

ESSAY TWO

General Comments

This essay gives a good answer to the prompt; it is a clear example of your leadership abilities. Most of the problems are relatively minor, and I've worked to cut out unnecessary material in such a way that your voice and narrative are preserved. A few notes:

Impose a narrative

The essay's organization can be tightened by imposing a narrative on the piece. For instance, you can start with what the situation was when you got the new interns. Step two is how you trained them. Step three is the result. Step four is what you and they learned. You had basically already organized your essay this way, and I just drove that organization home.

Tone

At times the tone was a bit too informal (using etc.) or came across as too self-confident (an example is "When Jawon talked to me that my encouraging advice was the best she ever heard, I convinced that my style of leadership works.") While it's good to be confident, it's important that the reader likes you as well.

Too much emphasis on people's names and positions

Including the names and titles to the essay does not add much since the names are foreign and the reader won't know them. They distract from your overall points, and we can simplify it.

The essay is already just over 500 words, so let's be sure in editing to keep the word count down.

INITIAL DRAFT with specific comments

Essay 2: Please describe a time when you coached, trained, or mentored a person or group. (500 words or less, limited to one page)

"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people." by Mohandas Gandhi.

"People ask the difference between a leader and a boss. The leader leads, and the boss drives." by Franklin Roosevelt.

What I think of as a leader needed today is a people-centric leader who naturally motivates and leads other people.

I was a mentor of five summer interns for four months in 2008. Main purpose of my team's project was to analyze the success story of old media giants and their rise and fall affected by new media of Internet, and to derive implications to KT, which is a newbie for media industry. At first glance, it looked like a consulting project so that I have to adjust the level of project. KT's summer internship program is open to every senior university students so that my team members' background was ver diverse. Among them, except Jaechul Kim whose major was communication and journalism, no one is familiar with new media industry or services. Believing that confidence is important when someone have to carry out unfamiliar and unexperienced job, I broke down the whole project into small items and assigned it to each member. This was based on my belief that small accomplishments make someone being self-motivated and it also raises acountability.

What I did first was to know my team members' academic and personal background, capability and potential, and value-orientation, etc. And then, I assigned jobs based on this analysis. For example, considering their undergraduate major, I ordered Heegoo Kang and Sinae Kang to analyze and valuate the M&A between Time Warner and AOL by using Harvard Business School's case material, "Valuing the AOL Time Warner Merger". In other way, I encourage and motivate Ms. Ahlim Oh, the weakest member, to research recent converged media services after showing her the specific examples and providing reference materials.

Our project included the perspective on future TV services, which needed creativity and insight. And creativity comes from free work atmosphere. Everyone must have the freedom to communicate with anyone. Knowing empirically that most Korean people are shy at first in face-to-face meeting but active in various Web-based social services, I let them know that I was available to chat anytime via Skype, an instant messenger the only usable in the office without security problem.

Comment [MSOffice1]: These quotes help convey your leadership skills, but they are not directly relevant to the prompt. Also, as a rule for quotes you don't need to put "by" before listing the speaker's name. Starting an essay with a quote like this is a bit overdone, and it won't read as strongly as the rest of your well-done essay.

Comment [MSOffice2]: For effective writing it's best to avoid using the same word twice in the same sentence - here, "leader."

Comment [MSOffice3]: "Newbie" is a colloquial term, and we should use more formal language.

Comment [MSOffice4]: The use of the present tense here is confusing.

Comment [MSOffice5]: Good detail here.

Comment [MSOffice6]: Avoid this sort of informality in application essays. "etc." is too informal and can convey laziness. Just say what you want to say and include as many examples as you think you need.

Comment [MSOffice7]: Listing specific interns' names does not add much to the essay; the reader will not know them.

Comment [MSOffice8]: You should clarify how she was the weakest member. It can come across as judgmental if you did not know them too well but decided immediately that she was the weakest member.

Comment [MSOffice9]: This is my favorite part of the essay! It gives a specific detail of something you did that shows something about your personality.

Comment [MSOffice10]: Let's find a way to describe what Skype is that takes fewer words; most people already know what it is.

Although we had not a creativity-spurring place like Stata Center of MIT, we could have a casual meeting from time to time at a bar or cafe for flexible thinking and free discussion.

