



**Business Plan**  
May 24, 2004

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## Executive Summary

A coincidence of desires exists between students of business at Georgetown University and the non-profit community of Washington, DC. Students are constantly seeking opportunities to gain deeper exposure to real-world businesses and further develop their business skills while non-profit organizations frequently suffer from limited resources that make big dreams impossible. HILLTOP CONSULTANTS aims to bring these two groups together so they can mutually benefit through the coordination of free strategic business projects.

Sixty percent of Georgetown University students are finance majors but when you look at campus student organizations, companies recruiting on-campus, and other experience-building opportunities in the field, you might suspect the figure were closer to 90 percent. Just three of the top 25 consulting firms recruit on campus and the only significant opportunity to gain experience and exposure to business strategy, national case competitions, has thus far been limited to seniors. The only student organization on campus that dealt with consulting that previously existed was exclusively limited to MBA students.

HILLTOP CONSULTANTS is a Georgetown University undergraduate student organization dedicated to advancing the interests of students interested in management strategy and consulting while also exposing others to the opportunities in these fields. The club is focused on providing skills training, networking, and recruiting opportunities related to strategy and consulting.

Washington, DC is the non-profit capital of the world, with more such organizations than any other city on the planet. Many of these organizations are large, national or international groups with large numbers of employees and fairly stable access to resources; many more, however, are not. Charitable and advocacy groups have huge dreams but limited resources or ability to make good on many of their ideas, no matter how beneficial they might be.

The primary activity and focal point of HILLTOP CONSULTANTS' energies are therefore dedicated to providing free strategic business solutions to local non-profit organizations. We bring teams of four to eight undergraduate students together to work on semester-long or shorter consulting projects that are strategic in nature. The students volunteer their time and the only cost to client organizations is to pay for the resources necessary to actually carry out the project.

Because our services are essentially free, we have a very unique competitive advantage for our clients over other local non-profit and for-profit consulting firms – accessibility. The students involved on these projects apply to work for the client on a purely voluntary basis, ensuring both dedication and genuine interest in the project at hand. Georgetown is one of the top 25 universities in the United States and its business students are capable, intelligent, high achieving people able to tackle many of the business and operational struggles faced by non-profit organizations. Furthermore, as undergraduate students we have access to highly experienced expert advice from both faculty and MBA students.

The club's costs of operations are limited to administrative overhead, marketing, training, and transportation. Anticipated sources of funding are from Georgetown University's Student Activities Commission, the McDonough School of Business and outside grants.

Hilltop Consultants is organized as a student organization with a President, five Directors (Human Resources, Finance, Operations, Marketing, and Client Relations), Project Managers, Project Members, and General Members. Club leaders are elected each semester with an emphasis on long-term leadership and involvement. Membership is open to all undergraduate students, not just members of the business school.

## **Organization Overview**

Georgetown University is a non-profit organization and Hilltop Consultants is one of its numerous official student organizations. The university provides limited financial and operational support for such organizations but each is largely responsible for financing itself independently through membership dues, service fees, or grant funds. Because Georgetown is a relatively small university, with a total undergraduate population just

over 6,000 – approximately 1,200 of whom study business – Hilltop Consultants will remain a small organization, limited in the number of projects it can undertake in any given semester. A critical part of the club’s mission is the advancement of Georgetown University and the McDonough School of Business, so it will remain focused locally and not expand to other universities in the area or nationally.

### **Mission Statement**

HILLTOP CONSULTANTS is a business-related student organization with the purpose of:

- a. Allowing students to explore the field of strategy and consulting
- b. Providing students with extracurricular business-skills training
- c. Establishing Georgetown as a university with an active population of students interested in strategy and consulting to increase their opportunities to participate in related events, competitions, and recruiting in the field
- d. Building a relationship between students of strategy with alumni and other professionals dedicated to business strategy and consulting

