

Part III – Developing the Monograph Proposal

The MCM Monograph Proposal provides an overview of the candidate’s plan for developing the MCM Monograph. This document suggests what the candidate wants to accomplish and how he or she proposes to do so. It should be developed after the MCMP and the monograph topic have been approved by the Academic Council and after members of his or her support group have been identified and agreed to assist the candidate. The proposal serves as a bridge between a general idea about a project suggested in the MCMP and the process to actually develop the MCM Monograph.

MCM PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT “CASE STUDY”

Terry Smith has received the good news about the MCMP and his proposed Monograph topic was approved. The next step is to develop the project proposal that will be submitted to the MCM Academic Council.

Terry’s self-selected Monograph topic will address “Computerized Purchasing of Food and Beverage Products in Clubs.” Terry realizes that the support group should consist of people who can bring applicable knowledge to the Monograph development process. Terry also knows that the support group must include an academic advisor and must be comprised of three or four individuals from at least two of the following groups:

- Master Club Manager
- College/University professor with research background applicable to the topic
- Expert in the field of study

Terry identifies and selects four support group members to assist with the project.

Figure 1: Terry’s MCM Monograph Support Group

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An MCM 	<p>He/she thoroughly understands the club industry and can provide club perspectives and industry context to the project.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Academic 	<p>He/she will be a topic expert and will be able to assist in the design of the project’s study and writing methods.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An E-Procurement Expert 	<p>He/she knows how to plan and implement computerized purchasing systems.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Manager (not Salesperson) Representative of a Large Supplier/Distribution Organization 	<p>He/she knows the supplier side of the topic.</p>

Terry does not “go through the motion” of selecting support group members who live nearby or others with whom Terry has come in contact over the years. Instead, those who are selected are those who can provide significant assistance with the Monograph development process. Terry provides each member of his support group with a copy of *The Role of the Support Group in the MCM Process* that outlines the support group’s role in providing assistance in Monograph development. He obtains the sign off form (or equivalent acknowledgment) from each support group member to include in his Monograph proposal.

Terry follows CMAA’s sample outline for the MCM Monograph proposal because it provides an overview of the information needed for Academic Council evaluation of the project plans.

A. Statement of Problem

What problem, condition or concern will be addressed in the Monograph?
Why is this issue important to the club industry?

This section will be based on the information about the proposed Monograph topic submitted in the MCMP. Terry indicates that the Monograph will address computerized purchasing of food and beverage products in clubs. To defend the importance of the topic (and how it’ll benefit the industry) Terry suggests the following in the proposal:

- Significant costs are incurred for product purchases.
- Labor costs related to management of the procurement process can be reduced.
- Operating problems including stock outs, cash flow and inventory turnover rates can be better managed.
- Savings can be used for member added-value benefits.

Terry has developed the list of benefits because some are personally known, the support group members have suggested others and other benefits might be discovered when applicable information is reviewed. If so, they will be included in the final Monograph.

B. Project Questions (Goals)

This section will indicate what the Monograph will accomplish if it is successful. It must clearly specify the project’s scope by indicating with several questions, exactly what you will do and, areas of the project topic that will not be addressed. This section is important because it will indicate the factors upon which your Monograph will be evaluated by the MCM Academic Council.

Here are examples of project questions (goals) that might be important to Terry’s project because they clearly define the purposes of and limitations of the project:

- To what extent are computerized purchasing systems currently used in clubs?
- What are the benefits of using a computerized purchasing system for food and beverage products in clubs?
- What are the most common challenges in using a computerized purchasing system, and how can related problems be “designed out” of a system when it is planned?
- What tactics are useful when implementing a computerized purchasing system to reduce transition challenges from the manual system?
- How should club managers evaluate computerized purchasing systems?

C. Review of Literature

First, it is important to learn what is already known about the topic to confirm that the project is necessary. Secondly, to provide background information that might serve as a foundation for the project. Background information should, depending on the topic, consider work done in the general discipline as well as more specific fields such as hospitality and club management.

Terry's main tactic is to conduct a thorough review of available information but to report only some of what was learned in the proposal information review and to include all information discovered in the actual Monograph.

