
Teaching the Importance of Networking by Conducting Informational Interviews

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Due to the changing nature of the work environment, from bounded careers to boundaryless careers, networking is still a skill that must be learned. Students planning to work in today's business environment must be entrepreneurial. That means students must take responsibility for their own career path. This paper describes an exercise that teaches students the importance of networking by completing the Networking Research Project. This exercise is a group project where students analyze and discuss the data collected through conducting an informational interview and reading on networking. Also, this exercise incorporates collaborative learning and reflective assessment. Students are given feedback on their interview, research, written, and presentation skills through this experience.

Keywords: Career Advancement, Networking, Social Networking, Networking Exercise, Informational Interview

Disciplines of Interest: Business Communications

INTRODUCTION

The mentor–protégé relationship is the most significant relationship for career development [Levinson et al., 1978]. Levinson et al. [1978] stated that the mentoring process consists of teaching, providing feedback, and counseling. A mentor is a role model the protégé can follow. The benefits of the mentor–protégé relationship were supported in the literature as providing both career and psychosocial support [Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Higgins, 2000; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Blake-Beard, 2001].

Kram [1988] proposed a constellation of relationships to foster career and psychosocial support. Higgins and Thomas [2001] studied those individuals who take an active interest in, and action to advance, another's career by assisting with the mentee's personal and professional development. This turns out to be a myriad of relationships. Due to a number of changes in the current work environment, Kram's constellation of relationships concept is re-examined.

The more conventional terms to describe the constellation of relationships are *networks* or *networking*. *Networking* represents proactive attempts by individuals

to develop and maintain personal and professional relationships with others for the purpose of mutual benefit in their work or career [de Janasz, Dowd, & Schneider, 2002; Forret & Dougherty, 2001]. Because networking is so important to the individual in their career, it is important that educators teach the definition and concepts of networking, and provide students the opportunity to learn and improve their networking skills [Whiting & de Janasz, 2004].

One way to incorporate teaching the principles of networking into a course syllabus is to include an exercise which promotes collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is an educational practice that (1) encourages student-faculty interaction; (2) encourages cooperation among students; and (3) promotes active learning [Barkley, Major, & Cross, 2014].

I have used the Networking Research Project (NRP) exercise ten times in the past five years within a business communications course and a first-year introductory course for freshmen, both at the undergraduate level at a university located in Los Angeles County. Approximately 400 students, in class sizes ranging from 20–40 students, participated in this exercise. The exercise is introduced and conducted over a six week period within a college semester.

This exercise is based on collaborative learning theories with a reflective assessment component aimed at giving students an opportunity to network by conducting an informational interview, gathering data on the purpose and benefits on networking, and analyzing the groups' data to determine similarities and differences. Students are given an opportunity to reflect on ways to enhance the NRP and ways to incorporate networking activities into their college experience.

THE VALUE OF NETWORKING

Networking is important for a number of reasons. Networks satisfy the same needs as in the mentor–protégé relationship and may include providing sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments [Kram, 1988; Adler & Kwon, 2002]. Psychosocial support is directed at enhancing one's sense of competence, clarity of identity, and sense of self. These functions include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship [Robinson, 1996; Kram, 1988].

Next, networking is identified as important in the job search and re-employment process [Eby & Buch, 1994; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000]. Seventy to 80 percent of professional jobs are obtained through networking [Koss-Feder, 1999]. The “hidden” job market can assist in establishing contacts, obtaining interviews, and identifying and cultivating mentors. Last, contacts obtained through networking enable the individual to meet people who can provide new ideas and timely information, obtain business leads, and provide social support [Baker, 2000].

While the mentor–protégé relationship is still significant and important today, the benefits of the relationship are obtained through networking relationships.

This is significant because protégés are often selected by a mentor, and many individuals are seeking an alternative or more proactive approach to career advancement and career support. Networking is a more proactive approach for individuals who are adaptable, self-directed, and focused on employability [Hall, 1996; Hall, 2002].

