

## **FME-Organizational Behavior Stream Paper Assignment: Interpersonal Relationships and Action Analysis Paper**

### **Purpose:**

In the organizational behavior stream within FME we have learned a variety of frameworks to help us understand human behavior in organizations. We hope that you have learned to use this understanding to engage as an entrepreneurial leader as you work to influence individuals, teams, and organizations and to solve organizational challenges in an ethical manner. We take action and learn from it.

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to: 1) analyze a situation in FME where you faced an interpersonal challenge; and 2) extract lessons learned regarding how you might effectively handle such challenges in the future.

### **Assignment Overview:**

Write a short paper (4-5 pages) on a recent situation in which you faced a challenge working with another person or group, analyze how you responded to that challenge, and extract lessons about how you might handle similar challenges in the future. Examples of challenges you might want to write about include: trying to influence another team member to do (or not do) something, managing a conflict with another individual or group, dealing with cultural or stylistic differences, giving or responding to a critical performance appraisal, handling a leadership issue, getting support for a new idea or an approach to solving a problem, etc. The challenge may involve one or more members of your business team, or it may involve external parties such as customers, vendors, administrative staff, faculty, etc. The key is that the paper must focus on YOU and a SPECIFIC interpersonal challenge YOU faced within your FME business. In choosing a situation to analyze, we encourage you to write about a situation where you really cared about the outcome. If you cannot pick a situation from FME, reach out to your OB professor for more guidance.

Your paper should include 3 sections:

- **A brief description of the incident.**

This will be the shortest section of the paper (no more than one page) and should summarize what happened: the challenge you faced, what you did (or didn't) do, what the other party did (or didn't do) and the outcome. In describing the incident, you want to be as concise, specific, and objective as possible. The purpose of this section is simply to provide context for your analysis and lessons.

- **A critical analysis of the incident.**

The majority of your paper should focus on the analysis of the incident (2-4 pages). Using OB concepts you have learned *at any point this year* in FME (fall or spring semester), go beyond the description of "what happened" to critically analyze **how and why** the situation occurred. In analyzing the situation, be sure to draw on OB concepts and frameworks to help explain the situation (i.e., emotional intelligence, ethics,

motivation, communication, teamwork, culture, power, behavioral styles, social identity, etc.). Remember, using more concepts to analyze the situation isn't necessarily better. Focus on applying those concepts that are most relevant to your specific situation – some concepts may not be useful for uncovering the root causes that underlie the incident.

You will not be graded on how effectively you handled the challenge, but rather on the quality of your analysis and of the lessons you extract. A challenge that you did not handle as well as you would have liked will probably offer richer ground for analysis than a challenge that you feel you handled well. Moreover, engaging in a candid and thoughtful self-critique is likely to be a more useful learning experience than recounting a perfect success story.

Don't simply drop jargon and buzzwords into your paper. A more insightful analysis will go beyond simply describing the situation using OB terminology and will offer a well-supported explanation for why the situation unfolded as it did. Furthermore, a strong analysis will explain how various concepts / points / insights about the situation are linked together and will include proper citations for quoted or paraphrased material.

- **Lessons learned: What the incident and your analysis of the incident tells you about yourself and your development.**

In the final section (1 – 1.5 pages), based upon your analysis and what you have learned about yourself, discuss the implications of your experience for your future development. Describe what lessons you take away from your experience and your analysis and how you intend to approach situations differently or behave differently in the future. Action plans about what to do differently are every bit as welcome as lessons about what to continue or reinforce.

### **Paper Structure:**

Your paper should be 5 pages maximum (not including cover page or exhibits). **Please format your paper using double-spacing, 12 point font Times New Roman, 1 inch margins and page numbers.**

The paper should include the following:

1. A cover page, please type or write the honor statement: "I pledge my honor that I have neither received nor provided unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work" and sign it.
2. Your name on your cover page but not on the subsequent pages.
3. Submit your paper on Canvas under the OB Final Paper Module.

### **Grading Criteria:**

You will be evaluated on the clarity of your description of the incident, how effectively you have analyzed the situation using course frameworks, and the specificity and thoughtfulness of your action plan. Spelling, grammar, and proper referencing are important as well.

The four evaluation criteria are described in more detail below:

1. Description of the influence incident is concise, behavioral, specific, and objective.
2. Analysis is insightful and effectively uses appropriate model(s) to get at the root causes of why the incident occurred as it did. Better papers will link causes together to explain *why* an event happened, not to impress the reader with the number of buzzwords per paragraph. **The analysis section is the most important component vis a vis your final grade.**
3. Lessons Learned is specific and connects to the points in your analysis. This section of the paper discusses what you have learned from reflecting on the situation, and therefore what you will continue to do and/or do differently in the future.
4. Organization and Writing. Your paper should be well-written and well-organized so that your ideas are presented clearly and concisely. Rhetoric is important in this paper so pay attention to introduction paragraphs, transitions, and developing a thesis statement. Finally, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and referencing should be professional. Please refer to your Rhetoric Guide and consider gaining support from the Writing Center to help you in the creation of a professional document.

### **A few common mistakes students make that we encourage you to be careful of:**

- Writing about an incident in which there was no real challenge, leaving little to analyze
- Writing about a challenge someone else faced, rather than one you faced
- Writing a heartfelt paper about a tough situation but spending the entire paper describing the situation and not analyzing it.
- Introducing OB concepts in your paper but not applying these concepts to analyze the situation

This paper is an individual effort and will count 20% towards your grade for the second semester of FME. Late papers will be downgraded by one-third a letter grade for every day late. In completing this assignment, students are expected to abide by the Babson Academic Integrity Policy.