

Busi6351 CASE ASSIGNMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS ON WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

The case write-up is due on or before April 30, 2018, 11pm. The due date is the latest date and time the assignment will be accepted before points will be deducted for lateness.

The written assignment is to use a minimum of 12 point (mm) type. The assignment will have a word limit of 2000 words, 900-1100 words for Part 1 and 900-1100 words for Part 2. Please adhere to this limit. Going over the word limit is a student fairness issue (as is being late with assignments as discussed above). Points will be deducted if assignments go over the maximum words allowed. Since the assignment has a word limit, make each word count. Avoid empty sentences that add little to your analysis and recommendations.

You may discuss this assignment with your classmates. BUT, YOUR SUBMITTED PAPER MUST BE YOURS AND YOURS ALONE and in your own words.

Assignments will be graded based on the following criteria:

- 1) Scope and completeness – all questions assigned are answered and all parts and sections are completed.
- 2) Weaving course concepts into case analysis – cases are applications of the course concepts and material. Frequent and proper use of course terms and concepts in the write-up are absolutely necessary.
- 3) Critical analysis (with specificity) – student thoroughly analyzes situation, recognizes relevant issues and supports arguments and conclusions with sound and appropriate depth of evidence.
- 4) Recommendations and conclusions – logic and judgment are sound and conclusions flow plausibly from strong arguments with justification.
- 5) Consistency, clarity, grammar, spelling, on-time, adheres to word limit, no typos, sentences and paragraphs, etc. – Much of business is communication and clarity and consistency of ideas and expressions along with proper grammar and spelling are very important. Written clarity also means no lists. Paper must use well written, descriptive sentences and paragraphs. And, much of business includes meeting deadlines and time/word limits.

COMMENTS ON DEVELOPING A CASE

I have reviewed many cases and projects and have found several trends concerning how students prepare these assignments. This commentary discusses how the case in Busi6351 should be approached and developed.

For this case, no outside research is necessary. The case, as described in the text, is the situation students are to analyze.

1) Scope and completeness. Most students do a good job answering all questions and including all sections of an assignment in their papers. But, many students do not use appropriate subheadings. This makes it difficult for the reader to know exactly what part and section is being answered when. Please designate which part and section you are answering in your paper by including each part and section as an identifiable subheading (eight sections of paper: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d).

2) Weaving course concepts into the case analysis. Since cases are applications of course material (text and lecture notes), use the concepts presented in the course appropriately and often in your write-up. Part of learning is becoming comfortable with using business terms and concepts. One of the ways to develop proficiency is to use the written course assignments as practice. As a suggestion, when you are developing the case, page through the text and lecture notes and find applicable concepts (such as you would find suitable formulas in the text when solving finance or statistics problems) that should be used to present your ideas about the case.

3) Critical analysis. Do not just restate what is in the case. Critically analyze the case by painting an appropriate picture of the current situation (what the organization is doing effectively and what it is not doing effectively; what situational factors are positive and which ones are negative; and so on). Many students just rehash what is in the case. Few do any real critical analysis. The audience, your instructor, is familiar with the case situation. A small amount of case summary is justified so that your audience (me) will know what you are basing your analysis upon. But, a summary of case information is not analysis. Typically, most critical analyses are too general, not specific enough.

It is true that for the case in this course students (you) take the present case situation as a given. But, you need not accept assumptions presented in the case as a given. Is there anything in the case you do not accept as valid? For instance, if the case says Goodyear is developing a new product, you can take that as true. But, you do not have to agree that this new product will meet Goodyear's goals. If you do not agree and it is relevant to the case, specifically say why. What is it in the case that leads you to believe this is not going to work? If you do agree, specifically say why you think the new product will meet Goodyear's goals. A second example is that the case may state Goodyear's goal is 20% growth per year. You can take as fact that that is Goodyear's goal. But, given, for example, the case particulars that there is an economic recession in the world, you may feel that the growth rate goal of 20% is unreasonable given the case situation. In the paper, say that you think the goal is unreasonable, state the fact

that the world is in recession to justify your thinking, and then state what you believe would be a more realistic, achievable goal for Goodyear to establish.

4) Recommendations and conclusions. As you review the current case situation, you are to develop what you believe would be the best courses of action for Massey Energy. It may be those stated in the case or it may not. Either way, you are to justify why you believe these are the best solutions. In other words, you do not have to accept any or all of the future actions being proposed. You make up your own mind concerning what should be done (given the situation) and then justify this in your paper. Justification of future actions should not be just a few sentences but a large portion of the case write-up.