As researchers analyze the benefits provided by the mentor–protégé relationship to networking relationships, the same benefits apply. Job opportunities, business leads, and influence are benefits from relationships [Baker, 2000]. Access to information, resources, and career sponsorship, which are related to increase in salary, promotions, and career satisfaction, are outcomes of a networking relationship [Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001]. Career success is linked to effective networking [Eddleston, Baldrige, & Veiga, 2004; Hwang, Kessler, & Francesco, 2004; Forrett & Dougherty, 2001]. Therefore, because networking is a vital skill to learn, it is important that educators teach the importance of networking by teaching how to network [Whiting & de Janasz, 2004; Friar & Eddleston, 2007].

One networking technique students should learn during college is how to conduct an informational interview. An informational interview is an interview conducted with a professional by an interested party (student, job seeker, information seeker) with the intention of finding out more information. It is my experience as an educator in the field of business communications, that most students do not know a person in their chosen field. Plus, students choose careers with very little knowledge about that career. The informational interview is a tool to link real-life connections to academic experiences [Mulvaney, 2003]. In 2002, the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* confirmed the viability of conducting an informational interview for a variety of purposes in nearly all fields [Crosby, 2002]. “1 out of 12 informational interviews results in a job offer, compared with 1 out of 200 resumes” [Anonymous, 2000]. Informational interviews are useful throughout one’s career. They can be used to explore career opportunities [Kim, 2011], stay on top of the job market [Mulvaney, 2003], and learn about the workplace [Mulvaney, 2003].

I have shown that networking helps students in various ways throughout their careers. The purpose of the NRP exercise (informational interview) is to provide students the opportunity to practice their networking skills.

EXERCISE CONCEPT

The NRP incorporates various skills needed to network effectively. First, the exercise teaches the students the concepts of networking, as the concept is not clear to students. The exercise provides a forum for students to discuss the tools and techniques to network effectively and to listen to the networking experiences of other students; the group project is shared by the students presenting their

analysis via a class presentation. This process reinforces the importance of networking as presented in lectures, discussion, and readings. Second, the exercise provides a proactive approach to networking, which is then discussed as part of the job search. Third, the exercise provides students an opportunity to seek out and conduct an informational interview with a business professional. Students have limited exposure to professionals within their chosen field of study. Completing an informational interview with an unknown person within the students' area of concentration or anticipated profession is at first daunting and a valuable experience for the students. After completing the NRP, it is apparent that students learn not only the importance of networking but also techniques to sustain the practice of networking throughout their careers.

THE NRP

The NRP introduces the student to multiple aspects on the topic of networking. The NRP is conducted as a group activity. This activity is introduced to students towards the end of the semester. By this time in the course, students are prepared for the skills needed to network effectively. This exercise provides an experiential learning component aimed at giving students experience, feedback, and opportunity to discuss the importance of networking for their future endeavors.

The NRP consists of the following components. Students are grouped by the same or similar field of study. Groups consist of a maximum of four to five members. Next, the topic for the research paper is presented. The assignment requires the students to:

- (a) locate a professional employed in their field of study,
- (b) contact and request an informational interview from the professional,
- (c) meet and interview the professional,
- (d) write a formal thank you email to the professional,
- (e) read journal articles on the importance of networking, and
- (f) analyze the data collected from the informational interviews and journal articles.

At the end of the exercise, the students synthesize the information into a research paper, which includes a reflection section on the informational interview, and prepare a presentation to share the experience with fellow classmates. Towards the end of the assignment, students evaluate each other's participation in the NPR using a peer-evaluation form.

The research paper outline, interview questions, and students' peer-evaluation form are located in Appendices A, B, and C, respectively. Table 1 outlines the steps in conducting this exercise with a detailed description in the following sections.

Table 1. Networking Research Project Schedule

Step	Course week	Responsibility	Activity	Group activity
Organize	4	Instructor	Identify students' concentration.	
Organize	5	Instructor	Assign students to groups within the same or similar concentration.	
1	5	Instructor and student	Introduce Networking Research Project to students and discuss how to conduct a research project.	Students work in groups to discuss the research project.
				Students work in groups to locate a professional to interview.
2	5	Instructor and student	Discuss checklist for conducting informational interview.	
3	6–7	Instructor and student	In-class interviewing practice.	
4	8–9	Student	Conduct informational interview, and select, read and summarize journal articles.	
5	10–13	Student	Analyze and interpret data—write research paper.	Students work in a group to discuss informational interviews and journal articles.
6	14–15	Student	Research paper submitted and in-class presentations; Networking Research Project with Team-Member Assessment	In-class presentation by students

Organize

Students enter the university seeking a business administration degree with a concentration in accounting, marketing, information technology, management, human resources, finance, or international business. Students introduce themselves to the class identifying their field of study. Because a high percentage of students in the business administration program do not know other students within their concentration, I group four to five students within the same or similar field of study.