### **History and Current Status**

The idea for a club focused on promoting consulting and strategy at Georgetown was first seriously considered by Mitch Fox in September of 2003 during his semester studying abroad in Monterrey, Mexico. Encouraged by the support of two professors at Georgetown, Jackie Hoell and Willis Emmons, both involved in organizing the school’s business case competition teams, Mitch decided to continue developing his idea while abroad. After returning to DC in January, 2004, Mitch and a small group of other interested students, Jen Paragallo, Sharon Sweeney and Travis Hollingsworth, set to work on converting their idea into a reality. After discussing similar student organizations around the country, the founders decided to follow in the footsteps of University of Arizona’s “Students Consulting for Non-profit Organizations” (SCNO) by planning the engagement of local nonprofits through free consulting projects. On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the four founding leaders hosted the first General Meeting of HILLTOP CONSULTANTS (then named Hilltop Strategists), describing the club and seeking applicants to the newly created leadership positions. Forty-four students attended the first meeting and 13 applied for the five available Director positions. After reviewing applications and conducting interviews, the first Leadership Board (Consisting of Mitch Fox, Andrew Friedman, Melissa McKenna, Andrew Montgomery, Sivella Smith and Bridget Brennan) began planning for the launch of our first projects in September. On April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004 HILLTOP CONSULTANTS became an officially recognized Georgetown University student organization after approval by the Student Activities Commission. We plan to launch our first two or three consulting projects in early September, which will be completed by early December.

### **Market and Services**

Hilltop Consultants is focused on serving two groups: Georgetown University students and the not-for-profit community of Washington, DC. By coordinating small strategic

consulting projects to smaller non-profit organizations, our group hopes to expose undergraduate students to diverse real-world business challenges and help them develop the skills necessary for solving them. The primary goals of Hilltop Consultants include introducing students to consulting as well as providing them with opportunities to network with business leaders while building Georgetown's reputation in the field. We feel these projects are a perfect manner for us to accomplish these goals.

HILLTOP CONSULTANTS targets the small to medium sized non-profit organizations of the Washington, DC area for its free consulting projects for a variety of reasons. Smaller organizations are more likely to be in need of assistance and less able to gain access to professional business advice or consulting. They are also more likely to be willing to allow undergraduate university students actually take on substantive projects and help shape the strategic direction of the organization. The disadvantages of working with smaller non-profits is that while more willing to work with students, their plans and direction may be less well defined and their objectives in engaging a project less clear. Larger organizations might be more likely to expose students to more sophisticated business people, but we feel the benefits of really getting our hands dirty in more important projects are worth the tradeoffs.

### **Service Description**

A potential project example: A Washington area nonprofit photography museum has been considering for some time whether or not to open a small coffee shop in the museum front lobby to attract more nearby residents to the museums collections, improve the ambiance of the building and generate some additional revenue to help support maintenance of the collection. Despite the idea's appeal, the museum's directors have never had an opportunity to seriously consider the proposal or its costs versus benefits. Upon realizing that the project would likely never take shape unless someone with the time and energy to seriously research the project was brought in, the museum contacts HILLTOP CONSULTANTS, a Georgetown University student group that had placed an advertisement in one of the nonprofit industry trade publications the museum subscribed to. A group of five students is organized, headed by a business major and studio art minor who has visited the museum in the past and is dedicated to advancing the organization's mission. After meeting with museum directors and interviewing several of its employees, the students take three months to do a detailed market analysis of the coffee shop proposition. They study the neighborhood surrounding the museum, the costs of coffee equipment and remodeling, and reasonable expectations for revenue based on similar museum-based coffee shops. In a detailed report submitted to the museum directors, the group provides its recommendations and the research upon which it is based. The students worked on a purely volunteer basis and because no resources were required beyond the time of the museum's directors and employees, the project was completed at no cost to the organization.

### **Description**

HILLTOP CONSULTANTS provides free strategic business solutions to local nonprofit organizations through organizational or operational enhancement consulting projects. Because our membership consists of undergraduate students at all levels of study and not all of whom are even business majors, our service offering is necessarily focused on broader business challenges. Instead of attempting to tackle area-specific challenges that require sophisticated skills, such as information systems or accounting, we aim to assist in business planning and development, market analysis, new product offerings, and general marketing or branding development.

Our service is unique because it is free to our clients (they only pay for any resources necessary to complete the project) and is provided by intelligent and sophisticated university students in the midst of their training to enter the business world. The nature of our service also allows our clients to engage our services on projects that might not necessarily be strictly focused on improving their bottom-line financially (and therefore merit the costs of professional assistance) but rather on improving the way in which they provide service to their customers and beneficiaries or investigating new products or services.

## **Competition**

We recognize that our service is certainly not the only one available to clients. For instance, Georgetown's MBA program has a consulting club with a similar service but tends to focus on larger national or international projects and isn't exclusive to the non-profit community.

