
GROUP PROJECT

An essential business skill in today's (and yesterday's, for that matter) work world is the ability to work in groups and teams. Working in groups allows for multiple perspectives from multiple individuals to be combined and utilized in solving a single problem. However, working in groups can also present new difficulties in dividing work load, time management, coordination, perceptions of fairness, conflict management, etc.

Project Overview

In groups of about five (sometimes four or six) you will analyze an organizational problem, phenomena, or event that has been in the news or described in some other context. You will present your analysis to me in a paper, and also to the class orally. Select an incident or topic that is sufficiently complex and intricate to provide interesting data for analysis.

Your paper should include:

- (1) A succinct description of the event, phenomena, or problem you are analyzing (this may take several pages and should include citations),
- (2) A detailed analysis of the situation using concepts developed in this course (this section is the body of your paper and should be your focus both in the effort you put into it as well as the number of pages dedicated to it; don't forget to cite your sources—whose ideas are you borrowing, etc.), and
- (3) Well-reasoned recommendations for action.

You can present this information, both in the paper and in your oral, in-class presentation, as if you were consultants for the firm or organization you are discussing and presenting your findings to the decision-makers at that firm.

Research

This project is in part a research project. There are two parts to the research you will be doing:

- (1) You will need to first research a specific business problem or event. Search the popular business press for information, facts, details, etc. describing the event or phenomenon you are investigating.

For this part of the assignment you will likely want to focus on newspaper and magazine articles and perhaps industry reports (for instance, you might search the library database "ABI/Inform Trade & Industry").

- (2) You will also need to conduct research on the organizational behavior topic or topics which are related to the event you are investigating. Here, you are looking for academic/scholarly sources, not sources from the popular business press.

For instance, if you have chosen a topic related to the motivation of employees at a particular firm, it is not enough to only cite the textbook and class readings (though you may *also* cite these). You must find academic and/or scholarly-type publications on motivation and use these articles as sources in your analysis.

As an example, imagine you are interested in the negotiation between the Seattle Mariners and the Cincinnati Reds which brought Cincinnati's son, Ken Griffey Jr., back home. You might first research descriptions of the event from sources such as Sports Illustrated, ESPN The Magazine, and newspapers from Seattle, Cincinnati, as well as those with a national scope, such as USA Today or The New York Times.

Next, you would focus your research on scholarly outlets which publish work on negotiation with the goal of becoming something of an expert on negotiation. Using knowledge and insight garnered from these sources you should then be able to provide an *expert analysis* (as opposed to a *naïve analysis*—an analysis relying only on your own experience or intuition) of the case you've described.

Research Summaries

As previous explained, after picking a topic (see schedule for group project topic due date), your group's focus must then turn to scholarly research on the organizational behavior topic or topics related to your project's focus. Each member of the group is required to (1) find two academic/scholarly-type articles or book chapters which relate to the focus of your paper and (2) write a one page summary of each article. Include the full reference of the article and attach a photocopy or printout of the first page of the article only.

Make enough copies of your summaries so that each member of your group can have one. This research should provide the core for the analysis in your final paper and presentation.

To find academic/scholarly articles, use library databases such as "Business Source Premier," "Annual Reviews," or "JSTOR" (to name three). For help in determining the difference between a scholarly and popular source please see this guide (below) and/or seek help from a librarian or myself.

<http://www6.wittenberg.edu/lib/research/schol-pop.php>

Written Paper

The text of the paper (excluding cover page, exhibits, references, etc.—you can have as much of this as you want) should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages, assuming 12-point font and 1" margins. I expect most papers will be from 10-12 pages in length.

As with other writing assignments in this class I encourage you to seek help from the Shippensburg University Learning Center. Their website (www.ship.edu/~learning) has many help links for form and format concerns, as well as citation guides. There are also writing tutors who, by appointment (477-1420), can read through your work and provide help with grammar, structure, etc.

I am also available to read, review, and offer feedback on rough drafts of the final paper. This is optional—you are not required to give me a rough draft.

The paper is due in class on the last day of class.

Alternative Projects

Groups are welcome to propose an alternative project leading to a paper of similar length. For example, you could conduct a more in-depth research paper on an organizational topic you are interested in. See me if you wish to pursue this or some other idea.

Grading

Please see grading guidelines in the syllabus for a description of my expectations for written work as well as the relative point value of each portion of the assignment.

Penalties for lateness in meeting any of the deadlines associated with the project (including deadlines in submitting group roster, project topic, and outline) will be applied at my discretion.

Other than the research summaries, I will give the entire group only one grade (not attempting to differentiate the contribution of individual group members). However, at the end of the semester each student will be asked to complete a peer evaluation of group member contributions to the project. Therefore, the extent to which weight-pullers are rewarded and slackers punished is up to you.