The first lesson in networking is to make contact with people seen on a regular basis. The students learn that their peers in school, specifically those students with the same or similar concentration, are key resources when seeking employment opportunities. Also, the students learn peer networks are vital when seeking employment opportunities.

Step 1: Introduction to NRP

The outline for the NRP is provided in Appendix A and is reviewed with the students. Chapter 1 introduces the topic for the research paper. The topic of the study is for students to determine the effectiveness of networking for career opportunities, job opportunities, career support, and emotional well-being support. The students gain an understanding on how people in their respective field of study network. The students answer the following questions for the research project:

1. How do the people in your field find job opportunities?
2. How did the people in your field find their past and present jobs?
3. With whom do the people in your field network?
4. Do the people in your field use the Internet for social networking purposes?
5. How important is networking to the people in your field?

Chapter 2 describes the sources of data for the research paper. Each student contacts, schedules, and interviews one professional within their field of concentration. This person must be in a management or leadership position and cannot be a relative. The person must be unknown to the student at the time of the study.

Most students have difficulty finding an appropriate person in their field of study to interview. I suggest the following to students:

- (a) Students could help each other to find someone to interview when they meet in groups. Perhaps someone in the group knows someone to ask: friends, neighbors, or relatives.
- (b) Students could ask a professor (in their respective field) to recommend a person to interview.
- (c) Students could call the human resource department of any nearby company where there is an interest.

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- (d) Students could contact the Career Center or Alumni Office. The Career Center or Alumni Office can offer advice on people to contact.
 - (e) Students could use their social media accounts. An appropriate use for LinkedIn or Facebook accounts is to seek resources for career related information.
 - (f) Students could seek out individuals within a company where they currently work. For example, if a student is interested in marketing, the student could locate the marketing person within that company to interview.
 - (g) Students have additional ideas on how to find a professional to interview, and those ideas are solicited and shared with the class.

Each student in the group is required to read two journal articles found in print or through electronic library databases or newspaper articles from major newspapers (e.g., *New York Times*) on the subject of networking within the student's field of concentration.

A discussion on relevant articles for consideration is necessary. Most students are not aware that using Google on the Internet does not always return quality material. Discussion on the importance of selecting academic articles is necessary. Also, this is an opportunity to discuss and demonstrate the use of an online library service, to which most university students have access. The university librarian is solicited for a class visit to discuss the process and library services.

Next, the interview questions are provided for the students to review in class. The group is encouraged to develop and ask three additional questions tailored to their selected field of study (please refer to Appendix B). The student is requested to take notes during the interview and write a reflective paper about the interview. Both assignments are discussed in Step 2.

Chapter 3 requires the group of students to meet and discuss the data obtained from the research articles and informational interview. The data collected must be interpreted and analyzed to answer the questions posed for the topic of the research. Then, the limitations of the study are requested. The students must discuss the issues with the assignment and the problems that occurred during the assignment. (Note: This information is useful to refine the project assignment for future semesters.)

The research project on networking concludes by completing Chapter 4, conclusions and recommendations on the topic of networking. The students are asked what new information they learned about networking. The students are asked to specify recommendations based upon the conclusions of the study. Does the topic need to be examined further? Is more literature needed? The students describe their networking experience by reflecting on the exercise in this chapter.

Finally, students are required to provide full bibliographical information (author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, page numbers, URLs, creation or modification dates on web pages, and date of access) as they gather resources. The students are taught to evaluate academic sources by looking

at the published date (older material is less applicable to the current research) and the publisher. Academic research requires respectable publishing sites.

Step 2: Discuss Checklist for Conducting an Informational Interview

A checklist on the steps required when conducting an informational interview is distributed and discussed with students. The checklist for conducting an informational interview was prepared by Guffey [2007]. This checklist includes what an information interview is and is not as well as what to do before, during, concluding, and after the interview.