### **Industry analysis**

Consulting can be a very lucrative business enterprise and it is no surprise that the Washington, DC area is well served by numerous consultancies, ranging widely from small one or two person firms to huge multinational organizations. One useful way differentiate consulting firms is to look at their focus, whether national or local. For example, Virginia-based Bearing Point is a very large, nationally focused firm which tends to work for similarly large, national clients. Consulting firms can be differentiated by industry or segment focus as well, one being a focus on non-profit or public-sector clients. BridgeSpan, a Boston area non-profit firm, is focused entirely upon serving and consulting other non-profit organizations,

Most consulting engagements are organized with a team of four to eight consultants working on short-term projects of six months or less. These projects typically include one or two true experts and two to seven support members of varying degrees of experience. In order to emulate this standard practice in the industry, Hilltop Consultants plans to organize its consulting groups into teams of four to eight with a project manager in charge of coordinating and managing the project. Because even juniors and seniors in the business school are far from being experts, we will supplement the teams with one MBA and one faculty advisor for each case project that can be used for support and advice.

## **Market and Customer analysis**

Not for profit organizations generally receive funding through grants, membership fees, service charges, and donations. Locating sufficient funding is frequently a major struggle for nonprofits. Similar to how consulting firms can be broken down into different segments, nonprofit organizations can be divided into locally or nationally focused groups. For example, a women's shelter is locally focused on the community in which it is located, whereas organizations like the Human Rights Campaign are oriented on changing culture and policy nationally.

What makes Washington, DC a unique city for the non-profit sector is that it is populated not only by a large number of local charitable services and other local nonprofits, but is also host to a huge number of national organizations. By situating their national headquarters in the Washington area, organizations are able to have greater access to many of the federal bodies that provide the grants and other funds they need to survive. Symbolically, the DC area is an ideal location for national headquarters, especially if some part of the organization's activities includes lobbying or advocacy work.

## **Marketing Plan**

Our target customer is a small to medium sized nonprofit organization that is either less developed and looking for business and operational assistance or is already developed but looking for an opportunity to grow. These customers benefit from our free service because they are able to gain access to knowledgeable business advice without having to devote substantial resources. Many organizations have projects they have frequently considered that simply have not yet been undertaken for lack of free time on the part of the staff, lack of experience or knowledge of the project to be undertaken, or insufficient resources. These are the perfect projects for us to undertake because they would allow our members substantial freedom in planning and developing the project while keeping risk to a minimum – these projects were not even being attempted before we began working on them.

## **Service Strategy**

Our service is business and operations focused, helping an organization improve the way it works. We are not volunteers working to support “the cause.” In selecting the clients and projects to undertake, interest and desire to help support the organization will be critical evaluative criteria, but our teams will not simply be augmenting the day-to-day operation of the organization. Instead, we will be helping the organization make changes to its processes and strategies.

## **Advertising and Promotion strategy**

At first, we expect most client projects to be referred to us through connections at Georgetown University. Many professors, especially those of management and strategy,

are frequently solicited for assistance by local organizations that they simply are unable to provide because of their busy schedules. These professors could now refer these groups to HILLTOP CONSULTANTS. Georgetown also has a number of long standing relationships with local nonprofit organizations through the office of Volunteer Service Programs. The staff and volunteers that work with these groups might be able to recognize potential clients with the kinds of challenges we are best suited to address.

Another primary channel of advertising will be through our online web presence. We hope to use the website as our primary method of disseminating information about our services, past projects, and mission. We would ideally like to place advertisements in several DC area trade publications that tailor to a nonprofit audience with our website listed if people are interested in finding out more.

Finally, we fully expect a number of clients to be referred by former clients who had successful experiences with our work. With these future referrals (which will also serve as case studies for future potential clients) in mind, we must ensure that our first group of projects are extremely successful. We will engage only two to three clients in the fall so we can devote supplemental resources and assistance if necessary.

### **Client Selection Strategy**

Another area critical to our success is on the selection of clients. Because our service is free and provides a substantial benefit to clients, we fully expect to receive more project proposals that we can responsibly undertake. In order to determine the best projects, the Leadership Board will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Predicted student interest
- The degree and nature of the impact our work will have on the organization
- “Match” with our capabilities and experience

### **Marketing Costs**

Most of the costs that Hilltop Consultants will incur are related to marketing. We must pay to register and host our website, print business cards, letterhead, and brochures, and place advertisements. The sources of the funds necessary to pay for these expenses will be discussed in the Financial Plan section.