Terry uses several sources to learn about existing information for the topic:

- **The Internet** – Terry enters several topic-specific phrases in a search engine. These include, “computerized purchasing in clubs,” “food service procurement software,” “e-procurement” and “automated purchasing systems.” A review of articles and other information found will be a good start to learn information about and sources for the project's topic.
- **Hospitality-Related Trade Magazines** – Terry also uses the Internet to search for “restaurant and food service management trade magazines” and discovers examples such as *Restaurant Business and Food Management Magazine*. Websites for these and other trade magazines often have an “archives” section that can be reviewed. Terry enters the term, “computerized purchasing” in each website's search box if there is one.
- **General Management/Business Research-Based Journals** – Terry searches the Internet for “procurement research journals” and also enters the phrase in www.online.sagepub.com. Examples of journals identified include *Journal of Operations Management*; *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* and *Journal of Supply Chain Management*. These and related sources are reviewed and yield applicable information.
- **Hospitality-Specific Research Journals** – Terry enters key words such as “computerized purchasing” in two indexes: www.google.com and the Purdue University Hospitality and Tourism Index. Note: the academic on Terry's support group helps to gain access to the Purdue index. Examples of hospitality-specific research journals that Terry finds include the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* and the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*.
- **Support Group Members** – Terry knows that members of the support group may have other sources of information on the topic, and they do!

Terry recognizes the rule of thumb that the search for existing information should continue until an honest effort has been made to find everything available and the topics being reviewed have already been discovered.

D. Proposed Research Methods

Processes to gather new information that builds on that available in the literature and that will be club industry-specific include surveys, interviews, focus groups and information analysis. The primary concern is to use the method(s) that help to answer the project questions (see B above). The academic advisor on the candidate's support group will be especially useful as the project's methodology is planned.

A copy of the survey draft, if applicable, should be included with the proposal.

In this section of the proposal, Terry informs the MCM Academic Council members about how the study will be conducted to best achieve its goals.

Possible Project Goal	Research Method
Extent of Current use (e-procurement)	Web-based Survey of CMAA Members
Benefits and Challenges	Web-Based Survey of CMAA Members who use Aspects of Computerized Purchasing.
Exemplary Implementation Procedures	Personal Conversations with Experts Nominated by Support Group Members and by CMAA Respondents who use a Computerized System.
Exemplary Evaluation Procedures	Personal Conversations With Experts Nominated by Support Group Members and by CMAA Member Respondents who use a Computerized System.

Terry's proposal will indicate that support group members will help to develop the CMAA member survey and to identify the open-ended questions to ask industry experts. Terry also will indicate that Internet and other software tutorials from suppliers will be accessed and "worked through" while thinking about Terry's club with an emphasis on special challenges. This information will likely be of use in the results section of the Monograph.

E. Results, Discussion and Implications

How will results of the study be organized? For example, will survey results be reported on a by-question basis? Will a case study be used to illustrate application of the findings? Will interviews of experts be compared to survey results? Monographs often employ more than one discussion tactic.

Terry knows that this section is the “so what” of the actual Monograph because it will inform readers about the project’s major findings. Now, while the proposal is being written, Terry indicates that the section will be organized into two major sections:

- Part I: What I Found Out – What CMAA members indicated in the survey responses and what information was learned from e-procurement experts.
- Part II: What Club Managers Should Know. A checklist format will be used to report factors applicable to selecting a software vendor and implementing and evaluating a computerized purchasing system.

WHAT’S NEXT?

After Terry completes a draft of the proposal, it will be reviewed by support group members and their revision suggestions, if any, will be included. Then, the proposal will be submitted to the MCM Academic Council. Terry understands that extensive work on the Monograph should not begin until after receiving Council members’ input, if any, and the Proposal has been accepted.

Terry is excited about the MCM process and has successfully completed its first challenge: the MCMP. Terry also understands that the MCM Monograph proposal is not a “hurdle” that must be overcome. Instead, it is a roadmap that is developed by the MCM candidate and for support group members to help ensure that the MCM Monograph is as good as it can be, that it will maximize benefits to the club industry and that it will provide the framework upon which the Academic Council will evaluate the Monograph.

Questions to ask About the Proposal

- Are project questions clear, capable of investigation and able to be answered?
- Is the project positioned within the context of previous studies?
- Are proposed study methods the most suitable for answering the project questions?
- Can the project be completed within a reasonable time?
- Does my approach allow me to use the abilities of my Monograph support group?