Most students state that they have little to no experience conducting a structured interview. The students are told that interviews typically last 30 minutes; a longer interview builds if rapport is developed between the interviewer and interviewee. The design of the interview is to start with a list of questions to set both the interviewer and interviewee at ease and develop some rapport. Questions on networking are next, and three questions designed by the students close the interview. The student is instructed to take notes during the interview, as the questions and answers are included in the research paper. After the interview, the student is requested to write a one-page self-reflection paper about the interview experience.

My students shared that they are appreciative of the opportunity to meet and speak with an individual in their field of study. Several students were offered internships or starting positions after the informational interview. Some students found the exercise an opportunity to meet and talk with an employee where they work currently. Others stated that the exercise necessitated them to step out of their comfort zone to reach out to others in the business world and to create new relationships. Because the students were interviewing individuals in their field of concentration, the students were motivated to speak to a professional about networking.

Step 3: In-Class Interviewing Practice

Two activities are practiced with students prior to the informational interview. These are the handshake and the elevator speech.

The Handshake

A handshake is an initial connection with and first impression of another person, making this a very important activity to learn. People within the United States and various other cultures greet each other with a handshake. In the business environment, first-time meetings between employees of two or more companies are routine. Attending trade shows, conferences, and seminars is common. Students should be prepared for this common gesture when meeting people or attending events.

Teaching students how to shake hands with another individual is important, because students are unaware of the nuances of the practice. Before the exercise, students are instructed on the importance of the handshake and handshake etiquette. Then, the following items are discussed before the activity commences.

1. Students are informed that, whether shaking hands with a person of the same sex or opposite sex, a firm grip is required when shaking hands. Discussion on the strength of the grip is discussed as it is to be firm—not too hard or too weak. A firm grip represents confidence.
2. Students are instructed to make eye contact and smile during the handshake.
3. Students are instructed on what to say when shaking hands. “Hi, my name is Jane Smith, and you are? It is very nice to meet you.”

Once the activity is completed, a discussion on the process ensues. Students are asked about the process. Was the student comfortable or uncomfortable with the activity? Why or why not? Was there eye contact with the other individual? If not, how did that make the student feel? Did they notice a difference between shaking hands with a woman and a man? If so, what were the differences? Finally, the importance and frequency of the activity are discussed. Those students who find the activity uncomfortable are asked what they could do to make the activity easier and with less anxiety.

The Elevator Speech

An important skill when interviewing, networking, meeting new people, or attending business events is the elevator speech. An elevator speech is a 30-second introduction of who one is, what one offers, and what one is looking for meeting someone. It is a practiced speech to introduce one’s self to others and is the first question in most job interviews. The elevator speech provides students the opportunity to talk about themselves in a controlled environment such as the classroom.

As in the handshake, instruction on the elevator speech is conducted before the student performs the activity. An elevator speech is a good activity for students because it is visual, verbal, and vocal.

1. For the visual aspect, students are instructed on the significance of first impressions. Good posture on delivery of the elevator speech is discussed as it relates to confidence. Smiling when delivery of the elevator speech is important as it represents being approachable and friendly.
2. When the elevator speech is rehearsed, the student demonstrates good verbal skills. Relaying the importance of using proper English during job interviews is stressed. The importance of preparing for a job interview is

discussed at this time. Jobs are obtained through the job interview, not the résumé. This is important information to provide students.

3. The vocal aspect includes the importance of speaking in a good tone and speed—not too loud or soft, and not too quickly or slowly. Students with an accent need instruction on how to speak slowly and clearly for others to understand what they are saying without interruption or requests to repeat what they are saying.

Also, through the elevator speech, students learn to interact and speak to people they do not know. So, the elevator speech teaches how “people gradually come to learn about each other, become comfortable with each other, and develop bonds that enable future access” [Borgatti & Cross, 2003, p. 436].

Once instructed on the importance and nuances of an elevator speech, playing videos for students is a good medium to demonstrate good and bad speeches. Another option, if videos are not available, is role-playing good and bad speeches. The exercise requires students to form pairs. After an initial handshake, each student in turn introduces himself or herself via the prepared elevator speech.

The students are provided a list of questions that are often asked during an interview. During class, an interview demonstration occurs by selecting a pair of students to play the parts of the interviewer and interviewee. We then debrief the training session and discuss what went well and what could be improved. Another two students are selected to role-play until the interview process becomes more natural and more is said about what went well than what could be improved.