## **Operations Plan**

### **Operations Strategy**

Our primary operational advantage over any competitors is cost – our services are free. While our members are not yet professionals, nearly all will go on to work in business and are in the midst of their training and skill development. We strive to be as professional as possible in our services and maintain a high standard of quality to ensure customer satisfaction and future referrals.

Because team leaders and members are hired after projects are selected, we can be assured that the students working on any particular client have chosen to work on it and are willing to devote the time and energy necessary to successfully complete the project. Project managers will most likely be juniors and seniors because they have broader business backgrounds that can be useful in overseeing the entire project. We will seek managers that are specialized in the field and skills necessary for a particular client, whether it be marketing, accounting, finance, etc. Team members will not be scrutinized as heavily on their particular background and qualification for the project, though they will be considered, but rather on their excitement about the project, availability, and commitment to the club and past projects.

Our service focuses on the planning and development aspects of client projects, particularly in strategic business and operational areas. Whenever specialized, professional skills are required that we cannot provide in-house, we will recommend outsourcing the work to a specialized firm, but will maintain design, development, and oversight control of the project.

A critical factor in our success will also be our reliance upon faculty and MBA support both in advisor roles and through training. Because a part of HILLTOP CONSULTANTS' primary mission is the training and development of business skills outside of the classroom, these training sessions will be of particular importance to our operations. We also hope to tap the extensive Georgetown alumni network to gain access to guest speakers and advisors from the consulting field.

### **Operations Costs**

While most expenses for our club are related to marketing, there are some operational costs that must be paid for. We hope to be able to compensate team members' transportation expenses and provide food and refreshments at our various training sessions. We have also planned on arranging client meetings and an end of the semester celebration banquet after the successful completion of each project. The sources of the funds necessary to pay for these expenses will be discussed in the Financial Plan section.

### **Development Plan**

Plans to develop HILLTOP CONSULTANTS must necessarily not only focus upon the most pressing business at hand, our consulting projects, but also on other long term goals and objectives for the club.

In the fall of 2004, we plan to launch two or three consulting projects to local nonprofit organizations. The success of these projects will enable us to develop more convincing marketing materials and a reputation in nonprofit circles. Beginning in the spring of 2005 and in each following semester we plan to slowly increment the number of projects being undertaken until we reach a point where we can no longer fully support the projects and it becomes difficult to recruit interested team members.

## **Development Strategy**

Our development strategy for the consulting projects is fairly simple. We hope to attract the kinds of organizations that have exciting projects for our teams to undertake in which we can have a major impact on their operations. By taking on projects with exciting companies, we can alleviate some of the potential burnout or disinterest that might grow amongst our volunteers and bring them back to work on future projects.

As our operations get under way, we will want to continue to develop our connections with alumni – especially for their support in recruiting and training. As undergraduate business students, any activity we can engage in that might help in securing a desirable job is extremely seductive. Our alums that work in consulting are an easy resource to tap for training purposes because of their greater inclination to help support their Alma Matter.

Finally, the next step in our club's development would be the beginning of a Georgetown business case competition. Case competitions help fulfill many of the same objectives that our consulting projects do and would make significant contributions to improving the school's reputation and prestige in the areas of business and strategy. Relatively few undergraduate case competitions exist in the world, currently totaling probably fewer than ten that actually attract significant national and international competitors. We would like to see HILLTOP CONSULTANTS work closely with the McDonough School of Business to develop a case competition and see how it could complement the club's existing programs. It has even been suggested that the case study challenge upon which the competition is based might be a nonprofit client organization that is looking for new ideas on how to run its business.

## **Development Timeline**

### Fall 2004

- Begin 2-3 nonprofit consulting projects to be completed by December
- Complete the alumni database structure and begin populating it
- Begin a database directory of local industry experts that might be willing to meet with our teams or otherwise assist with training
- Begin lobbying consulting firms to recruit on campus at Georgetown
- Seek grant and other funding support outside of the university

### Spring 2005

- Start 3-5 nonprofit consulting projects to be complete by May
- Begin case competition planning, work with university to gauge support
- Continue development projects from the fall

### Year 2005-2005

- Start 3-6 nonprofit consulting projects to be completed by December
- Launch first annual case competition in the spring of 2006
- Continue development projects

## **Organizational Structure**

HILLTOP CONSULTANTS' organizational structure and policies are outlined in the group's constitution as approved by the Georgetown University Student Activities Commission and could be modified at any point through a majority vote should the membership decide that changes are necessary. The basic structure is defined as follows:

The Leadership Board – composed of the President and Directors of Human Resources, Finance, Marketing, Operations, and Client Relations. All board positions are elected on a per-semester basis but are encouraged to serve at least a year in their position.

