GUIDE TO PARTICIPATING IN THE WEEKLY SUMMARY DISCUSSIONS

Introduction
It will be difficult for you to participate in the summary discussions on Monday evenings if you do not participate on the discussion board during the week. The Monday evening sessions are designed to summarize the major points raised by the class on the discussion board. Each week you are asked to discuss as a group a case regarding a “virtual” commercial printing company located in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA). You will be seeking to apply your knowledge gained from reading the narrative on the specific topic presented each week.

As presented in the other course Guides, the case method is designed to help you develop the skill to apply the knowledge presented in this class. You will be helping each other out in the process. Different students can read different documents that support the narrative and report on them using the discussion board. If you see some document that someone reported on that seemed interesting, you can decide whether you wish to read it yourself. I am not expecting every student to read every item that is cited in the narrative. However, you need to read enough to offer advice to the protagonist in the case as that person seeks to deal with the issues that are presented in the narrative. It may take you a few weeks to get used to the case method. Please let the teaching staff know if you have any questions as you get adapted to the routine of this course. We think you will really enjoy it once you do!

Introduction to the Course
On Monday, January 30, 2006, the Instructor will present an overview of the course. There will be a brief presentation on how to use the discussion board tool. This session will be videotaped and posted on the site as streaming video within about 48 hours. Resident students will ask questions during the session. Distance learners can e-mail the questions to the Instructor or the teaching assistants before Sunday, February 5, 2006, and they will be answered either by return e-mail or in the Monday, February 6th class. All the introduction materials are posted on the web site. You have plenty of time to review them. Don’t forget to review the materials in the Course Requirements section on the course web site. It seems like a lot of material, but you will pick up the rhythm of the course real quickly. We are here to help you with this. Remember, you just have to ask!
**First Week – What Are Others Telling Us About Sustainable Development?**

You will start on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 to prepare yourself for the discussion summary meeting on Monday, February 6, 2006. However, this is a transition week. You will read the narrative that is posted on this topic and then read the case. We will be asking you to post an introduction of yourself on the discussion board to get the feel of using the discussion board and to let others in the class know a little about the people they will be discussing the cases with. What you tell your classmates is up to you! However, I do hope that you will share with us a description of what you expect from this course based on the syllabus and the introduction information. This will be a big help to the teaching staff.

The Instructor will conduct a series of postings on the case. You are welcome to join in. However, you are not required to do so. This is being done to help you see how the discussion board will be used during the semester. I am sure that you will improve significantly on the lonely discussion of the Instructor with your wide range of experiences and knowledge. This is what makes the course so worthwhile each year to all that take it! You will all be instructors and students at the same time!

On Monday, February 6, 2006, I would ask the resident students to have prepared three suggestions to the owners of the commercial printing company, Charles River Printing. Distance learners can send their three suggestions to the Instructor or one of the teaching assistants by Sunday. Please also let us know if you wish to be paired with a resident graduate student for the purposes of being able to submit information to the summary session or to ask questions about things and reactions that you observed when watching the summary section on your computer. Resident graduate students that expect to attend most if not all of the classes should let one of the teaching assistants that you would be like to be paired with one of the distance learning students. It is a rewarding experience and I would highly recommend that you consider doing this.

**Second Week – Starting Our Journey to Sustainable Development**

On Tuesday, February 7, 2006, you will start preparing for your Monday, February 13, 2006 summary discussion. This week you will be required to participate on the discussion board and make comments that will help the protagonist determine the best way to start the journey that Charles River Printing will take as it seeks to start moving down the path to sustainable development. You will be graded on your contributions to the discussion board by the teaching assistants. If you do not participate, you will receive a “zero” grade and a note saying that we missed your participation on the discussion board. There will be some that have problems with travel or other issues that arise from time to time. Please let us know right away about your availability to participate. In all cases, we expect that you will be able to do so before the fact and not after the note has been sent to you. Occasionally there are electronic issues. Please save copies of all of your postings just in case they are not transmitted properly. You might feel a little “stage fright” at first. This is natural. Just remember that all the students want to learn as much
as they can about this very interesting topic. In other words, you are all in the same situation. The object is to help the protagonist in the case, not to debate the fine points of each topic. Some of you will be from different cultures. Please state that in your country or region of the USA, you might try to handle this in a certain way. This is fine. Sometimes we can learn a lot of good things from other cultures. Remember, there are no right answers. You can consider whether something would work at Charles River Printing or not. But remember, it is only a virtual company. So no one will be hurt if the advice is not perfect.

It is not required, however, most of you would have a commercial printing company somewhere near by. You might wish to approach the people that work at the front desk at that company and let them know what you are doing in this class. Maybe they will be interested and share some thoughts with you. You could then share these thoughts with the class. The commercial printer certainly has the same issues to deal with as do most small and medium sized businesses. So you could approach another local business that may be trying to demonstrate environmental excellence, social responsible behavior or trying to move down the path to sustainable development. If you need some help approaching the company or local government department (the local government also operates operations that are similar to other small businesses in the city or town), please let the Instructor know and he will try to send you information and advice that might help you be more successful with your efforts. Some of you might be able to do this at work or at the place of employment of a family member or friend. However, you can choose to be perfectly content with the virtual company.

On Monday, February 13, 2006, we will discuss the case for that week. Please select the three best suggestions that you found on the discussion board and raise them in class. They need to be practical and within the ability of the protagonist to accomplish. The suggestion would be for the best way for Charles River Printing to be sure that it has got on the path to sustainable development. What can they do that will help them get started on this journey?

**Remaining Weeks**

And so the routine will go from week to week. From time to time, the Instructor may send a broadcast e-mail to the class suggesting some new analytical tools that they may try to use to help you find better ways to assist the protagonist in the case. Sometimes these tools will be presented in the narrative. Sometimes they may be separately posted on the site with a note sent on how to use them. There may be instances where you know a problem solving or decision-making tool that would be applicable to a particular case. Please let us know about it. We can post your information or help find additional information to post. We could create a separate folder on the discussion board for this information and let others comment on that tool as well as on the case. In these ways, we can make adaptations in the course to meet the expectations that you posted with your introduction in the first week. Enjoy the discussions and share the lessons learned each Monday in the summary discussion session.