At the end of the session, I review the interview process which includes scheduling the interview and confirming the interview via email, talking with people, appearing confident, being prepared, dressing professionally, and remaining focused. Knowledge of the handshake, the elevator speech, and the mock interviews prepares the student to interview the professional effectively.

Step 4: Conduct Informational Interview—Select, Read, and Summarize Journal Articles

During this step in the research project the students will (a) meet and interview an individual in a specific field of study, (b) write a reflection paper on the informational interview experience, (c) write a thank you letter, and (d) find, read, and summarize articles on networking.

A discussion on how to conduct an informational interview was reviewed with the students in Step 2. However, reviewing a few key concepts is important prior to the student conducting the interview.

- **An informational interview is not a job interview.** It is important when requesting an informational interview to state you want to meet to discuss

a topic or to obtain information—not to request a job. I insist that students conduct the interview in person.

- **Preparation is essential prior to the informational interview.** Once an appointment is scheduled, preparation for the interview is important. Students are requested to obtain knowledge regarding the person they interview and the company he/she works for prior to the interview. I stress that students should demonstrate that homework was done! Being prepared for the interview imparts a good first-impression, shows enthusiasm, and demonstrates professionalism.
- **Know what to do before, during, and after the interview.** The informational interview is more casual than a job interview; however, making a positive first impression is very important. Dress well (at least business casual), be professional (bring a resume, arrive on-time, and shake hands upon meeting), and show appreciation (say thank you, buy coffee for the both of you, and write a thank you email or letter).

A reflection paper on the informational interview experience is part of the assignment. I ask the students to report on securing the interview, personal reactions, and insights to the interview process.

I require each student to write a formal thank you letter. This requires a separate lesson on the format and tone of a business email or letter. The letters are reviewed by me before it is either emailed or mailed to the interviewee.

I recommend to the students to find, read, and summarize the articles on networking prior to conducting the informational interview. This recommendation is given to students to gain knowledge about networking prior to talking with the interviewee because it will foster communication and demonstrate knowledge of the subject.

Step 5: Analyze and Interpret the Data, and Write the Research Paper

The research paper enables students to explore and discuss the developing trends surrounding networking: how to utilize them to one's advantage, and how networks affect the job search for employers and potential employees. The students meet as a team throughout the semester to discuss their articles and interviews by examining what students find in common and what is different in the data collected. Once this is completed, the students collectively write and compile the information into a research paper with a given format.

Step 6: Group Presentations on Networking

The students have a chance to share their research projects on networking with the class via a PowerPoint presentation. I use the rubric supplied in Appendix D to teach and grade presentation skills. Also, this is the time where students share their experiences on the informational interview. At the end of the presentation, there is a segment for questions and answers. This assignment requires the students to answer the following questions:

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1. What did you like best about this project?
 2. What did you like least about this project?
 3. What did you learn about networking that you did not know before?
 4. How difficult was finding someone to interview within your individual field of interest?
 5. What would you change about the research project?

TEACHING NOTE

The concept of networking must be taught in college. The activities shared provide a rich learning opportunity for students to experience networking, learn the importance of networking, and realize the potential of networking for personal and professional success. Due to the volatile work environment, the student must understand that to feel comfortable working in the business environment, networking is an activity that must be given attention; it is a conscious effort on the part of the individual [Arthur & Rousseau, 1996]. Most students commented on learning about the process of networking in a positive way, as represented in the following student quote:

Our recommendation is that everyone should network as much as possible. You never know where your connection will take you in the future. Also, if you know someone who is looking for work or needs help, then help. You might be that person one day.

Within the past couple of decades, technology has permeated lives and changed the world. Despite these changes, networking remains one of the most important tools to achieve one's career goals. With the advent of computers and the Internet, the age-old phenomenon of "word of mouth" has crossed over into digital form, connecting companies and people from different continents through social networks and instant messaging. Many students are familiar with social networking sites such as Facebook, but they are unaware of the impact social networking sites have on career management and job opportunities. After the course and completing any or all of the activities, students commented,

With all the articles and interviews, our group concluded that networking is crucial in today's volatile job market. The more traditional way to network is through word of mouth and face-to-face interaction. With the advancement of technology, social networking is considered the modern way to network. Social networking helps spread the word at a much faster rate compared to the traditional approach.

