting source is not included simply to oppose your main argument. It should test whether your interpretation remains convincing when other evidence is considered.

Your argument should therefore become more precise as the essay progresses. For example, an early interpretation might be: *Influencer marketing strengthened the organization's brand positioning.*

Later analysis may refine this to: *Influencer marketing appears to have contributed to stronger positioning among younger consumers, although independent evidence is limited and changes in products, pricing, and competitor activity may also explain the outcome.*

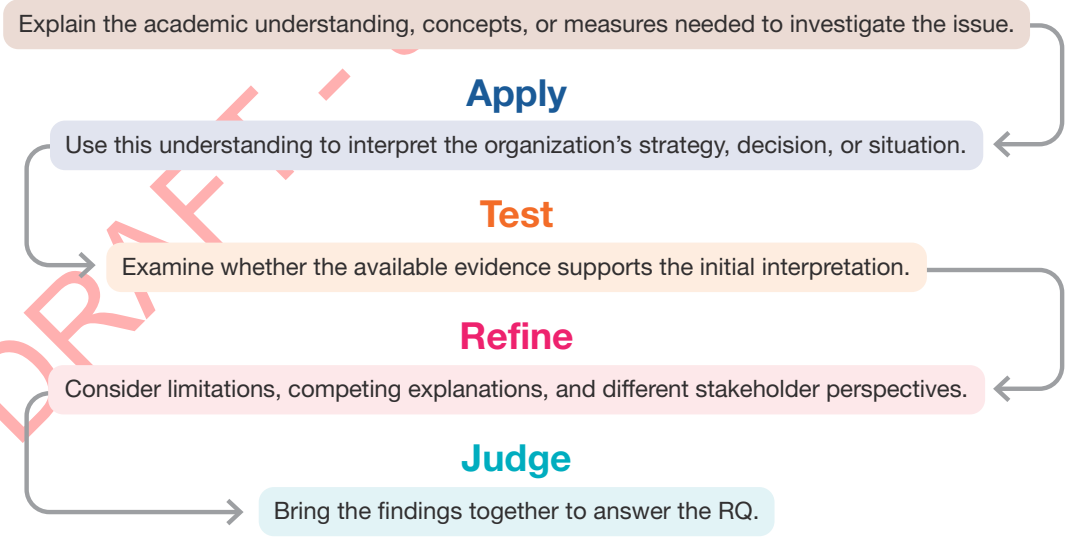
The second statement is more convincing because it reflects the complexity of the evidence.

Build a cumulative line of argument

A strong sequence does more than place sections in a sensible order. Each section should build on the **findings** established earlier.

How to build a cumulative line of argument

Establish → apply → test → refine → judge



This progression does not need to appear as five separate headings. It describes how the reasoning should develop across the essay.

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Example: sequencing an argument

The fictional influencer-marketing investigation introduced earlier in this step can be organized into the following sequence.

Introduction

Establish the organization, market, period, target consumer group, meaning of brand positioning, RQ, and research strategy.

Section 1: Establish the academic basis

1.1 Explain relevant academic research into influencer credibility, authenticity, and consumer attitudes.

1.2 Clarify the relationship between consumer perceptions and brand positioning.

1.3 Establish the types of evidence that may indicate a change in positioning.

This section creates the analytical basis for judging the company evidence. Relevant academic understanding should also be applied throughout the later sections rather than confined to this opening section.

Section 2: Examine the organization's strategy

2.1 Analyse why the organization increased its use of social-media influencers.

2.2 Examine the intended target market and campaign objectives.

2.3 Consider what company-controlled sources can and cannot demonstrate.

This section applies the academic understanding to the organization's decisions.

Section 3: Assess evidence of outcomes

3.1 Analyse campaign engagement and company-reported results.

3.2 Compare these findings with independent brand, market, and consumer evidence.

3.3 Judge whether the evidence demonstrates changed positioning rather than only increased visibility or engagement.

This section tests whether the claimed outcome is supported.

Section 4: Refine the interpretation

4.1 Consider whether product design, pricing, or wider marketing activity influenced consumer perceptions.

4.2 Examine relevant competitor and market developments.

4.3 Evaluate limitations in the available evidence and difficulties establishing causation.

This section prevents the essay from treating influencer marketing as the only possible explanation.

Section 5: Synthesize the findings

Bring together the academic, company and independent evidence.

Judge the relative importance of influencer marketing compared with other influences on brand positioning.

Prepare the ground for a direct and appropriately qualified conclusion.

Conclusion

Answer the RQ directly by judging the extent to which influencer marketing strengthened brand positioning, while recognizing important alternative explanations and limitations in the evidence.

Get it right!

⚠ This example shows one possible sequence. It should not be copied or treated as the required structure for every Business Management EE.

The structure must develop from:

- your exact RQ
- the nature of the evidence available
- the outcome being investigated
- the arguments and limitations emerging from your research.

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Check the connections between sections

Before drafting, review the order of your sections and ask:

- ✓ Does the reader have the necessary academic understanding before I apply it?
- ✓ Does each section build on a finding established earlier?
- ✓ Have I placed important alternative explanations where they can test the argument?
- ✓ Am I comparing sources and evidence rather than discussing each one separately?
- ✓ Does the sequence move towards a judgement rather than merely accumulate information?
- ✓ Could any two sections be combined because they serve the same purpose?
- ✓ Does every section contribute directly to answering the RQ?

Your source log, evidence matrix, and complete plan from **Step 6** should help you answer these questions. They allow you to see which evidence belongs together and how each section contributes to the developing argument.

If you discuss each source, organization, or piece of evidence in isolation, the essay can begin to read like a series of mini-reports rather than one connected argument.

The next stage is to turn each planned claim and group of evidence into developed analytical writing.

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Example of new Case Study colour

How to link your EE to interview questions

Interview questions	How your EE experience helps you answer	Skills demonstrated
Tell me about a project you're proud of.	Describe your EE journey: choosing a topic, planning, researching, adapting, and completing a long-term project.	• Independence • Perseverance
How do you manage your time and workload?	Refer to your EE timeline, deadlines, and how you stayed organized over several months.	• Time management • Organization
What did you learn about yourself as a learner?	Reflect on discovering how you think, research, apply academic rigour, and respond to feedback.	• Self-awareness • Metacognition
Tell me about a time you had to adapt.	Share how you changed your **method** or **focus** when your first plan didn't work.	• Flexibility • Critical thinking • Problem-solving • Resilience
When did you work with others or seek guidance from others?	Mention collaborating with your supervisor, teachers, or contributors outside school.	• Communication • Collaboration
Why are you interested in this subject?	Link your EE topic to your academic curiosity and future study plans.	• Intellectual curiosity • Motivation

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