Project Teams – composed of four to eight students including one project manager responsible for coordinating the project and its successful completion. Team members are selected through an application process to the Leadership Board.

General Members – while students not directly involved on the leadership board or consulting projects do not have a vote in club matters, they are encouraged to attend guest lectures and training sessions as well as other club social events. General members and anyone who has an established relationship with the club will have some preference in team selections and placements.

## **Financial Plan**

The financial aspect of Hilltop Consultants planning is very basic. Our clients pay nothing for the human aspects of the work – the time put in by the volunteers. The only expense to them is to pay for any resources necessary to complete the project. For instance, a soup kitchen seeking to change its advertising and logo would only have to pay for the actual printing of signs or brochures, not for the time spent in designing it or the strategy on how to use it.

### **Financial Requirements**

Our 2004-2005 budget is attached as an appendix to this business plan, but to briefly summarize, we expect to spend approximately \$1,500 on marketing and operational overhead for the year and approximately \$1,000 on training and travel reimbursements for team projects.

We plan to seek funding from various sources, including Georgetown University, various grants and corporate foundations. At Georgetown, we will apply for funding support from the Student Activities Commission, Volunteer Service Programs office, and McDonough School of Business. Because our service is philanthropic in nature and budget requirements are limited, we expect and hope that funding should be readily forthcoming. More than just doing something charitable in nature, we feel our service builds value for our client customers. By supporting our organization, our supporters are actually helping make other charitable money go further. Because we aim to improve the

business and operations of nonprofit organizations throughout DC, those charitable dollars the organizations are receiving will be put to more efficient use.

### **Business Risks**

With such small budgetary needs, the relative risks of our organization are extremely small, but some do exist. The biggest risk is that student interest and support for the projects may never materialize. Without the volunteers to actually carry out the projects, our mission cannot be fulfilled. What gives us a substantial degree of ease related to this risk however was the substantial turnout of over 40 students at our first general meeting when we consider that launching two projects would require only between eight and sixteen participants, depending on the size of the project team.

The other substantial risk is related to the quality of our work. Our membership is composed entirely of undergraduate students and even with faculty and MBA support available, we cannot guarantee the quality of the work our teams will provide. Students, while in the process of learning the tools of their trade, need opportunities to go out and truly apply them – one of the central purposes of our organization’s existence. First time experiences, however, come with the easy risk of failures and mistakes. By providing various levels of support for each team, from the Project Manager to the Leadership Board to their faculty and MBA advisors, we hope to mitigate this risk. Georgetown University is one of the top 25 universities in the country and we have high expectations for the quality and abilities of our membership.

## Appendix A: 2004-2005 Operating Budget

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>SERVICE EXPENSE</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>PRICE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>72101</b>	<b>SAC Printing</b>	1,000	\$ 0.05	\$ 50.00
<b>72103</b>	<b>External Printing</b>			
	Letterhead	500	\$ 0.12	\$ 60.00
	Envelopes (no. 10)	500	\$ 0.14	\$ 70.00
	Envelopes (for brochures)	200	\$ 0.18	\$ 36.00
	Business Cards - Named	400	\$ 0.10	\$ 40.00
	Business Cards - Generic	1,000	\$ 0.08	\$ 80.00
	Client brochures	200	\$ 1.50	\$ 300.00
	Event Banner	1	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00
<b>72724</b>	<b>Advertising</b>			
	Website hosting	11	\$ 20.00	\$ 220.00
	Domain name renewal	1	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
	Partially Subsidized T-shirts	50	\$ 4.00	\$ 200.00
	Advertising in The Hoya	4	\$ 63.00	\$ 252.00
<b>TOTAL COST</b>				<b>\$ 1,478.00</b>
<b><u>EVENT AND TRAINING EXPENSES</u></b>				
<b>72738</b>	<b>Student Social Functions</b>			
	Professor training session	2	\$ 75.00	\$ 150.00
	Client project training sessions	6	\$ 50.00	\$ 300.00
	Industry leader seminar	2	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00
	Client Meetings	6	\$ 50.00	\$ 300.00
<b>73102</b>	<b>Travel Reimbursement to client sites</b>	12	\$ 15.00	\$ 180.00
<b>TOTAL COST</b>				<b>\$ 950.00</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST</b>				<b>\$ 2,428.00</b>