Although students know the term *networking*, they often do not realize the impact of the art of networking on their career. Students enter college with an idea

on a field of study to pursue, and much of their effort is placed on attending classes. Understanding the importance of networking and attempting to network while attending class is out of the realm for most students. Many students go about their day with little thought regarding networking. Connecting with students in their major is not for networking opportunities but to satisfy a current need to study, obtain notes, or share missing assignments. Students are not informed about the benefits of networking or how to network effectively to take advantage of the current setting. Students are not informed of the major journals, conferences, or events available in their chosen field of study. This information must be taught and learned in college.

Networking is not a “wait-and-see” type of activity. Networking is a process that must be practiced and incorporated into everyday activities. Students must practice and rehearse shaking hands effectively when meeting someone new and delivering an elevator speech that is polished and professional any moment required. Students should not be intimidated by requesting an informational interview. One student stated, “*Networking should not be a burden, but a natural tool to achieve one’s goals.*”

CONCLUSION

Students often quote the saying “it’s not what you know, it is who you know.” I read this quote in their papers many times. So, students understand the value of networking, they just do not know how to network or how to use their network.

The objectives for this exercise are to: (a) define and teach the value of networking, (b) provide an exercise in networking that is beneficial and meaningful, and (c) provide opportunities to self-reflect on the informational interview experience and the group project.

First, the term “networking” is not clearly defined. It is a term used by many that is often misused and overused. Many authors have proposed unique definitions for the term “networking” and instruct how to increase one’s network. Still, there is a lack of clarity on the meaning of the term and the types of relationships that facilitate career success (which includes obtaining a job). This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and misperception as to the needs of parties within the networking relationship and the potential outcomes of the relationship. The term “networking” has historical roots based on the mentor–protégé relationship. This is important when discussing the term and understanding how networking enhances the job search or job advancement.

The ability to obtain a job, career advancement, and career success are dependent on networking skills. Many individuals are uncomfortable with or lack the necessary skills to network effectively. To teach the importance of networking skills to the business student, I discuss the historical roots of the term, benefits, and challenges of networking and assign a teaching assignment that is effective in increasing students’ networking awareness and effectiveness.

The reflection papers, term report paper, and presentation are areas where students can express what they have learned regarding the network process. Most often expressed by students is at first a reluctance to contact and meet with an interviewee. However, most are appreciative of the opportunity to meet someone and learn about real-work experiences through the informational interview. Also expressed by students, is the time spent to get to know and share experiences with students in their field of study. The value of the event, conducting the informational interview, and the group project provide networking opportunities for the students. Students become more comfortable attending networking events and have the tool-set ready to connect with others.

The second objective is to provide an experience that is memorable and more importantly, repeatable. Students can take this experience and use it to contact other individuals for information on a variety of topics. In the class presentations, students share what they learned about networking with one another. This is a forum where students share experiences and come away with addition ideas or tactics for future networking opportunities.

And finally, the third object is the use of self-reflection to enhance understanding of the concepts. Students write about all of the topics learned in the course leading up to and including the final presentation. Students have heard the term “networking,” and understand the importance; however, students do not know how to network. Students learn the value of practicing and using the elevator speech. One student spoke about obtaining an internship after he used his speech during a networking event.

As an instructor, this exercise demonstrates the importance of having students engaged in the learning process. Students enjoy the process of the experience because they have the tool-set to use to during networking events. Most students appreciate the opportunities to venture out of the classroom to practice the skills taught.

In conclusion, the research project teaches students a number of tools to network effectively. The opportunity to practice these skills in a business environment and come away with positive experiences is the goal of this exercise. Students gain an understanding of the importance and benefits to network which can be used throughout their careers.

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APPENDIX A: THE RESEARCH PAPER

I. Chapter 1—The Study (2 pages)

A. Introduction (State your thesis and the purpose of your research paper clearly. What is the chief reason you are writing the paper? What are the issues that you will be describing?)

B. Describe the Team's Participation (State the team members, who submitted/evaluated which papers and interviews, who is writing which part(s) of the research paper and presentation.)

II. Chapter 2—Review of the Literature and Interviews (1 page per research article; reflection process, 1 page per interview)

A. Literature Review (Review the article from the journal or newspaper.)

B. Interview Review.

- i. List the questions and answers to the questions
- ii. Reflect on the interview process.

