

S671 Georgia Lockley New Zealand Journal

What really is The Global Enterprise Experience? I was one of the lucky ones to be invited into this surreal opportunity, and truly find out what all the fuss was about. It's not just a competition, or a team management exercise; it's a unique experience that provides you with a wider perspective on the way you see the world, and the way the world sees you. Although it teaches you how to lead a multinational team, it grows you as an individual, while teaching you a thing or two about who you are as a person. I came into this with the mindset of a young competitive, perfectionist female, desperately eager to receive the top grade. That it possibly couldn't be that hard to lead seven other individuals. I was very naïve and somewhat selfish; everything I assumed actually translated into being the exact opposite. March 26th slowly waltzed on in; I promptly sent off my launch letter, which exemplified tones of passion and inspiration, making sure it stimulated a supportive culture.

Throughout this experience it was refreshing how connected our team became. The use of Facebook was our main source of communication, which played a large part in our success as a team. Viber, Email and Facebook were the main three platforms each member felt comfortable with, and nobody seemed to encounter problems here. I continually praised team members on their hard work and efforts, determined to establish an intrinsic motivation within the group. In the initial stages I developed a questionnaire, this helped us develop a personal relationship with each other before having to proceed onto something more professional, it enabled what I think, was a smoother transition.

The main challenge I faced throughout this project was the initial sharing of ideas phase and then collaborating this to expand on specific threads together. I came up with a plan to encourage more ideas flowing among the group, we set up a discussion group using TimeandDate, and this worked a charm! To begin with I had to take charge putting forth an idea, asking members specifically how they would turn it into a feasible project, the implementation path they would take and who they would target as their market. In doing this I demonstrated that every idea is a good one as it sparks further innovation and collaborative teamwork. However due to different time zones, many nights I would set sessions which started at 2am NZ local time, and many which wouldn't finish until 4.30am. The willingness to forgo sleep and enter into early morning discussion enabled me to provide loyalty to my team, ensuring they understood that I would always be there whatever the time of day.

Mid competition, GEE was really starting to test my enthusiasm. Constant late nights, stress from sacrificing crucial study time, my own body resenting me for not taking the time to eat proper meals, including overanalysing situations, and the constant worry about scenarios which hadn't even occurred yet! It all overwhelmed me... I resented it. I wanted to quit. At points I felt alone, and that many other teams were doing succeedingly better than me, until Monday morning tutorials arrived. My management class cried out fits of pain, and indescribable troubles they were experiencing, which made mine seem pathetic. These sessions provided me with warmth, as they all described similar doubts and concerns that I myself was experiencing. They enabled me to be pragmatic, while providing me with multiple perspectives on how to go about similar problems we all seemed to be experiencing. As the final week drew closer GEE was consuming each and every ounce of strength and patience that I had. GEE throws you in the deep end, I wasn't prepared at all for what I was about to experience, though it was me who chose to swim, rather than sink.

An internal issue I faced within myself was the issue of never wanting to come across dominant, or harsh. I felt that if I pushed my team too hard, or demanded too much, without so much as a spark of inspiration coming from my part they would shy away, resent me, and my leadership abilities. Four days before the end of the competition, I hadn't completely received everyone's section, the worry built up inside me and my faith in my team started to deteriorate. I had to change up my approach. I expressed to my team if they hadn't submitted their sections in within the next 24-hour period (due to already having had a week) their names would be removed from the report. To my amazement each and every one of them responded to this quickly, submitting something within the next 24-hour period. I learnt that everyone responds differently to direction, and it's ok to change it up every now and then.

Greg Anderson once said, "Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it". Personally I think this quote speaks a lot for what GEE represents, and until now I never really understood why. To Patricia, Nicholas, Linda, Shane, Ivy, Maggie and Claudia thankyou, without you I would not be the individual I am today. I am utterly grateful for everything you have done.