If people have common interests, they can become friends more collaborative and cooperative each other. Considering this, I, in addition to lead and guide them, continually kept relationship with my team members sharing common interests such as doing basketball with Heegoo and Jaechul, sharing experiences from travel to Europe and US with Jinyoung and Ahlim, and sharing information of photography with Sinae.

When someone has to make a presentation under unfamiliar environment such as a talk at an international conference for the first time, many people easily feel nervous and screw it up. Dr. Sunggoo Kim was a Ph.D candidate and my mentor when I was in my master's course. Just before I made a presentation at a conference, he told me like this; "Even though you have to talk in front of many professors and Ph.D students and they surely have much knowledge on electrical engineering as a whole, you are the very best man relating the specific theme you have digged in so far. So, be confident"

Before my team's presenter Heegoo made a speech, he and my colleague Ms. Jawon Kim, Class of 2008 from Fuqua School of Business, were talking about the speech. I told above story to Heegoo and he did a great job on his speech. When Jawon talked to me that my encouraging advice was the best she ever heard, I convinced that my style of leadership works.

Every experience during inernship was very helpful to me and to all my mentees. I learned and tried a lot to be a good leader, and they experienced useful business social life. The total summer intern was thirty five students and only two received full-time offer from KT. Jaechul was one of them. Also, Heegoo, who had started to have great interest in media industry during his intern life, was hired by MBC, major national Korean television and radio networks and one of dream companies among recent university students. On top of that, the most great and valuable thing is that we are still personally and professionally networked by now.

Comment [MSOffice11]: Let's find a way to condense this paragraph.

Comment [MSOffice12]: This is a bit of name-dropping that doesn't add much to your essay, but it does make you seem like you're trying too hard to impress.

Comment [MSOffice13]: While it's good to be confident, this reads a bit too strongly.

Comment [MSOffice14]: This detail, while impressive, does not directly relate to the essay prompt. It seems forced, and it does not do much to improve your image and takes up a lot of space.

EDITOR'S FINAL REVISION

In 2008 I led a team of five college summer interns, most of whom had no experience in new media or telecom. Our task was to analyze the successes and failures of former media companies in the Internet age and suggest applications to KT's business model.

Realizing the importance of accountability and self-confidence in the workplace, I broke the project into small deliverables so the interns would have ownership over their assignments. To assign tasks tailored to each members' skills, I took time to acquaint myself with the employees' personal and academic backgrounds, goals, capabilities, and working habits. With the completion of each action item the interns grew more confident in themselves and more knowledgeable in their subject areas. My mentoring style adapted to meet each student's needs; for some I simply assigned a task and provided energetic approbation, while others required specialized help finding reference materials.

Our task was not simply research, however; it required that we think creatively to analyze the data collected. Realizing that successful analysis only comes from an open, friendly working environment where communication is encouraged, I worked to overcome Korean cultural tendencies towards bashfulness. Knowing that Web-based social services tend to eliminate this shyness, I made myself available to my team any time of the day via Skype, a web-based phone service heavily used by young people. I talked with them not only about work, but also about their favorite hobbies - basketball, travel, and photography. Once team members were comfortable with me and with each other, I organized casual meetings in bars and cafes to encourage free thinking and collaborative dialogues, the kinds of conversations the Stata Center at MIT promotes. After many long afternoons of brainstorming and analysis, we completed the project and prepared ourselves for the final presentation.

One intern in particular seemed nervous for her portion of the presentations, so I pulled her aside to deliver a piece of advice which my mentor had given me years ago. "Even though you will present to professors and doctoral students, you are the very best person to relate the specific theme you've researched. You're the expert, so be confident." The look in her eyes shifted immediately from trepidation to confidence, and she presented excellently. By empowering one intern the entire team performed better.

The mentoring experience taught me at least as much as it taught the interns. It showed me the value of giving employees ownership of their tasks and the necessity of understanding your mentees personally to help them grow professionally; there is no cookie cutter to meet to all employees' needs. Most importantly, it taught me that to be a mentor you have to be adaptable and energetic, ready to deliver a piece of advice from an old colleague or a late-night Skype call about how to organize data. My experience mentoring and leading the interns helped them clarify their interest in the industry and build their professional network, but it also made me a more understanding and effective leader.