III. Chapter 3—Findings with Analysis and Interpretation (1 page)

A. Analyze and Interpret Your Data (What answers to the questions did you all have in common? What answers to the questions were different?)

B. Limitations, Issues, Problems (State the limitations of your study, the issues with the assignment, and the problems that occurred during the assignment.)

IV. Chapter 4—Conclusions (1 page)

A. Conclusions (What did you find out that you did not know before?)

B. Reflection on the project (Recommendations are offered based upon the conclusions. What recommendations would you offer based upon the conclusions? Does the thesis need to be examined further? Does it need clarification? Is more literature needed?)

V. References

APPENDIX B: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PART 1: Individual characteristic information

1. Name: _____
2. Job Title: _____
3. Organization: _____
4. What is your age range?
25 years old or less _____
26–35 _____
36–45 _____
46–55 _____
56–65 _____
Over 65 _____
5. What is the highest degree earned?
Bachelor's _____
Master's _____
Doctorate _____
Other (please specify) _____
6. How many years have you been in a leadership position?
25 years or more _____
20–24 years _____
15–19 years _____
9–14 years _____
5–8 years _____
1–4 years _____

-
7. Is (insert your major) your first career?
Yes _____
No _____
 8. What position did you enter into the (insert your major) profession?
 9. How many years have you been in (insert your major)?
 10. How many people do you currently have reporting to you?

PART 2: Career Development Questions

11. What or who influenced you to go into the (insert your major) field?
12. Let's start by talking about your career. I am interested in how you found the various jobs throughout your career.
 - How did you get your first job?
 - How did you get your second job?
 - How did you get your third job? (And so on until the present job).
13. What kinds of tasks do you do on a typical day or in a typical week?
14. What excites you most about this job?
15. What type of decisions do you make?
16. Is this career changing, and if so, how?
17. How did you prepare for this career?
18. Do you have advice on how to prepare for this career?
19. What type of advancement opportunities are available for an entry-level worker?

PART 3: Networking Questions

20. Is networking important to you? Why?
Yes _____ No _____
21. If "yes," how do you network? What do you do specifically to network?
22. What memberships do you belong to?
23. What conferences do you attend?
24. What journals/papers do you read frequently?
25. What social networking sites do you belong to (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)?
26. Have the social networking sites helped you in looking for a job? If so, how?
27. Why do you belong to the social networking sites? What do you expect to achieve?
28. Group Question 1
29. Group Question 2
30. Group Question 3

APPENDIX C: TEAM-MEMBER ASSESSMENT

1. Write the name of each member of your group, including your own, in each column below.
2. Respond to all the questions for every member of your team.
3. **Ranking Scale:** Use a rating from one (1) to five (5) for each statement.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = mildly disagree 3 = okay or neutral
 4 = above average or mildly agree 5 = excellent or agree

This assessment is an important element in the overall grading system. Therefore, you are encouraged to be honest, forthright, and objective in your responses. I can assure you they will be held in the **strictest confidence**.

Your Name: _____ Group # _____

Last Name _____	SELF				
Responses					
1. Had useful ideas.					
2. Stimulated critical thinking.					
3. Communicates with the team.					
4. Helped to keep the team intact.					
5. Helped the team to make progress.					
6. Completed their fair share of all work.					
7. Displayed a positive team attitude.					
8. Submitted work in a timely manner.					
9. Submitted a well-written, finished product.					
10. Deserves the same grade as the rest of the team.					
Total Please					

Comments (if any):

