

Global Enterprise Experience Journal

I entered the GEE with a bit of trepidation; I was unsure about my abilities to be a leader to so many individuals, and I was concerned about the challenges that my team would face due to cultural, language, and time differences. However, now at the end of the GEE, I can reflect and say I have had a positive experience, and I have learnt many things from this experience. I have learnt how to be patient and understanding with different cultures, that different people communicate and interpret the same piece of information differently, and I have also learnt a lot regarding our topic of health and education.

As a leader, the first, and probably most important process, was to encourage my team to share ideas and be creative when discussing and deciding on a business concept. I believe this was one of the most important times for our team, as it encourages people to open up about their ideas, and express their viewpoints. I also found this the most difficult and frustrating time during the contest. Due to limitations of some team members, technology such as Skype wasn't a reliable form of communication. Therefore, the first brainstorming meeting took place at 12.30am NZ time in the Campfire chat room set up for our team. The technology itself was good, but as the leader I found the process of this meeting extremely slow and somewhat unhelpful. My team members were still in the forming stage, and they approached every suggestion with caution. After over an hour, and no complete ideas formed, I called an end to the meeting. The next day I asked each individual member for two ideas, and from this I drew up a table with all the ideas, and pros and cons of each idea. I found this to be much more effective than a meeting, as members had time to think the possibilities over, and contribute suggestions in their own time.

Basecamp was used as our main form of communication, with our own Facebook group being the second most used. Direct email was used occasionally, but only to communicate directly with individual team members. I found the strategy of posting messages on Basecamp, then repeating the message on Facebook, very useful. I also found using Facebook was used by members a lot when they wanted to ask me a question directly.

As the leader of my team, I learnt several things. I learnt how to communicate effectively with people from different cultures and backgrounds; I found that showing understanding towards members went a long way; it meant there were less pressured and more willing to contribute. I also learnt that encouragement and constructive criticism is best. In some instances, some member's submitted drafts to me that were not on topic of the tasks I had delegated. Therefore, I gave them positive feedback on things they had done well, and then suggested how they could improve. This proved to be effective as overall; I was pleased with the work each member contributed.

Overall, I enjoyed the GEE and would happily recommend it to anyone who wishes to participate. With six out of seven (not including myself) team members participating, I was lucky to have such good numbers, but this could be overwhelming at times. I also think I was lucky with my team members; although sometimes reluctant, everyone contributed well to the final proposal and everyone treated each other with respect. I am definitely proud of the effort of my team.