5) Consistency, clarity, grammar, spelling, submitted on-time, adheres to word limit, sentences and paragraphs, no bullet lists, no typos, etc.- most students do well in this category, but I will take off points for problems with any of these items in the case write-ups. Also, no lists are to be used in the write-up. Students are to use sentences and paragraphs to convince their audience what are the important issues and what are sound recommendations.

In general, when you are writing your cases, picture yourself as a consultant specializing in management who is hired by Massey Energy to analyze the situation and make comments and recommendations. View this case write-up as practice in developing professional analyses and recommendations. Does your paper sound like one a management consultant would write? Would you hire a consultant who wrote a paper similar to yours?

GRADING

1) Missing scope; not all questions answered and parts completed (5 to 50% off depending on extent of what is missing)

2) Paper does not include appropriate course concepts and material from the applicable chapters – only a few references to pertinent course content is included (5 – 20% off). I specifically read case papers and say ‘does this paper read as if someone who has mastered the appropriate course material has written it?’

3) Critical analysis insufficient; paper fails to be convincing; little case analysis and mostly a summary of the case situation are included (5 to 20% off).

4) Paper does not include several thoughtful recommendations that are well justified and flow logically from the write-up and case material presented (5 to 20% off).

5) Paper is not well written, not consistent or clear; paper includes grammar and spelling errors, typos, etc. (5 to 20% off depending on extent). When answering the

case questions, a bullet (list) format is not appropriate. This format rarely conveys to the reading audience the full message the author intends. Well-constructed sentences and paragraphs are necessary for clarity when writing (5 to 20% off depending on extent). Paper does not adhere to the word limit (5 to 15% off depending on severity). Paper not submitted on time (5% off for first day late and 15% off for each day late thereafter).

CASE ASSIGNMENT

Read “The Upper Big Branch Mine Disaster” Case on pages 513-522 of the text. Answer the following questions by critically analyzing the situation, weaving course content into your answers, and developing convincing recommendations. Case write-up maximum 2000 words.

As stated previously, assume you are a management consultant who Massey Energy Corporation has hired to review their situation and make recommendations.

Part 1 (900-1100 words)

As a consultant, convince Massey Energy upper management to consider what you believe are the important issues that Massey Energy should address concerning “the Upper Big Branch Mine Disaster” case. Divide Part 1 into four sections as described below. The sections need not be equal in word length.

- 1a) What are the important issues from concepts and material in Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 text and lectures that Massey Energy management should address? Explain.
- 1b) What are the important issues from concepts and material in Chapters 5 and 6 text and lectures that Massey Energy management should address? Explain.
- 1c) What are the Important issues from concepts and material in Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 text and lectures that Massey Energy management should address? Explain.
- 1d) What are the important issues from concepts and material in Chapters 13, 14, 18 and 19 text and lectures that Massey Energy management should address? Explain.

Part 2 (900-1100 words)

As a consultant, recommend what Massey Energy should do for each important issue brought up in Part 1 of your case analysis. Recommend actions that should

be taken in the next 6 months and within the next 3 years. Be convincing in your arguments. For Part 2, divide your response into the following four sections. Again, the sections need not be of equal word length.

2a) What suggestions do you recommend to Massey Energy management pertaining to issues discussed in Part 1 of your paper from topics covered in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 text and lectures? Explain.

2b) What suggestions do you recommend to Massey Energy management pertaining to issues discussed in Part 1 of your paper from topics covered in Chapters 5 and 6 text and lectures? Explain.

2c) What suggestions do you recommend to Massey Energy management pertaining to issues discussed in Part 1 of your paper from topics covered in Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 text and lectures? Explain.

2d) What suggestions do you recommend to Massey Energy management pertaining to issues discussed in Part 1 of your paper from topics covered in Chapters 13, 14, 18 and 19 text and lectures? Explain.

This case will be evaluated using the criteria in the General Comments on Written Assignment instructions of this course, above. This case is due on or before April 30, 2018, 11:00pm, with a maximum of 2000 words (excluding headings and subheadings in the word count). Include your name on the paper. The assignment is worth 15 points or 15% of your total grade. About a week before the case due date, a case submittal area will be placed on the course homepage in Blackboard Learn for uploading your paper.

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