APPENDIX D: PRESENTATION AND REPORT RUBRIC

Presentation Group _____ Total Score _____

Objective	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Points Scored
Organization	Presentation had definite beginning, middle, & end; main points easy to follow & logical; engaging introduction and conclusion	Beginning, middle, and end were present but not clearly identified; main points generally easy to follow and logical; introduction and conclusion were satisfactory	Beginning, middle, or end was difficult to define; main points were logical but difficult to follow; introduction & conclusion were unsatisfactory	Beginning, middle, or end was missing; main points so difficult to follow that logic could not be determined; no introduction or conclusion	
Appropriate communication of idea	Presented relevant, accurate, up-to-date information; each point had supporting information	Information was relevant and accurate, but outdated; points were unsupported; examples strayed from the point	Relevant information was incorrect and outdated; several points were vague or unsupported by evidence	Wandered from topic to topic; gave unrelated information; points were vague; supporting evidence was missing	
Effective demonstration	Used originality, creativity, & relevant choice of examples; use of notes was not distracting or noticeable	Presentation had some originality and creative choice of examples; used more notes	Treatment of topic & choice of examples were fairly traditional; occasionally fumbled with notes	Relied fully on traditional treatment of topic; inappropriate examples; constantly fumbled with notes	
Visual aids	High-quality and useful visuals reinforced presentation; used correct grammar and spelling; readable lettering	Most materials were high quality; accurate visuals but some slides were unclear; had few grammar and spelling errors; readable lettering	Most materials were inadequate; slides had to be read to the audience; inaccuracies and spelling/grammar mistakes; slides are too busy; unreadable lettering	Poorly prepared; inaccurate, difficult-to-see slides detracted from presentation; many errors; presenter just read from slides	
Overall delivery	Speakers were confident and relaxed; used appropriate terminology; easily understandable; volume and pace were appropriate; showed enthusiasm for topic and engaged listeners; speakers appropriately dressed and well-groomed; inspiring delivery	Speakers' initial nervousness was not distracting; used a few unfamiliar words and didn't explain them; correct grammar; volume and pace were satisfactory; showed interest in the topic but did nothing to engage listeners; dress and grooming were adequate; delivery a little dry	Speakers' apparent discomfort was distracting on occasion; did not explain presentation; standard word choices; a few grammatical mistakes; mumbled, low volume, and pace made it difficult to understand; presenters had no feelings about the topic; dress or grooming were distracting; speakers showed little interest	Speakers' nervousness was distracting; did not explain presentation; word choices were poor; many grammatical mistakes; mumbled, low volume, and pace made it almost impossible to understand; dress and grooming were inappropriate	

Comments:

Name _____ Date _____ Reviewed By _____

Objective	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Points Scored
Ideas & content	Exceeds in responding to assignment; interesting ideas clearly communicated; balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that shows thoughtful, in-depth analysis	Solid paper, responding appropriately to the assignment; clearly states ideas but has minor lapses in development; no critical evaluation of ideas; information provides reasonable support & displays evidence of basic analysis	Adequate but responding less well to the assignment; lapses in understanding main thesis; information supports central purpose only at times; analysis is minimal	Does not respond appropriately to the assignment; lacks a central idea; central purpose not clearly identified; analysis vague or not evident	
Organization	Uses logical structure appropriate to the subject; good transitions between sections; appropriate conclusions and recommendations	Shows fairly logical progression of ideas & ordering of topics; transitions have flaws; writing somewhat choppy; could improve conclusions & recommendations	Transitions not logic based; ideas may be arranged randomly rather than with any evident logical structure; transitions missing; conclusions & recommendations formatted incorrectly	No organization; lacks transitions & coherence; reading and understanding difficult; conclusions & recommendations inappropriate & formatted incorrectly	
Format & headings	Uses proper spacing and formatting to distinguish between sections; uses compelling talking, functional, main, and subheadings	Some inconsistencies in spacing & formatting; less talking headings; headings merely adequate	Several inconsistencies in spacing & formatting; vague headings; few talking headings	No consistency in spacing & formatting; poor headings; no talking headings	
Graphics	Graphics appropriate for information conveyed; labeled correctly	Graphics somewhat appropriate for information conveyed; labeled somewhat correctly	Graphics not very appropriate for information conveyed; labeled incorrectly	Graphics not at all appropriate for information conveyed; labeled incorrectly	
References	Uses evidence appropriately & effectively from professionally legitimate sources; MLA/APA format used consistently	Professionally legitimate sources that support claims generally present; most references professionally legitimate; minor MLA/APA errors	Many statements unsubstantiated; offers generalizations; irrelevant examples; most references from inappropriate sources; MLA/APA has frequent errors	References not cited; personal narrative rather than analysis; inappropriate sources; MLA/APA format not recognizable	
Writing mechanics	Writing is clear, concise, conversational, professional; writing is free of typing, spelling, grammar, & punctuation errors	Writing pretty clear, concise, & almost free of errors	Writing has unnecessary words; formatted in a way to make it less conversational or professional; more errors	Writing unclear, unprofessional, & wordy; writing has many distracting errors; the meaning is obscured	

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