

(1)

Spanner Supplies, Inc. is an up-and-coming retailer of restaurant supplies and equipment. They handle cooking utensils, ovens, dish washers, tables, and other necessary restaurant items from around the world. SSI's 36 stores are located in six cities— Kissimmee, (4), Orlando (6), Atlanta (6), San Diego (6), Los Angeles (10), and Las Vegas (4).

Initially, SSI focused on building stores, and very little attention was given to supply chain management until a Vice President of Logistics was hired to improve global product flows. Emily, the new VP, began her tenure by hosting a conference call with Ernesto, SSI's transport manager, and Juan, the company's senior-most buyer.

Emily: Thanks for meeting on such short notice. The CEO has instructed me to reduce our transportation spend without hurting service quality. The attitude of "let's get it to the store, no matter what" has got to go.

Juan: Ok, but I don't understand why I'm called upon. Delivery issues are not my responsibility. I don't see where my organization could cause your headaches.

Emily: Some of your decisions impact transportation, and you could give us some insights.

Juan: Ok, I'll try.

Emily: Ernesto, how do you make decisions on international routes and carriers?

Ernesto: Juan's team tell me the product vendor, location, shipment size, and how soon they want it. I go to carriers that I know well and cut the best deals that I can.

Emily: What's your split between ocean and air?

Ernesto: It's about 50/50. We use air to expedite hot orders and anything smaller than a TEU. For FCL, I route it through the Port of Los Angeles, break the container, and send out smaller amounts as LTL.

Juan: No wonder our margins are terrible. You're using premium air service half the time!

Ernesto: It's not my fault that your people finish most of their deals at the last minute. Plus, if you would find me suppliers in strategically-located spots, buy larger quantities, and give me more warning, I could move 90% of our cargo on ocean carriers.

Emily: Wait, this is not the time to be assigning blame. We need strategies and solutions.

Juan: Maybe we've gotten too big to manage this cargo on our own. Can't we look for some outside assistance?

Ernesto: That's a possibility, but I'm good at what I do. With a more stable cargo volume, we could create some ocean contracts and maybe even a charter movement. For air cargo, Juan has to get our suppliers to pack in efficiently-sized boxes. They use huge boxes that weigh almost nothing and are filled with packing peanuts.

Emily: Now, we're making some progress. Let's investigate the feasibility of these ideas and also think of some new ideas for improving transportation and report at our next meeting.

(2)

Provide a thorough discussion of this case and the following case questions. Compose a 1500-word report with good business communication style. The case will, in part, be graded according to the COB writing rubric.

Case Questions:

1. Based on what you know, what are some causes of SSI's transportation problems?
2. Given their product lines, do you think SSI using the right mixture of global transportation services? Explain your answer.
3. How can SSI use Juan's idea about external assistance with transportation?
4. What about Ernesto's ideas? How could routing, contracting, or chartering impact ocean service?
5. Is Ernesto's complaint about product packing legitimate? What, if anything, should be done?

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UHD College of Business Rubrics

Writing Rubric

UHD College of Business

AACSB Assessment of Student Learning Outcome

Authored by Assessment Sub-Committee

Criteria	Unacceptable (1)	Almost Acceptable (2)	Acceptable (3)	Superior (4)
Organization	Writing is not concise and has a tendency to ramble. Lack of focus interferes with understanding.	Number or severity of focus inconsistencies causes direction to wander.	Focus and direction of writing are acceptable and do not interfere with understanding, but could use a little work.	Writing is concise. Information is easy to understand. Focus and direction of the writing are extremely clear.
Sentence Structure	Sentence structure is poor, making understanding difficult. Sentences are awkward or lack structure.	Multiple errors and/or awkward patterns impair understanding.	Sentences are not generally awkward or lacking in appropriate structure. Overall, most sentences clearly express ideas.	Sentences are clear, well developed, and express concise ideas.
Transitions	Connections between topics, ideas, or arguments are confusing.	Connections between one or more topics, ideas, or arguments need strengthening.	Most sentences within a paragraph build upon a single issue. A few ideas lack good transitional sentences.	The writing enhances readability. Sentences build upon singular ideas. Transitions are good.
Background, Evidence	Ideas lack support, or are supported with personal views only (and assignment requires evidence, references, data, etc.). Ideas are not constructed well.	Citations to evidence and references (beyond personal opinion) need expanding in quantity or quality to support arguments adequately.	Ideas are supported with occasional citations or with class lessons. Paragraphs generally support the main idea.	Arguments are supported with cited references or relevant facts. Arguments support ideas which support the premise.
Punctuation and Spelling	Writing contains numerous and/or significant punctuation and spelling errors, distracting from the message.	Errors in punctuation and/or spelling are significant enough to impair the message.	Writing contains occasional errors that do not distract from the message.	Writing is nearly error free.
Professionalism	Document is not professionally written. Tone, word choice, and aesthetics are inappropriate.	Tone, word choice, and/or aesthetics distract the reader and/or diminish the message.	Writer uses familiar but not sophisticated words that are not distracting. Document is fairly professional looking.	Wit, insights, and sophistication provide evidence of due diligence. Tone adds to the writing quality. Document is neat and professional looking.
Content	Content does not satisfy the assignment requirements. Content is too general, off topic, unrelated, or inadequate to satisfy assignment requirements.	Content is related to assignment requirements, but not sufficient in depth and/or breadth.	Content is sufficient in depth and breadth to satisfy the assignment requirements.	Content satisfies assignment requirements and also includes appropriate content beyond the minimum requirements.
Introduction and Conclusion	Main idea is not established in the introduction, and/or the conclusion is weak.	Reader must work to discern the main idea. Intro fails to clearly establish the main idea, and/or the conclusion falls short of satisfactory closure.	Main idea and direction of the paper are established in the introduction. The conclusion is satisfactory.	The introduction not only establishes the main topic and direction, but also has an interesting hook. The writing is brought to closure with justified insight or lasting revelations.

Last updated 7/08.